

Religion

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The department offers a general major in religion and a teaching major for students in secondary education. In addition, students may design group majors, such as Religion and Philosophy, Religion and History, or Religion and Sociology. Two minor concentrations are offered: A general minor and a group minor in missions. These programs are described below and will be worked out with a departmental advisor who will help design the program according to the student's specific needs and interests.

GENERAL MAJOR

- One course in Old Testament (Religion 211-214)
- One course in New Testament (Religion 221-224)
- One course in Systematic Theology (Religion 230-237, 251)
- One course in Historical Theology (Religion 241-244)
- One course in Religious Studies (Religion 250, 255, 352-355)
- Two 300-level electives (excluding the course used to fulfill the Religious Studies requirement and 396)
- Two additional electives in Religion (excluding 121 & 131)
- Religion Seminar (Religion 396)

The general major in religion is designed for students seeking a strong background in biblical, theological, and religious studies as preparation for various professions, for graduate education, or for Christian service generally. The general major consists of ten courses (30 semester hours). A departmental interim course may be included as an elective course. As part of the departmental writing program, majors must designate one departmental course (excluding Religion 121, 131, 359, 396) prior to their senior year as writing enriched. This course will include additional writing, a revision component, intensive evaluation, and will prepare the student for Religion 396. Students considering seminary or graduate school should consult their advisor about a recommended language cognate. Admittance to the major program requires completion of a core course with a minimum grade of "C" (2.0).

SECONDARY EDUCATION MAJOR

- Biblical Foundations Core
- Theological Foundations Core
- Religion 250
- Religion 255
- Interdisciplinary 234
- One elective from biblical studies
- One elective from theological studies
- Two courses from Art 232, 233, Classics 231, History 231-233, Philosophy 204, 205, Psychology 399, Sociology 153, religion courses in biblical studies and theological studies, or an approved interim.
- Religion 357

The teaching major is for education students who plan to teach religion in secondary schools and consists of ten courses (30 semester hours). The teaching major in religion fulfills the requirements for the state-certified Academic Study of Religions minor. (It cannot count as a state-certified major in a secondary education program). Teaching majors must fulfill the departmental writing program requirements as stated above under the general major. T. Thompson is the advisor for the teaching major.

INTERDISCIPLINARY MAJORS

Interdisciplinary majors in religion and other fields may be designed according to the guidelines for group majors. For example, a student wishing to present an interdisciplinary major in Religion and Philosophy could take 4-6 courses (12-18 semester hours) in religion and 4-6 courses (12-18 semester hours) in philosophy, and 2 courses (6 semester hours) from a third discipline. Interdisciplinary majors must be carefully

planned and must be approved by both major department chairs and the registrar.

GENERAL MINOR

- One course in Biblical Studies (Religion 211-214; 221-224)
- One course in Theological Studies (Religion 230-237; 241-244; 251)
- One course in Religious Studies (Religion 250, 255, 352-355)
- One 300-level elective
- Two additional electives in Religion (excluding 121 and 131)

The general minor in religion is for students who seek to develop a biblical and theological perspective for work in other disciplines and for Christian service generally. This minor consists of six courses (18 semester hours), excluding 121 and 131. An interim course may be included as an elective course.

GROUP MINOR IN MISSIONS

- Religion 251
- Religion 252
- Sociology 253

Three courses chosen (in consultation with an advisor) from the following: Religion 255, 352, 353, 354, 355, Geography 320, 240, Sociology 153, Economics 337, IDS 201, area study courses (History 238, 241, 242, 245, 246, 331, 338, 371, 233-236, 355, and Spanish 310), an appropriate interim course, and other courses approved by the advisor as part of an introduction to holistic missions

The group minor in missions is for students interested in missions and other cross-cultural ministries and consists of 6 courses (18 semester hours). D. Obenchain is the advisor for the missions minor.

COURSES

Basic Courses

- 121 Biblical Literature and Theology (3).** F and S. This course is a study of the Bible within its literary, historical, cultural, and canonical context in order to understand its central theological teachings.
- 131 Christian Theology (3).** F and S. A study of Christian theology in light of its historical development and ongoing significance, this course surveys the central teachings of

the Christian Church as rooted in the Bible, formulated by key theologians, and summarized in the ecumenical creeds and Reformed confessions.

Intermediate Biblical Studies Courses Prerequisite: Religion 121 or 131

211 Pentateuch (3). F and S. A study of the first five books of the Bible. This course examines the accounts of creation, the fall, Israel's ancestors, the exodus, and the giving of the Law. Theological issues explored include the nature of God, human beings, and the world, our covenantal relationship with God, and the presence of God in historical events.

212 Old Testament Historical Books (3). F This course explores the Old Testament books of Joshua through 2 Kings, 1 and 2 Chronicles, Ezra, and Nehemiah in terms of their literary features, historical settings, and theological themes. Particular attention is devoted to the prophetic character of these works, which provide a theological interpretation of Israel's history.

213 Psalms and Wisdom Literature (3). F Students examine the books of Psalms, Proverbs, Job, and Ecclesiastes. The three focuses of the course are how to read poetry, the different categories of the Psalms and their interpretation, and the role of wisdom books in the Bible.

214 Prophets (3). F and S. The books of Old Testament prophetic literature are studied, including Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, and selected minor prophets. Each book is considered in light of its literary characteristics and socio-historical context with a view to explicating the text's theological message and its contemporary relevance.

221 Synoptic Gospels and Acts (3). F and S. This is a study of Matthew, Mark, and Luke-Acts. After dealing with introductory issues, this course examines the text and context of the books to discern their major themes. The relationship between the Synoptic Gospels and the historical Jesus is also considered.

222 Johannine Literature (3). F and S. This course studies the Fourth Gospel and 1-3 John. Students consider matters of introduction, historical context, interpretation of major themes and distinctive theological contributions.

223 **Paul's Letters** (3). F and S. A study of Paul's letters with particular attention to their meaning within the context of the early Christian communities.

224 **Revelation and General Letters** (3). F and S. This course studies Revelation and the general letters, including Hebrews, James, 1 and 2 Peter, and Jude, in terms of their literary features, historical setting, theological emphasis, and present relevance.

Advanced Biblical Studies Courses

307 **Interpreting the Bible** (3). *Alternate years. A study of the methods and principles of biblical interpretation. Various exegetical and hermeneutical approaches will be examined and evaluated in terms of their usefulness for understanding the meaning and message of the scriptures. Prerequisite: at least two courses in biblical studies or permission of the instructor.

309 **Biblical Theology** (3). *F, alternate years. A course in constructive biblical theology, focusing on central themes, the problem of the unity and diversity of scripture, the "center" of biblical revelation, and proper methodology. Issues are considered in the context of historic and recent attempts to construct a biblical theology. Prerequisite: at least two courses in biblical studies or permission of the Instructor.

311 **History and Archaeology of Ancient Israel** (3). *Alternate years. A study of the history of ancient Israel from the patriarchs through Ezra in the context of recent research on this topic. This course will consider the sources for reconstructing the history of Israel, including the Old Testament, Ancient Near Eastern literary remains, and archaeological evidence, as well as appropriate methods for interpreting these sources. Prerequisite: 121 or an intermediate biblical studies course.

313 **When Women Read the Old Testament** (3). *S, alternate years. This course is the special topic for the Current Issues in Old Testament Studies course. In the last two decades, biblical interpretation by women and about women has blossomed and made significant contributions to the field of biblical studies. This course will study feminist approaches to the Old Testament and examine key passages relating to gender issues.

Prerequisite: 121 or an intermediate biblical studies course.

321 **Intertestamental Judaism** (3). *Alternate years. A study of Jewish history, literature, and thought from 400 B.C. to A.D. 100, as a background for understanding the New Testament. Literature studied includes the Apocrypha and Dead Sea Scrolls. Prerequisite: 121 or an intermediate biblical studies course.

323 **Christian Origins** (3). *F, alternate years. A historically-oriented study of selected topics on the origins of Christianity during the first century, this course studies such matters as the Jewish and Greco-Roman context of earliest Christianity, the historical Jesus, and the history and theology of the earliest Christian communities. Prerequisite: 121 or an intermediate biblical studies course.

Intermediate Theological Studies Courses

Prerequisite: Religion 121 or 131

230 **The Doctrine of Revelation** (3). F This course is designed to help students explore Reformed concepts of revelation in contemporary cultural context. Traditional models of general and special revelation and models of biblical inspiration and authority are explored and developed in the context of modern and post-modern concerns in philosophy, science, and non-Christian religions.

231 **The Doctrine of God** (3). F and S. This course is designed to examine Christian concepts of God in considerable depth within the context of historic debates and modern discussions. Issues considered include the possibility and extent of human knowledge of God, evidence for God's existence, the attributes of God, and the nature of the Trinity.

232 **The Doctrine of Creation** (3). F and S. This course investigates Christian teaching about the creation of the world. Topics considered include the interpretation of Genesis 1 and 2, creation out of nothing, creation and evolution, the goodness of creation and the problem of evil, the image of God, the cultural mandate and the idea of stewardship, and the eclipse of creation in modern thought.

233 **The Doctrine of Christ and Reconciliation** (3). F and S. The main goal of this course is to provide students with an opportunity to examine and reflect upon historic and Re-

formed doctrines of the person and works of Christ in the context of contemporary analytic thought and current biblical theology. Topics include Christ as God and man in current discussion, New Testament Christology and the current debates, and Reformed Christology in the making.

234 The Doctrine of the Holy Spirit and Church (3). S. This course is a study of the biblical teachings, confessional formulations, theological reflections, and experiential impact of the universal and local church as the creation and manifestation of the Holy Spirit, as well as the attributes and ministries of the Church universal.

235 Eschatology (3). F and S. Christian teachings concerning the end times and last things are studied in this course, including their biblical basis, historical formulations, and contemporary relevance. Topics covered include the return of Christ, the final judgment, the resurrection of the body, and eternal life. Millennialist and dispensationalist issues are also critically analyzed both historically and theologically.

237 Christian Worship (3). S. A study of the history, theology, and practice of Christian worship. This course examines the relationship between theology and worship by considering the biblical basis for worship, the history of Christian liturgy, and contemporary worship. Examples of sermons, baptismal, and Lord's Supper practices, hymnody, prayers, dance, art, and architecture from both traditional and contemporary worship are studied.

241 General Church History (3). A survey of the history of the Christian church from its beginning to the present time, noting deviations from apostolic faith and practice, the interplay with the political, the great church councils, the crises that emerge, divisions and reunions, and the confluence of forces that determine the complexion of the Christian church today. Not to be taken if students have taken or plan to take Religion 243 or 244. Not offered 2007-2008.

242 Christianity in America (3). F, alternate years. A study of the history and theology of Christianity in America from the immigration period to the present. Attention is paid to the European background, the colonial era

and such movements as revivalism, evangelicalism, fundamentalism and liberalism.

243 History of Christian Theology I (3). S. This is a historically oriented study of Christian theology in the Patristic and Medieval periods (100-1500). Particular attention is paid to the development of key Christian doctrines such as the Trinity and the Incarnation and to questions such as the relationship between faith and reason.

244 History of Christian Theology II (3). F and S. This is a historically oriented study of Christian theology in the Reformation and Modern periods (1500 to the present). Particular attention is paid to the development of key Christian doctrines such as justification, sanctification, and the church and to questions such as the relationship between faith and reason.

251 Christianity and Religious Plurality (3). F and S. This course examines the relationship of Christianity to the religions of the world. An attempt is made to understand the phenomenon of religion from a theological perspective by investigating how various biblical and Christian writers have viewed Christianity's place in the religious history of the world. Special emphasis is placed on twentieth-century attempts to confront the reality of religious pluralism.

Advanced Theological Studies

331 Theology: Theory and Method (3). *F, alternate years. An investigation of the nature, task, and method of the discipline of systematic theology. A review of the pre-modern history of the concept of theology serves as a prelude to the focus of the course: the status of systematic theology in the post-Enlightenment period. Issues discussed include the relationships of theology to church, academy, and society. Thinkers and approaches dealt with include Schleiermacher, Barth, Tillich, Lonergan, Pannenberg, revisionism, and post-liberalism. Prerequisite: Religion 131 or an intermediate theological studies course.

332 Theological Ethics (3). *S, alternate years. A study of Christian moral theory and its application to selected cases. This course examines how diverse understandings of God's relationship to the creation inform how Christians think about the moral life.

Ethical issues such as war, human sexuality and reproduction, death and dying, and the environment are analyzed in light of theological commitments. Prerequisite: Biblical and Theological Foundations Core or permission of the instructor.

333 Studies in Roman Catholic Theology: Contemporary Catholic Theology (3). *Alternate years. A sympathetic study of Roman Catholic theology, with particular attention to developments since the Second Vatican Council (1962-1965). Topics include scripture and tradition; grace and justification; church, liturgy, and sacraments; ethics and the church in the modern world; death and the afterlife; Marian devotion; ecumenism; ecclesiastical authority and papal infallibility; and the pontificate of John Paul II. Prerequisite: 131 or an Intermediate theological studies course.

341 Studies in Early and Medieval Theology: The Rise of Trinitarian Theology (3). *Alternate years. This course explores the Patristic development of the doctrine of the Trinity through a close reading and discussion of primary texts. It examines the fourth-century trinitarian controversies, their precursors, and their implications. Attention is also given to how the work of the Cappadocians in the East and Augustine in the West set the tone for the Trinity doctrine of the Middle Ages. Prerequisite: 131 or an intermediate theological studies course.

343 Studies in Reformation Theology (3). *Alternate years. A study of selected doctrinal topics and central figures of the sixteenth century Protestant Reformation. Prerequisite: 131 or an intermediate theological studies course.

345 Studies in Contemporary Theology (3). *S, alternate years. A study of selected figures, movements, and doctrinal topics in twentieth century theology. Prerequisite: Biblical and Theological Foundations Core, or permission of the instructor.

Religious Studies

250 Introduction to the Study of Religion (3). A thematic introduction to the phenomenon of religion in comparative perspective. Issues examined include the dichotomy between the sacred and the profane, the nature of religious experience and its various

expressions in life, the significance of myth and ritual, and differing analyses of human existence. Attention is also given to questions about the origin, nature, and function of religion in human life and society, and to issues pertaining to the study of religion in the humanities and social sciences. Not offered 2007-2008.

255 World Religions (3). * F and S. A historical investigation of the nature of religion by examining the chief theories and practices of some of the world's major, non-Christian religions, including Hinduism, Buddhism, Confucianism, Taoism, and Islam. Emphasis is placed on each tradition's analysis of the basic human problem and the solution that it offers to the problem. Some attention is also paid to new, emergent religious movements and their relationship to older established traditions. Prerequisite: One religion department course.

352 Judaism (3). *Alternate years. A study of the major developments in Jewish history, thought, and practice beginning with the second temple era and extending to the contemporary period. Subjects studied will include rabbinic Judaism and its literature — the Mishnah and the Talmuds, medieval Jewish philosophy and mysticism, emancipation, Zionism, the Holocaust, and North American Judaism. The question of Jewish-Christian dialogue will also be considered. Prerequisite: One religion department course.

353 Islam (3). *Alternate Years. A historical and comparative study of Islam in its diverse regional and cultural settings, including the Middle East, Africa, Asia and the West. Topics will include the life and times of Prophet Muhammad, the Quran, the division between Sunni and Shia, and the formation of the traditions of Hadit and Shariah. Prerequisite: one religion department course and sophomore or higher status.

354 Hinduism (3). *F, alternate years. This course introduces Hindu religious traditions by examining Hindu mythology, philosophy and society from its beginning to the present. Topics will include the law of karma, class structure, dharma, yoga, devotional traditions, liberation, modern reform movements and Hindu mythology as presented in its sacred texts, including the Vedic hymns, Upanishads, and Bhagavad-Gita. Prerequisite: One religion department course.

quisite: one religion department course and sophomore or higher status.

355 Buddhism (3). *Alternate years. A historical and doctrinal study of Theravada and Mahayana Buddhism, focusing on Buddhist views of the human predicament and its solution, and different teachings and Buddhist practices in various regions of Asia and the West. Other topics include the historical Buddha's sermons, Buddhist psychology, cosmology, meditation, bodhisattvas, Pure Land and Zen. Prerequisite: one religion department course and sophomore or higher status.

Other Courses and Seminars

252 Introduction to Missions (3). Alternate years. A general introduction to Christian missions in biblical and historical perspective. This course surveys the biblical and theological foundations for missions, and the church's interpretation and implementation of the task of spreading the gospel. The methods, challenges, successes, and failures of Christian missionary activity will be considered. Prerequisite: Religion 121 or 131.

295 Christianity and Culture (3). S, alternate years. This course is a critical survey of models by which God's people have defined their relationship to the world, from Biblical times to the present, with a particular emphasis on the Reformed tradition. Special attention is given to the contemporary relevance of this discussion, both in terms of ways in which different models are visible in today's world and in terms of ways that the Reformed model can be applied to present concerns. Prerequisite: Biblical and Theological Foundations Core.

357 Religion and Education Seminar (3). F. A seminar in perspectives, principles, and practices in the teaching of religion on the secondary level. This course addresses a wide range of pedagogical issues that confront the teacher of biblical, theological, and religious materials in secondary teaching and

requires a major curriculum project. Prerequisite: Education 302/303 or permission of the Instructor.

379 Research Topics in Christian Worship (3). Participation in collaborative research on the theology, history, and practice of Christian worship. Topics are chosen in conjunction with the scholarly initiatives of the Calvin Institute of Christian Worship. Enrollment open to qualified juniors and seniors. Prerequisites: Biblical and Theological Foundations Core and permission of the instructor. Not offered 2007-2008.

396 Religion Seminar (3). S. An advanced seminar for senior majors in religion and other qualified students. This course considers significant issues in biblical, theological, and religious studies and requires a major research paper. Prerequisites: Three electives in religion and for non-majors, permission of the instructor.

Graduate Courses

510 Theological and Philosophical Hermeneutics (3). This course is an intensive study of the theory and methods of biblical interpretation developed in the context of modern theology and philosophy. Questions about language and events, experience and significance, and authority and community comprise the core of this course.

580 Perspectives, Programs, and Practices in Bible and Religion Curriculum (3). A study of various approaches in the schools to curriculum and teaching in biblical studies, church history, Reformed thought, and world religions. Consideration is given to the way fundamental differences of perspective on biblical Christianity influence the selection and use of curriculum designs, materials, and teaching techniques. Course content is adapted to the various grade levels of particular interest to enrollees.

590 Independent Study. F, I, and S.