REQUIREMENTS FOR THE MAJOR IN RELIGIOUS STUDIES: 34 semester hours, that must include:

1) RELS 101 or 105
2) RELS 210 Theories in the Study of Religions
3) One of the Western Abrahamic religions: RELS 223 (Ancient Near East), 225 (Judaism), 230 (Christianity), or 235 (Islam)
4) One of the Asian religions: RELS 240 (Buddhism), 245 (Hinduism), or 248 (Religions of China & Japan)
5) One of the American religions: RELS 250 (American religions), 260 (Native American), 270 (African American)
6) One of the Sacred Texts: RELS 201 (Hebrew Bible/Old Testament), 202 (New Testament), 205 (Asian Sacred Texts) or 310* (Sacred Texts) --* if taken as a sacred text course, 1 more 300-499 level course is needed
7) RELS 450: Senior Seminar in Religious Studies
8) RELS 451: Capstone Colloquium (1 Credit Hour)
9) One additional course at the 200-level or above
10) Two additional courses at the 300-level or above
11) Additional elective: 1 additional course

With the approval of the Chair of Religious Studies, one course (200 level or above) in a related discipline may be substituted for one of the courses listed under 9 or 10 above.

REQUIREMENTS FOR THE MINOR IN RELIGIOUS STUDIES: 18 semester hours (at least three hours of which must be at or above the 300 level), which must include:

1) RELS 101 or 105
2) One of: RELS 225, 230, 235, 240, 245, 248
3) One of: RELS 201, 202, or 205 or 310* (Sacred Texts)--*if taken as a sacred text course, 1 more 300-499 level course is needed (see 4) below
4) One course from RELS 300-499
5) Additional Electives: 2 courses from RELS 105-499. With the approval of the Chair of Religious Studies, one course (200 level or above) in a related discipline may be substituted for number 4 above.

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<td>13443</td>
<td>FYSE 134.01</td>
<td>Religion and Film: The Hero Myth in America</td>
<td>SIEGLER</td>
<td>MWF</td>
<td>9:00 – 9:50</td>
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<td>10871</td>
<td>RELS101.01</td>
<td>Messiahs &amp; Messianic Movements</td>
<td>HUDDLESTUN</td>
<td>TR</td>
<td>9:25 - 10:40</td>
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<td>MW</td>
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<td>CORMACK</td>
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<td>10:00 - 10:50</td>
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<td>Special Topics: Mind, Body &amp; Spirit</td>
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<td>HUDDLESTUN</td>
<td>MW</td>
<td>4:00 – 5:15</td>
<td>MYBK 119</td>
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FYSE: Religion and Film: The Hero Myth in America
Prof. Elijah Siegler For Freshmen Section 001 (MWF 09:00- 09:50) ECTR 19
In this class we will critically examine the myth of the American hero through weekly viewings of important American movies. Students will become familiar with various approaches to religious studies, and with the basic terms of film analysis. In this course students will analyze, discuss, and write about films, focusing in particular on those made by Joel and Ethan Coen, whose 30-year career presents us with an excellent opportunity to explore intertwined themes of heroism, mythology, masculinity, morality and the sacred. How can The Big Lebowski, No Country For Old Men and True Grit be considered religious films?

HONS 175.01: In Search of the Sacred, the Strange, and the Substance of Faith in America and India
Prof. Zeff Bjerken For Honors Students Section 001 (MW 02:00- 03:15) HONS 200
This course is an introduction to the academic study of religion in general and a survey of different understandings of sacred place and pilgrimage found in America and India. The main theme of “searching for the sacred, the strange and the substance of faith” takes us away from mainstream organized religion to examine the religiosity of socially marginalized individuals, whose visionary experiences inspire the creation of religious art and monuments. We begin by reading the studies of three “Road Scholars” who seek to find and interpret unusual forms of American religiosity while they undertake a common ritual: the cross-country road trip. On their journeys they encounter religion on the margins of America, yet they reveal themes that are central to American religious life: creativity as religious devotion, pilgrimage and the desire to recreate sacred time and space, prophecy and apocalypticism, the tension between authenticity, kitsch, and spiritual materialism, and the relation between religious vision and social marginality. After visiting many odd roadside religious attractions in the US, we travel to the ancient city of Varanasi in India. This sacred city steeped in history and Indian mythology will serve as a lens through which the worldview of Hindu pilgrims comes into focus. We will learn to see these strange and wondrous places as an expression of the religious imagination, where believers have sought to give outward form to their experiences and recreate the “substance of faith.”

RELS 101.01: Approaches to Religion: Messiahs & Messianic Movements
Prof. John Huddlestun No Prerequisites Section 001 (TR 09:25 – 10:45) ECTR 116
This course introduces the student to the academic study of religion through an examination of a particular theme in a handful of selected traditions. Following some discussion of the topic of religion and how to define it, we will focus on messiahs and messiah-like figures (and related movements) in three religious traditions: Judaism (setting the biblical foundation), Islam, and Buddhism (especially the Future Buddha Maitreya). Our examination of these will draw principally upon primary readings, along with some supplementary readings. The approach will be historical and more comparative as the course progresses, with some attention to various theories regarding failed messianic movements. The messiah theme provides an entry into many of the central ideas or concepts of each tradition; in this manner, the student should acquire some understanding of the basic tenets of each tradition and also an appreciation for its respective adherents.

RELS 101.02/03: Approaches to Religion: Evil and Suffering
Prof. Louise Doire No Prerequisites Section 002 (MW 02:00 - 03:15) ECTR 103
Section 003 (MW 04:00 - 05:15) ECTR 103
This course is an introduction to the academic study of religion through a particular theme. In this course we will focus our study on the topics of good and evil, and human suffering. Our examination will incorporate theological (when applicable) understandings and cultural constructions of these themes as they have been presented in Judaism, Christianity and Buddhism. The human experience of evil and suffering has been and continues to be a fundamental element of theological, religious and cultural ideology. As we proceed in our academic study, each student will be challenged to examine the theological, religious and cultural influences that have shaped and informed their own understanding of the universal experience of evil, the "Good," and human suffering.

RELS 101.04: Approaches to Religion: In Search of the Sacred, the Strange, and the Substance of Faith
Prof Zeff Bjerken No Prerequisites Section 004 (TR 01:40 - 02:55) ECTR 103
This course introduces students to Christianity and other religions in America, to Indian Hinduism and to Tibetan Buddhism by focusing on their distinctive understandings of sacred place and pilgrimage. We begin by reading
the studies of an American “Road Scholar,” who seeks to understand religions while undertaking a common American ritual: a road trip. After visiting many odd and fascinating roadside religious attractions in the southern US, we travel to the ancient and living city of Banaras in India. This sacred city will serve as a lens though which the worldview of Hindu pilgrims comes into focus. Finally we journey to Mt. Kailash in the Himalayas, regarded by Tibetan Buddhists as the central axis of the universe and a very powerful sacred site. The goal of the course is to see these strange and wondrous places as an expression of the religious imagination, where believers have sought to give outward form to their religious experiences. We will rely on texts that combine travel narrative and religious study, as well as documentary films and slides to gain insight into the religious art, rituals, and sacred stories of the pilgrims.

RELS 105.01: Introduction to World Religions
Prof Margaret Cormack No Prerequisites Section 001 (MWF 10:00 - 10:50) ECTR 116
The goal of this course is to introduce you to the beliefs, practices, and history of the major religions of the world. We will approach each tradition impartially, studying its beliefs concerning divinity/ies, the universe, the place and obligations of human beings within that universe, the afterlife, and how these beliefs were represented in cultural artifacts – poetry, statues, temples, and sacred texts. We will consider how the beliefs developed and how they relate to the societies that adhere to them. You will learn how people from different cultures look at the world, and how to think critically and sympathetically about a variety of world-views.

RELS 105.02/03: Introduction to World Religions
Prof June McDaniel No Prerequisites Section 002 (TR 09:25 – 10:40) ECTR 103
Section 003 (TR 10:50 - 12:05) ECTR 103
This course will examine a wide variety of religions, including indigenous religions (Hawaiian, Australian, African, Inuit), Hinduism, Buddhism, Taoism, Confucianism, Judaism, Christianity, Islam, Ancient Near Eastern religions, Rastafarianism, varieties of shamanism and new religious movements. We shall discuss their beliefs and rituals, and assignments will include visits to religious sites in Charleston. There will be films and guest speakers, three tests and two papers.

RELS 115.01: Religion and Society: Black Nationalism and Religion
Prof. Matthew Cressler No Prerequisites Section 001 (MWF 01:00 - 01:50) ECTR 103
This course will introduce students to religious ideas and practices from across the African diaspora that gave rise to the African American political tradition known as "black nationalism." In popular American memory black nationalists—whose philosophies and tactics range from cultural pride to armed self-defense, from economic self-determination to political independence—are usually associated with "Black Power" and imagined as the secular alternative to religious civil rights activists. This course challenges this image and situates Black Power in the long black nationalist tradition, a tradition with deep religious roots. Students will be introduced to the concept of "nationalism" and its relationship with its modern conceptual counterpart "religion."

RELS 120.01/02: Religion, Art and Culture: When Home is the Stranger
Prof. Louise Doire No Prerequisites Section 001 (MWF 10:00- 10:50) ECTR 103
Section 002 (MWF 11:00- 11:50) ECTR 103
Students in this course will approach religion as “movement in time and place,” enacted in and through the body, the home, the homeland and the cosmos. Through the media of literature and film, we will examine the narratives of individuals and/or groups that negotiate self, religion and culture through the experiences of displacement as the stranger, “the outsider.” Our examination will focus on the body and sensuality; on the home as religious dwelling; on cultural and religious transportation and transformation, and on the cosmos as the ultimate homeland.

RELS 205.01/02: Sacred Texts of the East
Prof. Lee Irwin No Prerequisites Section 001 (TR 10:50- 12:05) ECTR 219
Section 002 (TR 12:15- 01:30) ECTR 219
This course will explore the foundational texts of the religions of India, China, Southeast Asia, and Japan including sacred texts from Hindu, Buddhist, Sikh, Confucian, Taoist, and Shinto traditions. We will take an inductive approach to each text tradition and through reading of texts, seek to determine core beliefs of each tradition established by those texts. We will consider historical context, spatial location, textual diversity, internal debates on interpretation, canon development, conceptual theories of the text, including text recitations, and the ritual care of texts. We will look at issues of oral versus written texts, image and symbol texts, and text transmission. No previous knowledge of these traditions is required for this course; this is a course on text formation and interpretations, not a survey of general beliefs and practices.

RELS 230.01: Christian Tradition
Prof. Margaret Cormack  No Prerequisites  Section 001 (MWF 01:00 – 01:50)  ECTR 219
This course is a historical survey of Christianity. We will examine how the religion's beliefs and rituals develop and change with time, reflecting the cultures in which they were practiced. We will make extensive use of primary sources from different historical periods. The course includes a visit to a local church, and a term paper examining a Christian denomination or other religious organization, such as a monastic order.

RELS 245.01: The Hindu Tradition
Prof. June McDaniel  No Prerequisites  Section 001 (TR 01:40- 02:55)  ECTR 219
This course will introduce some major forms of Indian religion. It will focus on Hinduism, but will also include information on Buddhism, Jainism, Sikhism, and Islam. It will include readings from primary texts, data from fieldwork, films and guest speakers. There will be sections on yoga, religious art, music and dance, and analysis of meditation and other ritual techniques. There will be three tests and two papers.

RELS 270.01: African American Religions
Prof. Matthew Cressler  No Prerequisites  Section 001 (MWF 10:00 – 10:50)  ECTR 219
This course will introduce students to African American religions in all their complexity and creativity. Students will explore the varieties of African American religious experience from the seventeenth century to the present, with special attention to the religious histories of Charleston and the Lowcountry. While much of our time will be devoted to African American Protestant Christianities, we will also explore African diasporic traditions such as Vodou and Santeria as well as African American Islam, Catholicism, Judaism, and humanism. Throughout the semester we will discuss and debate key questions in the study of African American religions. What does Africa have to do with African American religions? Why would African American slaves convert to Christianity and how did they transform it? Was Christianity a catalyst or an obstacle for black liberation? What is the relationship between religious and racial identity?

RELS 280.01: Religion and Film: The Hero Myth in America
Prof. Elijah Siegler  No Prerequisites  Section 001 (M 07:00pm – 09:45 )  ECTR 118
& (W 07:00pm - 08:15)  ECTR 118
In this class we will critically examine the myth of the American hero through weekly viewings of important American movies. Students will become familiar with various approaches to religious studies, and with the basic terms of film analysis. In this course students will analyze, discuss, and write about films, focusing in particular on those made by Joel and Ethan Coen, whose 30-year career presents us with an excellent opportunity to explore intertwined themes of heroism, mythology, masculinity, morality and the sacred. How can The Big Lebowski, No Country For Old Men and True Grit be considered religious films?

RELS 298.01: Special Topics: Mind, Body & Spirit
Prof. Lee Irwin  No Prerequisites  Section 001 (MW 02:00 - 03:15)  ECTR 219
This course will be a survey of current ideas and research in areas related to trans-traditional theories of mind and body in relationship to embodied spirituality, neuroscience, biocentrism, physics, and studies in consciousness. The purpose of the course is to explore these theories as they might impact the field of religious studies and shape or reconstruct our understanding of what it means to be religious or spiritual. The course will be interdisciplinary and will explore discourses in neuropsychology, biology, and astrophysics that have contributed to new perspectives in how body, mind and spirit are interrelated. As this in an introductory overview of various fields related to religious studies, no previous knowledge on these topics is required.
REL 298.02: Special Topics: Religion, Environmentalism, & the Natural World
Prof. Todd LeVasseur  No Prerequisites  Section 002 (MWF 11:00 - 11:50)  ECTR 219
This course explores how religious beliefs, rituals, practices, symbols, and institutions interact with and shape various ecosystems around the planet, from past to present. The class will investigate the corollary of this—how various ecosystems around the planet have shaped and formed religious production, past and present. The course is interdisciplinary in this exploration, taking biological evolution as its starting point, and will use lenses from traditional ecological knowledge, environmental ethics, and religion and nature theory to generate theoretical sophistication in helping understand the overall phenomenon of biocultural evolution where “religion” is a key feature. Current issues related to human population growth, the biodiversity crisis, the extinction crisis, toxic pollution of natural landscapes, industrialization, and climate change will be included in the exploration, with specific attention being paid to the pollution of sacred rivers in India and various Hindu responses to this; and mountain top removal in Appalachia and various Christian responses to this, amongst others. Classes are a mix of lecture, videos, and group discussion.

REL 340.01: Advanced Topics in Asian Religions: Tibetan Buddhism
Prof. Zeff Bjerken  1 RELS Course as Prerequisite  Section 001 (TR 09:25 - 10:40)  ECTR 219
This seminar will explore a number of topics in the religions of Tibet from the 8th century to the present. The course will begin with a reading of a famous work on Tibetan Buddhist practice called The Words of My Perfect Teacher. This text introduces us systematically to Buddhist theories and practices from India that come to hold an important place in the Tibetan tradition. Next, we will turn to the transmission of Buddhism to Tibet and examine some of its unique developments, including the genre of revelation called “treasure texts,” the propitiation of demons and the role of protector deities, the veneration of sacred mountains, and the discovery of enlightened boys. Next we will explore recent debates over Buddhist “heresies” and investigate how the Dalai Lama institution was formed in Tibet, a unique institution designed to unite ultimate religious and political authority in a single figure. In the 20th century we will examine the Tibetan confrontation with Chinese colonialism, the development of Buddhism in exile, and the current Dalai Lama’s modernized Buddhism. The course concludes with a consideration of the recent popularity of Tibetan Buddhism in the West, especially in Hollywood.

REL 450.01: Senior Seminar: Prophets, Messiahs, and their Followers: History, Legitimacy, and Authority
Prof. John Huddlestun  For Seniors-210, 450 & 1 other RELS  Section 001 (MW 04:00 - 05:15)  YBK 119
In this seminar we will examine some of the seminal historical, interpretive, theoretical and comparative issues surrounding the founding figures of some of the major religious traditions, including the historical Buddha, Jesus, and Muhammad. One key question that has driven much of scholarship is how do we arrive at the historical life and teaching of these figures, as opposed to the later portraits that emerged in response to the needs of their respective communities? What is it about these figures that made their movements successful? Did they offer something new or unique? To what extent are their teachings or actions explainable within their times? Did that founder possess a certain charisma or personality trait or should we look elsewhere for an explanation? Are there common or universal elements in each of these figures; do they confirm to an ideal type, or must we consider each unique in their situation and appeal? Additionally, we may consider some important figures in more recent history and the movements they engendered (e.g., Shabbatai Sevi, the “Mystical Messiah” of the 17th century in the Middle East and Europe, or Menachem Mendel Schneersohn, the Lubavitcher “Brooklyn Messiah”).

2015 MAYMESTER - SUMMER I - SUMMER II

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<td>Applied Ecovillage Living</td>
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Maymester 2015 (May 18- June 3)

RELS 105-01: Introduction to World Religions
Prof. Todd LeVasseur  No Prerequisites  Section 001 (MTWRF 1:00- 04:30)  ECTR 219
This course is designed to introduce CofC students to the more popular religions (in terms of adherents) of the globe. By utilizing a comparative and historical approach, the course investigates the origin and flourishing of Hinduism, Buddhism, Confucianism, Judaism, Christianity, and Islam. The course also briefly covers some of the key theorists in religious studies, and ends by looking at religion in today’s globalized world. The class consists of lectures, reading and discussing sacred texts, videos, and discussing how and why religion is a driving force behind contemporary social and political issues.

RELS 280-01: Religion & Film: Saint Joan Goes to Hollywood
Prof. Louise Doire  No Prerequisites  Section 001 (MTWRF 8:30- 12:00)  ECTR 219
In this course students will explore the pervasive presence of religious themes in film including representations of female saints and sinners, and interpretations of redemption, God, self-sacrifice and the human condition. We will view and discuss films that are obvious in their portrayal of religious subjects such as Joan of Arc, The Mission, The Last Temptation of Christ and films that are not so obvious (The Fisher King). Other themes include Latin American Liberation Theology, Mary Magdalene in early Christianity and the medieval legend of Percival, the Green Knight and the quest for the Holy Grail.

SUMMER I 2015 (June 10 - July 10)

RELS 298-01: Special Topics: Nature Spirituality, Ecotopia, and Applied Ecovillage Living
Prof. Todd LeVasseur  No Prerequisites  Section 001 (MTWRF 10:00 - 11:45)  ECTR 219
Ever wondered what an “Ecovillage” is, or what it is like to create and live in one? This course explores how ecovillages help human communities live more sustainably by incorporating ecocentric values, ecological design, and environmentally friendly technologies. This Summer I course will meet on campus for the first week, and then will spend one week living in residency at Earthaven Ecovillage in Black Mountain, NC, outside of Asheville. Students will live on-site for 1 week, participating in hands-on learning modules about permaculture, organic farming, alternative building construction, nature spirituality, alternative energy, and other aspects of sustainable homesteading in the Appalachian mountains.

SUMMER II 2015 (July 16- August 14)

RELS 105-02: Introduction to World Religions
Prof. Courtney Tepera  No Prerequisites  Section 002 (MTWRF 10:00- 11:45)  ECTR 219
This course provides a basic introduction to prominent religious traditions and how they have impacted the world around them. We will focus primarily on Buddhism, Christianity, Confucianism, Daoism, Hinduism, Islam, Judaism, and Yoruba. These religions will be studied as cultural phenomena and repositories of knowledge to better understand the interaction of religion and culture in the modern world.