



DEPARTMENT OF THEOLOGY

CORE COURSES

The department and its core offering serves two Knowledge areas in the College's Core Curriculum: Theological and Religious Studies Knowledge as well as Ethics:

THEOLOGICAL AND RELIGIOUS STUDIES KNOWLEDGE: FIRST TIER COURSES

100 Christian Theology: The sources of Christian religious tradition. A selection will be made from the following topics: revelation, inspiration, sacred scripture, Christ and God, authority and the Church, the nature of religious affiliation, its logic, its method and its purpose.

Outcome: Students will be able to demonstrate understanding of the tasks of Christian theology in its efforts to understand the human situation from the perspective of faith, various challenges to theology in the contemporary world, and will focus on one or more current theological issues.

107 Introduction to Religious Studies: The course explores religion as a significant part of human experience and introduces the student to the description and analysis of various forms of religion.

Outcome: Students will be able to analyze and interpret various ways in which religious traditions intersect with contemporary issues, such plural and conflicting ethical behaviors, the creation of social roles and organizations, the impact of religious perspectives on the political and economic order, and the mutual influence of religion, culture and language.

THEOLOGY AND RELIGIOUS STUDIES KNOWLEDGE: SECOND TIER COURSES

231 Hebrew Bible/Old Testament: Introduces the students to the literary and historical study of the Old Testament, its cultural background and main themes. Relationship of literary form and interpretation in selected passages from the Pentateuch, historical and prophetic books, and wisdom literature.

Outcome: Students will be able to demonstrate an understanding of the central texts, beliefs, ethical understanding, and practices of Judaism and Christianity.

232 New Testament: Introduces the student to the study of the New Testament. Included will be a study of topics such as: the origin of the writings, their formation and development, the various types of interpretation, the distinctive theological views of the New Testament writers about Jesus, his life, teachings, death and resurrection.

Outcome: Students will be able to demonstrate understanding of the various literary genres found in the New Testament and explain why the recognition of genre is essential to the interpretation of the New Testament, as well as the importance of how the New Testament documents have reached their present form.

265 Sacraments and the Christian Imagination: Liturgical celebrations of the Christian community express and enable a Christian way of life in a pluralistic and secularized society. A study of the origin, historical development, and contemporary practice of Christian rituals provides valuable insights into the meaning and significance of liturgy and symbolism in Christian life.

Outcome: Students will be able to demonstrate how a sacramental system of aesthetics is often embedded in cultural artifacts such as poetry, music, painting, literature, and film, and recognize and interpret the impact of history and cultures on the development of Christian doctrine and practices.

266 Church and Global Cultures: This course focuses primarily on the identity of the Roman Catholic Church and its relation to the secular world; Protestant and Orthodox traditions may also be included. Possible topics are the historical processes, which have helped to shape the Church's self-understanding, the significance of Vatican II, and contemporary challenges facing the Church.

Outcome: Students will be able to analyze and interpret contrasting Christian understandings of the notion of original sin, and demonstrate knowledge, with attention to historical development, of the central texts, beliefs, ethical understandings, and practices of at least one religious tradition.

THEOLOGY AND RELIGIOUS STUDIES KNOWLEDGE: SECOND TIER COURSES (*continued*)

267 Jesus Christ: From among many approaches to the study of the person of Jesus Christ (through the New Testament, the fathers, great theologians of the past and present, spiritual writers), teachers of this course will select one according to their specialization and its aptitude for the religiously liberating goals of the humanities curriculum.

Outcome: Students will be able to demonstrate understanding of the nature of Jesus Christ as both human and divine, what this might mean, how this formulation was derived, and the varieties of understanding of Christ within the Scriptures, the church, and modern scholarship.

272 Judaism: An investigation of the central affirmations of Judaism: monotheism, the covenant peoplehood of the Jews, the revelation of the divine commandment, the ideas of the prophets, as well as the study of the Sabbath, the festival observances and ritual. The course will also include a study of modern Judaism-the orthodox, conservative, reform and reconstructionist traditions.

Outcome: Students will be able to name and discuss some of the most important Jewish scriptures, articulate the general outline of the historical evolution of Classical Judaism, and define and discuss key concepts, terms, values, and religious practices foundational to Classical Judaism.

276 Black World Religion: This course explores the revelatory manner in which the divine comes to unique presence and expression among African peoples throughout human history. It will examine the religious experiences and traditions of: Africa's ancient Nile valley civilizations, long recognized as cradling the world's spiritual and philosophical wisdom and as influencing the formative development of Judaism, Christianity, and Islam.

Outcome: Students will demonstrate their knowledge of African peoples' religious experiences within their various historical and cultural contexts.

278 Religion and Gender: This course will explore, in the light of both eastern and western religious traditions, the nature of women's religious experiences, the ways in which women have been perceived and described in the major religious traditions, and the ways in which women have functioned as significant religious figures, the connections between cultural assumptions and attitudes toward and beliefs about women.

Outcome: Students will be able to demonstrate understanding of the influence of religion on gender roles, and how women in the contemporary world are reinterpreting their religious traditions.



THEOLOGY AND RELIGIOUS STUDIES KNOWLEDGE: SECOND TIER COURSES (*continued*)

279 Roman Catholicism: An introduction to the major elements that make up Catholicism as a distinctive form of Christianity as stemming from and reaching to the center and axis of the Catholic way: the experience of Jesus as the Christ and its dogmatic correlate, the doctrine of the Incarnation.

Outcome: Students will be able to demonstrate understanding of the most important Roman Catholic beliefs, the historical evolution of Roman Catholicism, the key Roman Catholic concepts, terms, values, and religious practices, and the main lines of current Roman Catholic debates about its identity in today's world.

281 Christianity Through Time: An introduction to the institutions, rituals, teachings, and practices of Christians across several major epochs of the Christian story. Attention will be given to major continuities as well as historical changes in the interplay between Christianity and cultures.

Outcome: Students will learn to analyze and interpret religious texts, beliefs and practices using standard scholarly methods and tools.

282 Hinduism: An introduction to various dimensions of the religion that Western scholarship has labeled, "Hinduism" organized around three spiritual disciplines recognized by the Hindu tradition (action, knowledge, and devotion). Range of topics, such as the concept of the person, social structures, forms of ritual, philosophical and mystical impulses, myths and images associated with the major gods and goddesses of the Hindu pantheon, devotionalism, and sectarian divisions. The religious and spiritual lives of both men and women, and of both high-caste and low-caste Hindus. Outcome: Students will be able to demonstrate understanding of the most important Hindu scriptures, the general outline of the historical evolution of Hinduism, the key Hindu concepts, terms, values, and religious practices, and the basic narratives and imagery associated with some of the most important Hindu deities.

THEOLOGY AND RELIGIOUS STUDIES KNOWLEDGE: SECOND TIER COURSES (*continued*)

293 Christian Marriage: A study of the historical development of the institution of marriage within the Christian tradition as well as an investigation and evaluation of its condition in contemporary American society.

Outcome: Students will be able to demonstrate understanding of ethical principles used to evaluate particular issues relevant to the understanding of the Christian tradition of marriage, such as, homologous in vitro fertilization, artificial birth control, indirect abortion (pregnant woman seeking treatment for cancer), etc.

295 Islam: An introduction to the religion of Islam through the study of major religious ideas, movements, and figures prominent in the development of the tradition. The course covers three major phases: basic teachings of Islam, the articulation of the classical tradition, and contemporary developments. Major issues such as unity and diversity within Islam, Islamic government, the role of women, Muslims in America, and Islamic movements in the contemporary world will also be featured.

Outcome: Students will be able to demonstrate understanding of the most important Muslim scriptures, the general outline of the historical evolution of Islam, the key Islamic concepts, terms, values, and religious practices, and the diversity within Islam in terms of sectarian, regional, and historical developments.

297 Buddhism: The rise and development of Theravada, Mahayana, and Vajrayana forms of Buddhism in South Asia, Tibet, and East Asia. The life and teachings of the founder, Gautama, the establishment of the Buddhist community, the rise of Buddhist monasticism, the spread of Buddhist ideas from India to other parts of Asia, and the development of a variety of Buddhist sects. The various texts, institutions, beliefs, and practices associated with each of the three main forms on Buddhism.

Outcome: Students will be able to demonstrate understanding of the most important Buddhist scriptures, the general outline of the historical evolution of Buddhism, including its different major branches, and the key Buddhist concepts, terms, values, and religious practices.

299 Religions of Asia: A semester long seminar style format, this course explores the more common religious families in Vietnam: Buddhist, Catholic, Other Christian and Cao Dai. These religious traditions are often comingled and they share the most basic and unique Vietnamese religion of ancestral worship. During the early weeks of the seminar, students read and discuss basic texts – books, articles and web links – that probe the activities of the major religions in the Vietnamese environment and context. Each student is expected to choose a topic of personal interest which they will explore via readings, interviews, travel, and discussion with the instructor. This part of the course will not require class attendance. Toward the semester end, students present their topic in discussion format.

Outcome: Students will be able to demonstrate the methodology and results of each chosen topic.



ETHICS: CORE COURSE OFFERING

185 Christian Ethics: Is a core course that explores the major sources, methods, and insights of Christian social and theological ethics. Particular attention is given to Roman Catholic thought. The course will concentrate on the foundational sources in Christian ethics and examine the moral significance of major theological themes and affirmations. It will show how these foundational sources and themes guide ethical understanding concretely by examining one or more pressing issues of the day (e.g. ecology, immigration, poverty, medical ethics, among others).

Outcome: This course will expose students to some of the central theological themes and affirmations of the Christian tradition, such as understandings of the God-human relationship, the nature of the human person, creation, sin, and salvation. We will see how various theological commitments contribute to Christian ethical reasoning about contemporary moral problems in their personal and social dimensions.

186 Religious Ethics: This course will also expose students to the central themes and understandings of at least two religious traditions. We will learn about basic sources and doctrines that underlie the moral and ethical reasoning in these diverse religious traditions and we will observe similarities and differences in the kinds of questions that are seen as important within the context of distinct religious traditions.

Outcome: In this course, students will explore and compare the ethical understandings of and at least one at least two major religious traditions. With respect to each tradition, students will learn about the foundational sources, doctrines and questions that guide its ethical thinking.

Topics may include foundational assumptions about the purpose of human life, the nature of the human person and the human community, and our relation to God or ultimate reality.

Students will note how these basic understandings impact how each religious tradition frames ethical questions.



ETHICS: CORE COURSE OFFERING *(continued)*

203 Social Justice and Injustice: The course introduces students to Catholic and Protestant approaches to social justice. Students will also study theories and analyses of social injustice. Students will study specific instances of social injustice (gender, race, and class). It will increase student awareness of diversity, in the United States and globally.

Outcomes: *Summarize relevant social, economic, policy history/context that related to current sites of injustice related to racial-ethnic inequalities, economic inequality, immigration status, healthcare, and sex/gender inequality *Distinguish among distinct theories of justice in both theological and philosophical thought *Describe the moral challenges posed by injustice
*Relate key ideas, traditions, & practices in Christian theological, philosophical, and other religious thought that may help individuals and societies move closer to approximating justice in society/world.

204 Religious Ethics and the Ecological Crisis: Advances in technology and industry confront us with unprecedented abilities for altering long standing climate patterns. These capacities challenge many traditional religious and ethical assumptions about humanity and our relationship to the nonhuman world. We will examine the resources that religious traditions of the world offer for promoting ecological responsibility.

Outcomes: students will be able to: *Summarize relevant history related to scientific, policy & political data and decisions *Describe central scientific and ethical challenges posed by the climate crisis *Relate key ideas, traditions, & practices in Christian theological, philosophical, and other religious thought that may help address this crisis