

RELIGIOUS STUDIES

Schedule of Courses Spring 2012

101 C/D Introduction to Religion
[Religious Studies Faculty]
MWF 10:10 – 11:00 a.m.
MWF 11:15 – 12:05 p.m.

101 91 Saturdays 9:00 – 11:40 [Callender]
A survey of the major world religions and their perspectives concerning ultimate reality, humankind, and the world; contrasts between Asian and Abrahamic religions.

101 H Introduction to Religion [Petrella]
MW 3:35 – 4:50 p.m.

An introduction to the world's major religious traditions (Hinduism, Buddhism, Judaism, Christianity, and Islam) and to selected ongoing debates in the study of religion. Readings include both general descriptions and discussions of issues important to each tradition and theoretical perspectives on the study of religion. We will consider the following questions: When and how have these traditions originated? What ideas and practices are central to these traditions? What are their diverse views of human nature? What are their views of this life and world? What are their views of the ultimate destiny of the individual and humankind? In addition, we will also examine the interactions among religious traditions, the debate centering on insider/ outsider status in the study of religion, and the origins and adequacy of the term "religion" itself.

111 S Introduction to the Hebrew Bible/Old Testament [Callender]
TR 3:30 – 4:45 p.m.

An introduction to the content and background of the Hebrew Bible and to modern approaches to its study. The course will examine what some of these approaches have suggested about the origin and growth of the Hebrew Bible in its ancient Near Eastern context. The course will include a study of (a) the history of ancient Israel, including its religious and social institutions, (b) the literary forms and themes of the Hebrew Bible, and (c) some of the sociological forces involved in its formation.

131 1T Religion in American Life [Kling]
Tuesdays 5:00 – 7:40 p.m.

An introductory survey of the history of religion in America, including religions that have been most prominent (Protestantism, Catholicism, Judaism), native to the land (Native American), and non-traditional ("cults," Buddhism, Islam).

151 H1 Religion and Moral Choices [Swanson]
MW 3:35 – 4:50 p.m.

An introduction to major themes and important figures in religious and philosophical ethics. We will read, discuss, and write about ethical issues ranging from abortion to war, including topics such as the death penalty, environmentalism, and stem cell research.

171 P Introduction to Islam [De Sondy]
W: TR 11:00 – 12:15 p.m.

An introduction to the religion, culture, and history of Islam, examining the context in which Islam emerged, the Prophet Muhammad, the Qur'an, Muslim ritual and devotional practices, Islamicate aesthetics, law, and issues of gender. Readings and lectures will focus on Islam as a diverse, lived tradition.



238 Q Holy War and Toleration in Western Religions
[Thomas]
TR 12:30 – 1:45 p.m.

An exploration of concepts of Holy War and Just War and of traditions of tolerance and intolerance in Judaism, Christianity, and Islam, from ancient times to the present.

302 O The Hellenistic World [Graf]
TR 9:30 – 10:45 a.m.

In the fourth century B.C.E., the Greek world was united under Phillip II, King of Macedon. His son Alexander created a vast empire stretching from the Aegean Sea to the Indus River, bringing Greek culture face-to-face with Near Eastern culture. This interaction and synthesis will be surveyed in terms of its impact on political and social institutions, religion, and economic relations until 31 BCE, when Rome defeated the last surviving Hellenistic monarch, the famous Queen Cleopatra VII of Egypt.



334 1U American Jewish Experience [H. Green]
W: Tuesdays 6:25 – 9:05 p.m.

An analysis and interpretation of the characterization of the image of the Jew and the Jewish experience in American cinema. A selection of genres (dramas, comedies, epics, biographies) will be examined.

343 6H Catholicism and Human Sexuality [Nickoloff]
Wednesdays 3:35 – 6:15 p.m.

Though all Catholics regard human sexuality as a special gift from God, a great debate is currently taking place in the Church about this complex reality. This course will examine the Church's official teaching on sexuality as well as contemporary critiques of that teaching. Among the principal topics to be explored are (1) the Bible and sexuality, (2) salvation and sexuality, and (3) sexual morality. Special attention will be given to current discussions about marriage, reproduction, and homosexuality.

350 Q Current Issues in Religion [Maldonado]
W: TR 12:30 - 1:45 p.m.

An examination of the relevance of religion to contemporary issues such as politics, women's rights, immigration, violence, globalization, and consumerism. We will emphasize the manner in which religious worldviews and values have shaped broader cultural attitudes. The four major sections of the course will focus on consumerism, religion and violence, justice and peace, and politics.

354 4J The Problem of Evil [Swanson]

W: Wednesdays 5:00 – 7:40 p.m.

An introduction to contemporary religious issues related to the concept of evil. The course will discuss the origin and nature of evil and human suffering.



355 J Religion and Its Interpreters [Petrella]
W: MW 5:00 – 6:15 p.m.

An examination of the most important philosophical, sociological, psychological, and theological responses to the question, "What is religion?" For example, is religion a sign of humanity's immaturity? Or is religion a drug that keeps the vast majority of humankind's poor from rebelling against the rich? Is religion a feeling of unity with the universe? Is religion the way societies achieve a sense of identity? Does religion perhaps require castrating God? The course will explore these and other answers. Authors to be considered include Descartes, Schleiermacher, Kierkegaard, Nietzsche, Marx, Durkheim, Freud, Daly, Townes, Dewey, Levinas, and Barth.

361 P Religion and Youth in Contemporary America [Kling]
W: TR 11:00 – 12:15 p.m.

Contrary to popular images, religion plays an important role in the lives of many teenagers and young adults in America. This course will draw from the traditional academic disciplines that have devoted attention to youth, such as education and child psychology, but will also include new scholarship on youth in the fields of sociology and history. In addition, the category of "youth" is expanded to include young adults (the traditional college age population). The general goal of the course is to examine critically the role that religion plays in the lives of youth in contemporary America.



370 1J **Islam in Modern Times: Explorations in Film, Media, and Music [De Sondy]**

W: **Mondays 5:00 – 7:40 p.m.**

In the current international political climate, the mass media is full of images, narratives, and metaphors relating to Islam. The world at large is intrigued and interested to know more about a religion that offers conflicting views, either as terrorists or peace-loving builders of Mosques. We will examine how film, music, and the wider media present us with an accurate or inaccurate image of Islam. In what way have film, media and music been utilized by progressive/liberal/conservative/ traditional elements in the Muslim and non-Muslim world to support their agenda? In what way do these agendas root back to Islamic theology? Conversely, we will use images, metaphors, and teachings found in religion to discuss the layers and elements visually and audibly portrayed on screen. Through the three critical approaches of theology, mythology, and ideology, this course will examine how religion, as variously defined, pervades the modern cinema and how one may engage in dialogue with this phenomenon in exploring modern images of Islam and Muslims. The key aims of this course are (1) to think, discuss, and write critically about film, music, and media from a religious studies perspective, (2) to broaden understanding of the term “religious” and then to realize its significant role in film plot, narrative, and imagery, and (3) to foster insight into other perspectives through a careful examination of one’s own thinking.

371 R **Islam and Gender: Constructions of Masculinities, Femininities, and the Body [De Sondy]**

W: **TR 2:00 – 3:15 p.m.**

This course investigates the way Muslim religious discourse, norms, and practices create and sustain gender and hierarchy in religious, social, and familial life, exploring the historical and contemporary challenges posed to these structures. Gender, sexuality, and the body are crucial to understanding the political, social, economic, and intellectual life of Muslim communities from seventh-century Arabia to the present day. This course will cover significant moments in the religious and intellectual history of Muslim societies and explore several modern cases. Through each, we will be discussing key questions, including: How does gender structure authority within social, religious, and family domains? What are the current debates on such issues from a masculinities studies point of view? How does the tension between egalitarian and hierarchical ideals play out? What, if anything, is specifically “Islamic” about the situations under discussion? And how have scholars, both Western and non-Western, Muslim and non-Muslim, approached the study of these topics? Attitudes toward the body—involving sexuality, purity, fertility and seclusion—will be examined in a comparative context. The key aims of this course are the following: (1) Students will be capable of critically analyzing media

and scholarly discussions of gender and sexuality in Islam; (2) Students will have an understanding of the complex ways in which religious texts approach key issues surrounding men and women’s rights, roles, and responsibilities, and the diversity of perspectives that interpreters have brought to these questions through Muslim history; and (3) Students will also have a framework for approaching the study of women in other religious traditions.

404 C **Milton, the Bible, and Cultures of Violence [Shoulson]**

W: **MWF 10:10 – 11:00 a.m.**

Though it can be cited for its celebrations of peace, the Bible can just as readily be cited for its extensive accounts of violence in the service of, prompted by, or attributed to God. This course will read selections and consider the representations of violence, from Milton’s poetry and prose in tandem with portions of the Hebrew Bible and the New Testament.

404 4K **Special Topics in Religious Literature: Mapping Middle Earth: Critical Approaches to J.R.R. Tolkien [Goodman]**

W: **Wednesdays 6:25 – 9:05 p.m.**

The course will offer close readings of and multiple critical approaches to J.R.R. Tolkien’s major works, including *The Hobbit*, *The Lord of the Rings*, and *Silmarillion*, exploring the history of how Tolkien developed and revised his work over six decades.

406 O **Ethics and Genetics [Sapp and Glaser]**
406 O1 **[for Religious Studies majors/minors only]**

H:W: **TR 9:30 – 10:45 a.m.**

Foremost among a number of pressing social, ethical, and legal issues that challenge our nation today are questions raised by our rapidly increasing knowledge of genetics and the applications of this knowledge that are already available or are being proposed. This course will look at three such issues—stem cell research, diagnosis and treatment of cancer, and genetically engineered food sources—examining the relationship and interaction between scientific/ technological progress and religious/ethical values with regard to these three topics. Through lecture, film, guest speakers, and discussion we will explore the scientific background of advances in genetics, religious responses, and ethical values in our culture, and we will consider the close but sometimes puzzling and problematic relationship among religion, science, and ethics in our nation’s public life and the lives of individual citizens.



406 P **Philosophy of Religion [Cokelet]**
TR 11:00 - 12:15 p.m.

This course will be divided in two parts. In the first we will consider questions about the relation between religion and reason: Can belief in God, the afterlife, or reincarnation be rationally justified? Can we responsibly hold these beliefs if they cannot be rationally justified? And can religious mystical experiences provide people with supernatural knowledge, which goes beyond what science can tell us about the world? In the second half of the course we will turn to questions about the relation between religion, morality, and meaning: Can morality be given a rational, non-religious foundation? Can we rationally believe life is meaningful if we reject all religious beliefs? And can valid religious demands or values ever conflict with and trump moral ones?

406 S Islamic Art [Mathews]

TR 3:30 – 4:45 p.m.

Students in this course will study Islam as a religious and political entity and will analyze how the Islamic world defined itself in the realm of cultural production. This course will analyze a variety of Islamic artistic media, including architecture, manuscript illumination, textiles, ceramics, and small-scale luxury objects. Artworks from the seventh to the seventeenth century, created in a geographic area extending from Spain to India, will be studied in order to provide a general overview of artistic production in diverse Islamic lands.



406 1U The Nature & Foundations of Entrepreneurship [W. S. Green]

Tuesdays 6:25 - 9:05 p.m.

This course seeks to understand some of the basic social, legal, cultural, and economic infrastructure that enables and sustains the creation of new enterprises. Although conventional perspectives on entrepreneurship often overlook political or religious activists whose “products” are not “sold” in traditional markets, a more expansive view considers actions that transform ideas into enterprises that generate intellectual, social, cultural, religious, or economic value. Theory, data, and case studies will be covered to help students to think both broadly and deeply about what it means—and what it takes—to be an entrepreneur, and what characterizes the entrepreneurial society. This course is taught by Dr. William Green, Dean of Undergraduate Education, Dr. Susan Amat, Lecturer in the School of Business Administration, and guest lecturers from the community and the University.

409 1E Special Project in Religious Traditions:

Holocaust Survivors Service Internship [Rothman]

Mondays 12:20 – 2:15 p.m.

409 1Q Tuesdays 12:30 – 1:45 p.m.

Students enrolled in this program provide valuable services to Jewish survivors of Nazi atrocities while developing their leadership abilities and giving them an appreciation for the historical significance of the Holocaust. Student participants are matched with local survivors, whom they visit 4 to 5 times each semester over a period of two semesters. Students also participate in academic enrichment meetings several times during the semester for background information, training and problem solving. Students receive academic credit for their participation and are eligible for funds towards travel expenses up to \$250 per semester and for a Sue Miller Fellowship at the end of two semesters.

530 01 Religious Tolerance and Intolerance in Early Modern Europe [Gunther]

W: Mondays 12:15 - 2:45p.m.

Religious tolerance and intolerance are highly relevant issues in the modern world. Especially since 9/11, the relationship between religion and violence, the rights of religious minorities, and anxieties about religious pluralism have become major issues of debate in America and around the world. This course aims to bring historical perspective to these modern debates by examining another period of history where religious diversity, tolerance, and intolerance were pressing issues: early modern Europe (ca. 1500-1800). This was a time of new and increasing religious pluralism: the Reformation divided Christianity into mutually hostile Protestant and Catholic churches and the expansion of European empires around the globe increasingly brought Europeans into contact with the adherents of non-Christian religions. In a society that placed a high value on religious unity, this posed a major challenge: how would people of different religions live and work together in the same families, neighborhoods, and countries? As we will see, Europeans responded to this situation in a wide range of ways, sometimes engaging in the intense persecution of religious minorities, while at other times coexisting peacefully. In this course, we will examine the ideas and rationales that lay behind tolerance and intolerance; the forms intolerance took (including the Inquisitions, the burning of heretics, religious riots and murder, and social segregation); the ways in which families, neighbors, cities, and governments practiced toleration and peaceful coexistence; debates about the political rights of religious minorities; and the experience of religious minorities as they faced persecution. Class meetings will include both lecture and discussion.

530 36 Seminar in Religious Historical Tradition: Medieval Art and Mediterranean World [Mathews]

Tuesdays 11:00 – 1:45 p.m.

This course will explore various understandings and interpretations of the Gothic style in Western and Eastern Europe from 1140 to the 16th century. The Gothic is most often associated with cathedral building, and we will explore how this style manifested itself in significant religious buildings in France, England, and Italy. However, Gothic style was not solely reserved for religious architecture, and we will also address the international, multimedia manifestation of the Gothic throughout Europe, as seen in secular architecture, religious objects, and illuminated manuscripts.

INTERSESSION COURSES

January 3 – 14

405 81 Women of the Ancient World [Fitzgerald] MTWRF 5:30 – 9:45 p.m.

Women played a crucial role in the cultures, politics, and religions of the ancient Mediterranean world. This course will examine some of the most prominent women of ancient Israel, ancient Egypt, ancient Rome, ancient Greece, and early Christianity, through lectures, discussions, films, and readings of selected texts.



405 82 American Religion in Modern Film [Kling] MTWRF 6:00 – 10:15 p.m. Saturday 9:00 – 1:00 p.m.

A historical exploration of American religious life through the medium of film taught by Dr. David Kling. Special attention will be given to particular religious groups and issues in American religious life, including conflict, adaptation and assimilation of different ethnic religions, gospel music, “born again” Christianity, end-times scenarios, and alternative religions (so-called cults).



URome 2012

<http://urome.miami.edu/>

About the Program

The University of Miami's new URome program is unique in that it combines the breadth of the American University of Rome's course offerings with two core courses taught by faculty members from the University of Miami. UM students pay regular UM tuition to participate in the program, plus the URome program fee, which covers housing. All financial aid, including scholarships and loans, is applicable as though students were studying in Coral Gables.

UM faculty will offer two three-credit courses in Rome. Students who participate in the URome program must take one of these courses and may take both. The courses are "All Roads Lead to Rome: A Multi-Disciplinary Approach to Religion and Rome" (REL 405) and "The Sanctity of Life: Selected Themes from the Ancient World to the Present" (REL 406). Each course carries three Religious Studies credits and is team-taught by faculty members from UM's Department of Religious Studies and other UM departments.

In addition to taking one or both of the REL courses, UM students may take up to four courses from the curriculum offered by AUR, which emphasizes an interdisciplinary approach by drawing links among various fields of study. Students in International Relations, for instance, engage in the study of history, political theory, government, economics, law, and public administration as they focus on the regions of Europe, the Mediterranean, and the Middle East. The Business Studies program has an international focus with opportunities for students to explore the social and cultural ramifications of operating in a global economy. Archeology, Art History, Business Studies, and Italian Studies collaborate to offer programs in The Business of Art, Cultural Heritage Management, and The Italian Business Environment. As these examples illustrate, AUR has a holistic perspective that serves to integrate its course offerings and thus to afford students the opportunity to examine the same subject matter from a number of related perspectives.

Classes at AUR are held Monday-Thursday, giving students a three-day weekend to study, explore the city of Rome, and travel throughout Italy.

AUR Courses: Spring 2012

A complete list of AUR courses that are scheduled for the spring semester of 2012 is found on the AUR website. The list may be viewed or downloaded in a pdf format and the AUR course database searched.

www.aur.edu/american-university-rome/academics/course-offerings-at-the-american-university-of-rome

405 01 **All Roads Lead to Rome: A Multi-Disciplinary Approach to Religion and Rome**

Rome has long been an axial city, inextricably linked to the rest of the world in multiple ways. Not only has Rome imported the religions of the world but it has also transformed and exported them, along with its own indigenous religions. This course examines Rome's role as importer, exporter, cultivator, and transformer of religion and the religious life, giving attention to both the past and the present. By the end of the semester students will have increased their awareness of the important elements of the major religions discussed in class—their myths, symbols, rituals, doctrines, moral codes, and artistic expressions—and the ways in which Rome has influenced them.

406 01 **The Sanctity of Life: Selected Themes from the Ancient World to the Present**

This course examines the religious foundation of the idea that human life is "sacred" and considers a wide range of historical and ethical issues associated with this central concept of Western thought. We will explore the meaning of the multi-faceted phrase "sanctity of life," including its implications for such ethical and legal concerns as conception, birth, and termination of life; human dignity and human rights; the quality of life; and social justice. Some of the issues considered will include bigotry and prejudice; economic and social injustice; euthanasia, infanticide, and suicide; genocide, holy war, jihad, terrorism, and violence; health care and health costs; human trafficking and slavery; martyrdom and self-martyrdom; social-stratification; aging, death, disposal of the body; and the afterlife, especially in Dante's *Inferno*. We will consider how "life" is defined and described in different cultures at different times in history, and how religions have influenced these matters.



**REQUIREMENTS FOR A MAJOR OR MINOR
IN RELIGIOUS STUDIES**

Note: These requirements for majors and minors apply **only** to students entering UM for the first time in or after Fall 2008.

A **major** requires 30 credits, passed with a grade of C- or higher. At least 15 credits must be earned in courses numbered 300 or above. Six credits must be taken in each of the following subject areas: 1) Religious Texts, 2) Historical Traditions, and 3) Current Issues. A major must earn writing credit in at least one course in Religious Studies and must take REL 499, the majors/minors seminar.

An undergraduate **minor** requires 15 credits, passed with a grade of C- or higher. At least six credits must be earned in courses numbered 300 or above, and at least three credits must be taken in two each of the three subject areas. **REL 101, Introduction to Religion, is required of all minors.**

Transfer students who **major** in Religious Studies must complete at least 15 credits in departmental courses numbered 300 or above in residence at the Coral Gables Campus. Transfers who wish to **minor** in the field must complete at least 6 credits in the same manner.

The following is a *sample* of courses offered in each of the areas:

Religious Texts

- 111 Introduction to the Hebrew Bible (Old Testament)
- 121 Introduction to the New Testament
- 311 Prophecy and Prophetic Literature
- 322 St. Paul: Letters and Controversies

Historical Traditions

- 131 Religion in American Life
- 171 Introduction to Islam
- 231 Jewish Civilization: Society, Culture, Religion
- 232 History of Christianity
- 268 Religion in Modern Israel
- 301 Ancient Greece
- 302 Hellenistic Age
- 303 The Roman Republic
- 304 The Roman Empire
- 305 Religion and Culture in the Ancient Near East *
- 307 Religion and Culture in Pre-Islamic Arabia
- 314 Rise of Judaism
- 324 The Bible and Modern Film *
- 325 Jesus in Myth and History *
- 330 Caribbean Religion

- 331 Religions of Asia
- 334 The American Jewish Experience **
- 338 Latin American Latino/a Religion

- 343 Catholic Life and Thought **
- 345 Religion and Gender **
- 380 Archeology of Palestine from Pre-Historic to Islam
- 505 Seminar in Ancient Studies

Current Issues

- 151 Religion and Moral Choices
- 252 Religion and Human Sexuality
- 351 Religious Issues in Death and Dying
- 352 Religion and Science
- 354 Religion and the Problem of Evil
- 355 Religion and Its Interpreters ***
- 360 Religion and Bioethics
- 370 Islam in Modern Times
- 371 Islam and Gender ***
- 375 Religion and Democracy in Israel

General Area Courses

- 101 Introduction to Religion
- 404 Special Topics in Religious Literature or Texts
- 405 Special Topics in Religious/ Historical Traditions
- 406 Special Topics in Religious Issues or Problems

- * May count as Religious Texts
- **May count as Current Issues
- ***May count as Historical Traditions

(for complete list please visit Ashe Building 521)

NOTE: Major/Minor requirements on this page apply only to students who entered UM for the first time in or after Fall 2008.

HONORS OPPORTUNITIES AND AWARDS IN THE DEPARTMENT OF RELIGIOUS STUDIES

Honors Courses and General Honors

The Department of Religious Studies participates in the University of Miami's Honors Program and each semester offers at least one course for Honors credit. These Honors courses, which may be taken by all students who are enrolled in the Honors Program, count toward the fulfillment of the requirements for graduation with "General Honors." With the permission of departmental faculty, Honors students may also transform a regular course (at the 300-level or above) into an Honors course by doing specified additional work. This additional work is detailed on a so-called "pink sheet" that must be signed by the faculty member and submitted to the Honors Program Office by the student before the indicated deadline. For more precise information on the requirements for graduating with "General Honors" and on the regulations regarding "pink sheets," please contact the Honors Program Office.

Religious Studies majors and minors may enroll in any course offered by the Department of Religious Studies, including Honors courses, provided that they have the necessary prerequisites or permission of the instructor.

Departmental Honors in Religious Studies

The Department of Religious Studies encourages its majors and minors to intensify and deepen their knowledge of religious texts, traditions, and issues through its Departmental Honors Program. The program is designed to give our students the opportunity to explore various topics and problems in religion that are of particular interest to them, to work more closely with faculty in the department, to develop skills in research and thesis preparation, and in some cases to prepare for graduate work in religious studies.

Minimal requirements for the program are as follows: 1) a cumulative grade point average of at least 3.30; 2) a cumulative grade point average in religious studies of at least 3.50; and 3) a thesis that is approved by departmental faculty.

For the determination of honors, cumulative grade point average means either the average of all grades earned at the University of Miami or the combined average of all graded work taken at the University of Miami and elsewhere (whether or not the transfer work is accepted toward a degree at the University of Miami), whichever is lower.

Students have three options for writing the thesis. First, they may take six credit hours of senior thesis (REL 491 and 492: Senior Honors Thesis I and II) with one or more departmental faculty. Second, they may take a three-credit course offered at the 300-level or above and three credits of senior thesis

(REL492). Third, in exceptional circumstances, a student's thesis may be written as part of the requirements for earning six credits in religious studies courses at the 300-level or above.

In all three cases, the thesis must be a single, coherent work of scholarship through which the student earns six credit hours in religious studies.

In addition to completing the written thesis, students must orally present the results of their work to faculty and students at a special honors colloquium to be held during the reading days at the end of the semester.

Graduation Honors: Magna cum Laude and Summa cum Laude

Please check the Honors website:

http://www6.miami.edu/UMH/CDA/UMH_Main/0,1770,2619-1;2659-2,00.html#Summa_Magna_Cum_Laude

Awards for Graduating Seniors

Because every significant field of study intersects at crucial points with aspects of religion, the discipline of religious studies is extremely broad. The Department of Religious Studies attempts to offer course work in as many areas as its faculty have expertise. To facilitate the goal of majors acquiring both breadth and depth in their knowledge of religion, the Department divides its courses into three areas: Religious Texts, Historical Traditions, and Current Issues.

Each spring semester the Department of Religious Studies bestows up to five awards on graduating seniors. The two highest awards are presented at both the Honors Convocation and the TAK induction ceremony. The first is the Theta Alpha Kappa Award, typically given to the student who has excelled in all three areas of study offered by the Department. The second is the Honors Day Award, bestowed on the outstanding Religious Studies major, who usually will have excelled in at least two of the three areas of study.

Three additional awards are typically presented at the Theta Alpha Kappa induction ceremony that recognizes excellence in each of the three areas of study offered by the Department.

THETA ALPHA KAPPA
THE NATIONAL HONOR SOCIETY
FOR RELIGIOUS STUDIES AND THEOLOGY
(TAK)



Since 1995 the Department of Religious Studies has been proud to house the Alpha Beta Upsilon chapter of Theta Alpha Kappa (TAK), the national honor society for religious studies and theology. Each spring the chapter inducts eligible faculty, students, and members of the community who have distinguished themselves in the academic study of religion. The chapter presents all student inductees with an honors cord that they may wear at the University's Honors Convocation and Commencement.

To be eligible for induction into TAK as an undergraduate, students must have a cumulative grade point average in all academic subjects of at least 3.30 and earn an overall grade point average of 3.50 or higher in at least 12 academic credits in Religious Studies.* Graduating seniors who are in the process of fulfilling the requisite 12 academic credits in Religious Studies will be considered for induction into the Society, provided that they meet the other criteria. Eligible students are reviewed by the faculty each spring. Those who are approved by the faculty are offered induction into TAK, which is one of the highest honors that the faculty can bestow on majors and minors.

TAK publishes the *Journal of Theta Alpha Kappa*, which each year features undergraduate papers in all fields of religious studies and theology. The best undergraduate paper is awarded a prize worth \$200. For additional information on TAK and the paper competition, please contact Dr. David Kling.

*** For students who entered UM for the first time in or after Fall 2008, 15 academic credits are required.**

<http://thetalphakappa.net/>



RELIGIOUS STUDIES FACULTY



Professor John Fitzgerald, chairperson of the department, earned his Ph.D. in New Testament at Yale University. He is the author or editor of nine books and more than sixty articles. A former visiting professor at both Brown and Yale, he has received a University Freshman Teaching Award and been named Honors Professor of the Year at Miami. Professor Fitzgerald was also named “Best Professor” in Lisa Birnbach’s *New and Improved College Book*. Among the courses he teaches are “Introduction to the New Testament,” “The Bible and Modern Film,” “St. Paul: His Letters and Controversies,” “Jesus in Myth and History,” and “Women of the Ancient World.”

Professor Dexter Callender holds a Ph.D. in Near Eastern languages from Harvard University, where he studied Hebrew Bible, ancient Near Eastern history and literature, and myth and myth theory. Professor Callender is the recipient of the 2000 Provost’s Excellence in Teaching Award and was the 2001 Panhellenic Association Professor of the Year. He is the author of *Adam in Myth and History: Ancient Israelite Perspectives on the Primal Human* (Harvard Semitic Museum/Eisenbrauns, 2000). The courses he teaches include “Introduction to the Hebrew Bible (Old Testament),” “Prophecy and Prophetic Literature,” “Myth and Religion,” and “Religion and Culture in the Ancient Near East.”

Professor Amanullah De Soudy earned his Ph.D. in theology and religious studies at the University of Glasgow (Scotland), with a focus on Islamic Studies. His dissertation was on “Constructions of Masculinities in India and Pakistan between the 18th and 21st Centuries.” While he was at Glasgow he was the lead researcher on a project on “Philanthropy for Social Justice in the British Muslim Societies” that was funded by the Ford Foundation (\$160,000). He has been active in interfaith dialogue events and has twice served as an umpire at the Wimbledon Tennis Championships. His interest in presenting Islam and Muslims in the media has led to him making regular contributions to BBC Radio Scotland and to writing a blog on “Progressive Scottish Muslims.”

Professor Michelle Gonzalez Maldonado earned her Ph.D. in Systematic Theology from the Graduate Theological Union in Berkeley. Her teaching and research interests include Latin American, Latino/a, African-American religiosity, feminist theology, and theological anthropology. She is the author of *Sor Juana: Beauty and Justice in the Americas* (Orbis Books, 2003); *Afro-Cuban*

Theology: Religion, Race, Culture, and Identity (University Press of Florida, 2006); *Created in God’s Image: An*

Introduction to Feminist Theological Anthropology (Orbis Books, 2007); and *Shopping* (Fortress, 2010). The courses she teaches include “Religion and Gender,” “Catholic Life and Thought,” “Latino and Latin American Religion,” “Current Issues in Religion,” “Caribbean Religion,” and “Religion and the Problem of Evil.”

Professor David Graf received his Ph.D. from the University of Michigan. He is an ancient historian and archeologist specializing of the Greco-Roman world in the Levant and Arabia, Co-editor of the multi-volume *Anchor Bible Dictionary* (1992), he is the author of *Rome and Its Arabian Frontier from the Nabataeans to the Saracens* (1997) and more than 100 scholarly articles. He is currently directing excavations in the ancient Nabataean-Roman city center of Petra in Jordan and leading a consortium of universities is the first joint American-Saudi project at Jurash (Khamis Mushayt) in the SW 'Asir province of Saudi Arabia. His current projects include the preparation of over 300 new Greek and Aramaic funerary texts from Umm al-Jimal (in Roman Arabia), a new edition of some Greek historians for *Brill’s New Jacoby*, the study of the aromatics trade in South Arabia, and the Silk Route between Syria and China. He is a Member of the Institute of Advanced Study in Princeton and a recent recipient of the Provost’s Award for Scholarly Activity.

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RELIGIOUS STUDIES FACULTY



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