

UNIVERSITY OF MIAMI

DEPARTMENT OF RELIGIOUS STUDIES



SPRING 2026 COURSES

[CLASSES AVAILABLE ON CANELINK OCTOBER 13, 2025](#)

[REGISTRATION BEGINS NOVEMBER 3, 2025](#)

STUDENTS, PLEASE NOTE: Since you will want to attend to the matter of cognates when you enroll, we are providing you with the current active cognates linked to the REL courses that are listed below, as of the printing of this Course Guide. Please be sure to check all your other course cognates. If you have already declared a cognate that is now deactivated, you WILL be able to complete the requirements. You may search for active and deactivated cognates by course at <https://cognates.miami.edu/> or consult the Director of Undergraduate Studies.

REL 104/PHI 295: Atheism: Doubts and Debates

Husayn | T, TH 3:30 pm – 4:45 pm (Hybrid)

Why do some people doubt the existence of God? What does it mean to be an atheist or an agnostic? This course examines faith-based claims that invite skepticism and atheist critiques of the phenomenon of religion. This course defines atheism as a lack of belief in God and explores atheist literature and history to understand this worldview. Topics include: faith, doubt, unbelief, scripture, the supernatural, naturalism, morality, secular humanism, violence, extremism, and discussions about epistemology, or how we can know anything. Check out this video trailer for more information:

<https://youtu.be/2Kbg56NavFc?si=1kGePnSWRIJS7Bxw>

Counts toward the following cognates:

- Individual Cognate in Arts & Humanities
- Contemporary Issues in Religion

REL 105: Asian Religions: Transforming the Self

Ritzinger | M, W 10:10 am – 11:25 am

The religions of Asia loom large in American popular consciousness yet are at best dimly understood. This course will peel back the platitudes of fortune cookies and “Eastern wisdom” to reveal the richness and diversity of Asian religious traditions. In this selective survey, students will encounter major figures, doctrines, and ethical precepts, with special attention to one key element: the goal of self-transformation and the techniques for achieving it.

Counts toward the following cognates:

- Individualized Cognate in Arts & Humanities
- Individualized Cognate in People & Society
- Contemporary Issues in Religions
- Religious Traditions and Texts
- China Studies

REL 111: Introduction to the Bible: Tanakh/Old Testament

[Crocker Papadakis | TH 9:30 am – 10:45 am \(on-line\)](#)

An examination of the earliest form of the Bible, known to Judaism as the Tanakh and to Christianity as the Old Testament. The course will consider what traditional and modern approaches have suggested about the origins and growth of the Tanakh/OT within the historical and cultural context of ancient Western Asia and Northern Africa (Egypt), and how the texts of Tanakh/OT have functioned in different historical periods for different communities through today. Through close readings of biblical and other texts we will give special attention to key issues such as: law, ethics, and justice; conceptions of divine and human authority; conceptions of God, gods, angels, demons and other divine forces; divine revelation and human knowledge; and the analytical categories of "culture" and "religion." Using films, documentaries, and social media we will consider the Bible both as a religious document and as a force in popular and political culture today.

Counts toward the following cognates:

- Individualized Cognate in Arts & Humanities
- Religious Texts and Traditions
- The Evolution of the Jewish People in their Homeland and the Diaspora

REL 151: Religion and Moral Choices

[Crocker Papadakis | TH 2:00 pm – 4:45 pm \(on-line\)](#)

Using a narrative approach, this course introduces students to religious responses to dilemmas raised by issues such as capital punishment, biotechnology, abortion, euthanasia, and war. In this course, we will focus on formative narratives and biographies in Hinduism, Buddhism, Judaism, Christianity, and Islam. Because this course is part of the Religion and Health Care program, it will highlight issues related to health care. Key topics include reproductive planning/care, eugenics, abortion, gender vs. sex, vaccinations, mental health, end of life care, euthanasia, and organ donation. The course will be divided into two parts: 1. Formative religious narratives and 2. Health care topics in relation to religious ethics.

Counts toward the following cognates:

- Individualized Cognate in Arts & Humanities
- Individualized Cognate in People & Society
- Religious Traditions and Texts
- Contemporary Issues in Religion
- Politics and Religion
- Religion and Medicine

REL 232: A Global History of Christianity

Kling | T, TH 11:00 am-12:15 pm

This course introduces the history, themes, and issues in Christianity from the first century to the present. It takes a wide-view perspective on the most popular and influential religion in human history. Launched by Jesus of Nazareth 2000 years ago, the Christian movement currently has more than two and a half billion members. Its reach is worldwide. After examining Christian beginnings and four basic expressions of Christianity (Orthodoxy, Catholicism, Protestantism, and Pentecostalism), we will tour the world and explore Christianity's presence in Europe, North America, Latin America, Africa, Japan, and China.

Counts toward the following cognates:

- Individualized Cognate in Arts & Humanities
- Individualized Cognate in People & Society
- Western Civilization: Historical Approaches
- Religious Traditions and Texts

REL 288: Chinese Religions: Confucian, Daoist, Buddhist, and Popular Traditions

Ritzinger | M, W 12:20 pm – 1:35 pm

The rise of China will shape the 21st century. Discover the religious traditions that shaped its civilization in this survey of the "Three Teachings"—Confucianism, Daoism, and Buddhism—and popular religion. We will examine their development over time and their mutual interaction, attending both to lofty conceptions of the universe and humanity's place in it and to their historical and social context.

Counts toward the following cognates:

- Individualized Cognate in Arts & Humanities
- China Studies
- Religious Traditions and Texts

REL 334/AMS 301/JUS 360: The American Jewish Experience: Hollywood and Popular Culture

Green, H. | T 5:05 pm – 7:50 pm

Analysis and interpretation of the image of the Jew and the Jewish experience in American cinema by focusing on how Americans in general, and the American Jewish community in particular, have been reflected on the screen from the pre-World War II period until the present. The tension between maintaining an ethnic identity and assimilating is examined with the recent film, *Barbie* as a foundational pillar.

Counts toward the following cognates:

- The Evolution of the Jewish People in their Homeland and the Diaspora

- American Studies: Politics and Religion
- Judaism
- Religion, Myth and Interpretation

REL 350/PHI 337: Current Issues in Religion – Religion and the Environment

[Shockley | T, TH 3:30 pm-4:45 pm \(on-line\)](#)

In this livestream online course, we will delve into contemporary environmental and ethical issues through the multifaceted lens of various religious and philosophical worldviews. Topics will include but are not limited to animal rights, biodiversity, climate change, genetic modification, overpopulation, resource depletion, and the alarming loss of pollinators. Through the exploration of these perspectives, students will evaluate major environmental positions such as biocentrism, deep ecology, ecocentrism, ecofeminism, and ecospirituality. We will consider the bilateral relationship between religious traditions, nature, and responses to contemporary environmental problems. We will not only seek to understand how religious and philosophical traditions interpret nature but also how nature informs worldview beliefs, religious practices, and more (e.g., indigenous religions; nature deficit disorder; the integration of nature in urban landscapes, meditation and prayer gardens; the arts). We will also investigate the use of nature as religious symbols and teaching illustrations (e.g., blood; darkness/light; fire; fish; honey; lotus flower; pomegranate; soil; snakes; trees; water; white stag; wine).

Counts toward the following cognates:

- Individualized Cognate in Arts & Humanities
- Belonging in a Diverse Society: Intersections of culture, identity, and social justice

REL 354/PHI 351: Religion and the Problem of Evil

[Shockley | T, TH 5:05pm – 6:20pm \(on-line\)](#)

Major religious perspectives on the origin and nature of evil and human suffering.

Counts toward the following cognates:

- Individualized Cognate in Arts & Humanities
- Contemporary Issues in Religion

REL 360/ECS 372: Religion and Bioethics

[Newell | T, TH 2:00 pm – 3:15 pm](#)

In Religious Studies 360, we will examine the implications of religious thought for contemporary problems in biomedical ethics. Ethics—often defined as “right action” or principles that govern moral behavior—are frequently required to mediate between biomedical technologies, religious tradition, and human concerns. In this class we will focus on some of those concerns by examining contemporary issues in biotechnology, including

(but not limited to) cloning, genetic engineering, stem cell research, assisted suicide, human subject clinical trials, gene therapies, vaccinations, and embryonic manipulation. We will explore these subjects in the context of both religious values and ethical principles by utilizing historical case studies and following current bioethical situations as they unfold.

Counts toward the following cognate:

- Individualized Cognate in Arts & Humanities
- Individualized Cognate in People & Society
- Religion and Medicine

REL 372: Islam and the United States: The Politics of Race

Husayn | T, TH 5:05 pm – 6:20 pm

Interested in learning about the legacy of Malcolm X, the Black Panther Party, and Muslims in the civil rights movement? This course examines the cultural and political history of the United States with a focus on the experience of Muslims in America. Major themes include xenophobia, racism, national security, law enforcement and violence. Check out this video trailer for more information:

<https://m.youtube.com/watch?v=bhDFDxw3sFw&feature=youtu.be>

Counts toward the following cognate:

- Individualized Cognate in Arts & Humanities
- Individualized Cognate in People & Society
- Islam and the Arab World

REL 399: Method and Theory in the Study of Religion

Callender | TH 5:05 pm-7:50 pm

This course is an introduction to fundamental issues of theory and method in the academic study of religion. Religion is at once the newest and oldest subject in the humanities, and its study experiences persistent redefinition and recasting. We will critically examine some of the more important modern and contemporary theories of religion, assessing not only their rigor and persuasiveness, but also how they help us to think about and address a range of issues humans face in society today and in life.

Counts toward the following cognates:

- Individualized Cognate in Arts & Humanities
- Religious Traditions and Texts
- Contemporary Issues in Religion

REL 403: Supervised Reading in Religious Issues or Problems

Green, W. | Does Not Meet | By Instructor Permission

REL 406/JUS 401/POL 499/HIS 376/COM 406: Special Topics in Religious Issues or Problems: Law & Freedom

Green, W. & Bass, H | W 5:05 pm – 7:50 pm

This discussion-based seminar examines how American law shapes and has shaped people's freedom. Together, we will explore, from varied perspectives, key legal decisions that have both enhanced and constrained the exercise of the "liberty" promised in the preambles to the Declaration of Independence and the United States Constitution. The course will address topics such as speech, religion, privacy, and equal rights. Course members may suggest other topics as well.

Counts toward the following cognate:

- Individualized Cognate in Arts & Humanities

REL 406/MCY 540/MCY 640: Special Topics in Religious Issues or Problems: Music and Religion

Green, W. & Butler, M. | T, TH 2:00 pm-3:15 pm

Music and Religion are fundamental aspects of human existence, evidence of which goes back some 30,000 years. This seminar course will explore musical and religious experiences in human history and the use of music within major religious traditions. It will include specific study of some of the major monuments of sacred music from around the world.

Counts toward the following cognate:

- Individualized Cognate in Arts & Humanities

REL 406/ARC 589/ARC 689/CIM 489/CIM 689: Special Topics in Religious Issues or Problems: Religion & Sacred Space in an Era of Virtual Reality and Artificial Intelligence

Green, W. & Hector, D. | TH 5:05 pm-7:50 pm

The course explores how artificial intelligence and virtual reality will affect the future of religion in both practice and spatial experience. It involves student-designed collaborative projects.

Counts toward the following cognate:

- Individualized Cognate in Arts & Humanities

REL 409/HIS 396/POL 391: Special Projects in Religious Issues or Problems: Ethnic Cleansing, Human Rights and, Freedom of Religion

Green, H. | M 2:30 pm – 5:15 pm

Over the last 70 years, millions of people have been displaced from North Africa and the Middle East: Copts (Egypt), Jews (from North Africa and the Middle East), Kurds and Yazidis (Iraq), Palestinians (Israel), and Syrians. The course examines the reasons why these

minorities and populations have been displaced. Highlighting the International Declaration of Human Rights in the wake of the Holocaust (1951), the course engages students in collecting and documenting the testimonies of these refugees. The narratives include life in their countries of origin, their story of leaving and their experience of resettling in a new country. Core themes such as racism, religion, human rights, transnational identity, exile, diaspora, migration and lack of inclusiveness and equity, are central to the course. Witnesses (very diverse) who have been exiled will be invited to the class to tell their stories.

The course will also address the current Israel-Gaza War.

The course is part of an international project, Sephardic Voices (www.sephardivoices.com) and mirrors Spielberg's Holocaust Project. Instructor: Professor Green - hgreen@miami.edu 305-284-4375. Please contact Professor Green if you have questions.

Winter Intersession Course

REL 151: Religion and Moral Choices

Crocker Papadakis | M, T, W, TH, F, Sa, Su | December 15, 2025 – January 11, 2026 (Online Instruction)

Using a narrative approach, this course introduces students to religious responses to dilemmas raised by issues such as capital punishment, biotechnology, abortion, euthanasia, and war. In this course, we will focus on formative narratives and biographies in Hinduism, Buddhism, Judaism, Christianity, and Islam. Because this course is part of the Religion and Health Care program, it will highlight issues related to health care. Key topics include reproductive planning/care, eugenics, abortion, gender vs. sex, vaccinations, mental health, end of life care, euthanasia, and organ donation. The course will be divided into two parts: 1. Formative religious narratives and 2. Health care topics in relation to religious ethics.

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- Politics and Religion
- Religion and Medicine