**COURSE DESCRIPTIONS RELIGIOUS STUDIES Fall Semester 2023**

RELI 1000 INTRO TO RELIGIOUS STUDIES Section Time Days Instructor 001 10:00-10:50 MWF Dawson, K.

**(GE:HU; GD\*)**

In this course we introduce students to a critical understanding of various expressions of human religiosity, raising questions about how humans have created meaning for themselves through religion. We will explore common themes emerging in different religious expressions such as beliefs, ritual, symbolism, scriptures, and various traditions of social formation to learn about the nature of religion. We will also explore major historical and methodological approaches to the study of religion. Religious expressions are drawn from different religious traditions – Indigenous, Western and Eastern – to highlight the different components of religion as experienced in diverse contexts. The course can be used as a General Education (GE) Humanities elective, as a Global Diversity (GD)\* elective, and to help satisfy requirements for a Religious Studies major or minor. For more information about the major or minor, visit <https://religionprogram.ecu.edu/>.

RELI 1000 INTRO TO RELIGIOUS STUDIES Section Time Days Instructor 601 2nd block Dawson, K.

**(GE:HU; GD\*)**

In this course we introduce students to a critical understanding of various expressions of human religiosity, raising questions about how humans have created meaning for themselves through religion. We will explore common themes emerging in different religious expressions such as beliefs, ritual, symbolism, scriptures, and various traditions of social formation to learn about the nature of religion. We will also explore major historical and methodological approaches to the study of religion. Religious expressions are drawn from different religious traditions – Indigenous, Western and Eastern – to highlight the different components of religion as experienced in diverse contexts. The course can be used as a General Education (GE) Humanities elective, as a Global Diversity (GD)\* elective, and to help satisfy requirements for a Religious Studies major or minor. For more information about the major or minor, visit <https://religionprogram.ecu.edu/>.

RELI 1690 WORLD RELIGIONS Section Time Days Instructor

601 2nd block Mercer, C.

**(GE:HU)**

WORLD RELIGIONS. We explore the origins, historical developments, teachings, and current status of some major world religions, such as Buddhism, Christianity, Hinduism, Islam, and Judaism. We learn how these traditions address in different ways many questions, such as: What is the basic human predicament, what solutions are offered, what is the meaning and purpose of life, are religions basically similar or different, will religion survive, and religion and AI, robotics, and genetic engineering? The course carries credit for Humanities (HU) and Global Diversity (GD). The course is online asynchronous. A variety of interesting extra credit opportunities are available. For information about the course or a Religious Studies major or double major, contact Dr. Calvin Mercer at [mercerc@ecu.edu](mailto:mercerc@ecu.edu) or visit [www.ecu.edu/religionprogram](http://www.ecu.edu/religionprogram).

RELI 1690 WORLD RELIGIONS Section Time Days Instructor

001 12:30-1:45 TR Maher, D.

**(GE:HU)**

This course is an introductory study of major living religions with particular attention to origins, historical developments, ideas, practices, and contemporary status.  The course satisfies General Education Humanities and Global Diversity requirements. The course also counts towards the Religious Studies major and minor. This particular section of the course will also expose students to knowledge about each religion’s perspectives on death and dying, health and healing, and medical practice. For more information about the major, visit [www.ecu.edu/religionprogram](http://www.ecu.edu/religionprogram).

RELI 2691 CLASSICAL ISLAM Section Time Days Instructor

001 2:00-3:15 TR Nyangweso, M.

**(GE:HU)**

This course introduces students to the history and development of Islam. Students will explore the life story of the Prophet Muhammad, the basic beliefs and practices of Muslims, sources of Islamic teachings such as the Qur’an and hadith, and the divisions within Islam including the Sunni, Shi’i, and Sufi Islam. We will also examine Islamic theology, renewal movements as well as modern influences on Islam. It is the objective of this course to help students familiarize themselves with (1) The biography of the founder of Islam, (2) Describe the origins and development of Islam, (3) Describe sources of Islam – the Qur'an, Hadith, and Sharia, Fatwas and (4) Describe the influence of Islam on women, and the world particularly the United States. The course can be used as Foundations Curriculum (FC) humanities elective, a Global Diversity (GD), and also satisfies the requirements for a Religious Studies major. For more information about the RS major contact me at [wangilam@ecu.edu](mailto:wangilam@ecu.edu) or visit [www.ecu.edu/religionprogram](http://www.ecu.edu/religionprogram).

RELI 2695 INTRO TO THE OLD TESTAMENT Section Time Days Instructor

001 12:00-12:50 MWF Dawson, K.

**(GE:HU; GD)**

An introduction to the social, political, economic and religious context out of which the texts comprising the Hebrew Bible/Old Testament arose, this class focuses on the history and peoples mentioned in the Hebrew Bible/Old Testament. During the course of the semester, we will survey the history and religions of ancient Israel from the period of the biblical Patriarchs through the Hellenistic Period. This course can be used as a General Education (GE) Humanities elective, as a Global Diversity (GD) elective, and to help satisfy requirements for a Religious Studies major or minor. For more information about the major and minor, visit <https://religionprogram.ecu.edu/>.

RELI 2696 INTRO TO THE NEW TESTAMENT Section Time Days Instructor

601 Mercer, C.

**(GE:HU)**

INTRODUCTION TO THE NEW TESTAMENT: This course is an introduction to the history, literature, and religion of early Christianity through the first two centuries of the Common Era.  Although our primary concern will be with a critical (or academic, as opposed to devotional) study of the New Testament books, some attention is given to non-canonical texts, such as the Dead Sea Scrolls and the so-called “lost gospels.”  Text is *The Harper Collins Study Bible—Fully Revised and Updated: New Revised Standard Version, including Apocrypha Deuterocanonical Books with Concordance. A New Annotated Edition by the Society of Biblical Literature* (2006). The course carries credit for Humanities (HU) and Global Diversity (GD). The course is online asynchronous. A variety of interesting extra credit opportunities are available. For information about the course or a Religious Studies major or double major, contact Dr. Calvin Mercer at [mercerc@ecu.edu](mailto:mercerc@ecu.edu) or visit [www.ecu.edu/religionprogram](http://www.ecu.edu/religionprogram).

RELI 3500 METHODOLOGY OF RELIGIOUS STUDIES Section Time Days Instructor

001 12:30-1:45 Nyangweso, M.

**(GE:HU)**

This course is designed to introduce students to theories and methods in the study of religion. As an academic discipline, religious studies has developed theories (analytical ideas) and methods (research data collection and application skills) central to the study of religion and religious experience. The course will involve a survey of some major theories of scholars such as Edward Tylor, James Frazer, Evans Pritchard, Clifford Geertz, Mircea Eliade, Karl Marx, Sigmund Freud, Carl Jung, Max Weber, Emile Durkheim, Rita Gross Rosemary Ruether, Sherry Ortner, among others. Students will also explore research methods and skills used in researching and data collection, analysis, and application of religious experience. The objective is to appreciate the strengths and weaknesses of theories and methods in understanding and appreciating the academic study of religion. This course qualifies for Domestic Diversity (DD) credit

RELI 3700 CULTS, SECTS, AND MINORITY RELIGION Section Time Days Instructor

001 1:00-1:50 MWF Dawson, K.

**(GE:HU; DD; WI)**

Although unusual religions have developed in all areas of the world, this course will concentrate on the various types of cults, sects, and minority religions, some of which are classified as New Religious Movements (NRMs), which have been or are now active in the United States. We will explore the social, political, and economic conditions in which these religious traditions develop, noting a tendency for many individuals to turn to unusual religious traditions during crisis periods in American life. We will investigate such groups as: Shakers, Millerites, Eckankar, North American Raelians, Branch Davidians,