THEOLOGY & RELIGIOUS STUDIES (THRS)

Courses

THRS 110 | EXPLORING RELIGIOUS MEANING
Units: 3
A thematic and topical introduction to the study of religion. Drawing material from at least four religious traditions, including Christianity, this course considers a range of possible themes and topics such as symbol, ritual, mysticism, myth, material culture, gender, ethics, ecology, death and the afterlife, and contemplative practice.

THRS 112 | INTRODUCTION TO WORLD RELIGIONS
Units: 3-4
A survey of the major religious traditions of the world, focusing on an understanding of the religious world views and practices that shape cultures across the globe. Selected readings from these traditions, which will include Christianity, the religions of India and East Asia, Judaism, Islam, and the religions of indigenous oral cultures.

THRS 114 | INTRODUCTION TO CATHOLIC THEOLOGY
Units: 3
This course is an introductory survey designed to prepare students for upper division courses in Christian theology. Topics may include the scriptures, history of the Church and/or theology, the nature of theological discourse, introduction to theological terms and definitions, and examination of select topics or issues in theology. Emphasis will be placed on the constitutive dimensions and characteristics of the Roman Catholic tradition.

THRS 116 | INTRODUCTION TO BIBLICAL STUDIES
Units: 3
A study of the Bible: its formation, historical character, primary themes, and interpretation.

THRS 119 | CHRISTIANITY AND ITS PRACTICE
Units: 3 Repeatability: No
An introduction to Christian belief and practice through reflection on classic and contemporary expressions of the Christian life.

THRS 120 | CHRISTIANITY AND CONQUEST
Units: 3 Repeatability: No
An introduction to the history, current status, and theological themes of Christianity, including Catholicism. Emphasis on the relationship between Western Christianity and European colonialism, including how Christian beliefs have been deployed both to rationalize and to resist imperialist and colonialist domination. Students may not receive credit for taking both THRS 119 and THRS 120.

THRS 202 | SPECIAL TOPICS IN THEOLOGY
Units: 3 Repeatability: Yes (Can be repeated for Credit)
An examination of selected issues or themes in religion, and/or theological ethics, from one or more Christian perspectives, to be chosen by the instructor. Topics will vary semester by semester. A list of current special topic offerings is available on the department website.

THRS 203 | SPECIAL TOPICS IN RELIGIOUS STUDIES
Units: 3 Repeatability: Yes (Can be repeated for Credit)
An examination of selected issues or themes in religion to be chosen by the instructor. Topics will have a comparative focus, with special attention to Catholic Christianity as well as theory and method in religious studies. Topics will vary semester by semester. A list of current special topic offerings is available on the department website.

THRS 231 | CHRISTIAN CHANGEMAKERS
Units: 3 Repeatability: No
An introduction to the nature and scope of Christian theology, with a special focus on Christians who have created positive social change. We study the works of a select group of writers, thinkers, and activists, all of whom have been significantly shaped by their encounter with Christianity, and have, in turn, created lasting testimonies of significant cultural value because of that encounter. Throughout the semester students engage in self-reflection about their life experiences and core values; in written assignments students explore what it means to create positive social change in our world. There are no prerequisites for this course.

THRS 232 | RELIGION AND ANIMALS
Units: 3 Repeatability: No
An introduction to the subfield of animals and religion. Special attention will be given to Catholic and Jewish traditions, world views, and practices.

THRS 301 | RELIGION CAFÉ: MAJORS AND MINORS SEMINAR
Units: 3 Repeatability: No
Prerequisites: THRS 110 or THRS 112 or THRS 114 or THRS 116 or THRS 119 or THRS 202 or THRS 203 or THRS 231 or THRS 232
Through the study of exemplary texts and presentations from invited Religion and Religious Studies faculty members, this seminar will introduce students to the various methodologies in the academic study of religion, as well as to the research interests of current faculty members in the department. This course will also address basic research methodologies, the use of the library and the internet, and the construction of a research paper. This seminar is required of all majors and is open to minors. The course should be taken as soon as possible following the declaration of the major or minor.

THRS 311 | JEWISH FAITH AND PRACTICE - ADVANCED WRITING
Units: 3 Repeatability: No
An examination of Jewish beliefs and practices, their historical and biblical foundations, and their theological and cultural expressions. Students will write a thesis-driven research paper. This course fulfills the Advanced Writing requirement of the core curriculum. Students may not receive credit for taking both THRS 311 and THRS 313.

THRS 312 | THE HINDU TRADITION
Units: 3 Repeatability: No
Prerequisites: THRS 110 or THRS 112 or THRS 203
A historical and systematic study of Indian religion from the Vedic revelation to modern theologians, with special emphasis on points of contact between Hindu and Christian thought.

THRS 313 | JEWISH FAITH AND PRACTICE
Units: 3 Repeatability: No
An examination of Jewish beliefs and practices, their historical and biblical foundations, and their theological and cultural expressions. Students may not receive credit for taking both THRS 311 and THRS 313.

THRS 314 | BUDDHIST THOUGHT AND CULTURE
Units: 3 Repeatability: No
Prerequisites: THRS 110 or THRS 112 or THRS 203
An introduction to the academic study of Buddhism. The course systematically explores the historical development, philosophical premises, religious practices, social institutions, and cultural expressions of the world’s Buddhist traditions, with special emphasis on points of contact between Buddhist and Christian thought.

THRS 315 | ISLAMIC FAITH AND PRACTICE
Units: 3 Repeatability: No
This course is designed to provide students with a basic introduction to Islam. The monotheistic belief system and the concept of Qur’anic law will be the focus of the early part of the course. Brief overview of its early history will be followed by discussions on questions of interpretation, reform, and renewal.
THRS 316 | THE DAOIST TRADITION  
Units: 3  Repeatability: No  
An introduction to the Daoist (Taoist) tradition as both an indigenous Chinese religion and global cultural and religious phenomenon. This course provides a systematic overview of Daoist history and explores important and representative Daoist concerns such as cosmology, dietetics, ethics, meditation, ritual, and scripture study.

THRS 317 | RELIGIONS OF CHINA  
Units: 3  Repeatability: No  
An introduction to Chinese religions with specific emphasis placed on the indigenous Chinese religions of Confucianism and Daoism (Taoism) as well as on Chinese forms of Buddhism. This course explores not only Confucianism, Daoism, and Buddhism as Chinese cultural traditions, but also the transformation of those traditions in contemporary China and in contemporary America.

THRS 318 | ISLAM, WOMEN AND LITERATURE  
Units: 3  Repeatability: No  
The course will set in perspective the diversity of cultural manifestations of Islam in its regard for women. It will require a selective exploration of literary works. The writings reflect debates regarding the ever-changing role of Muslim women within various religious, social, geographic, economic and political contexts, primarily in the last 50 years, a period of significant historical change in the Muslim world.

THRS 320 | NATIVE AMERICAN RELIGIOUS TRADITIONS  
Units: 3  Repeatability: No  
A historical and systematic investigation into the spiritual contribution of Native Americans, their ethos, and their meaning for Christianity and the future of humanity.

THRS 321 | AFRO-LATIN RELIGIONS  
Units: 3  Repeatability: No  
This course studies the three main religions of African origins in Latin America and the United States. Lukumí/Candomblé, Vodoun, Olivorism, and Umbanda are approached and interpreted from diverse perspectives: historical, cultural, theological, etc. Their formation and development are contextualized in the Latin American experience of slavery and subsequent racist cultural (and legal) realities. Their contemporary significance is discussed.

THRS 326 | RELIGION AND THE PERFORMING ARTS IN BALI  
Units: 3  Repeatability: No  
This course will integrate the perspectives of religious studies, music, and ethnomusicology in exploring the faith and practices of Balinese Hindus and examining the complex integration of music, dance, drama, and other arts in their vibrant ritual life. Emphasis will be placed on indigenous, colonial, and neocolonial expressions of cultural, social, and economic power and privilege on the island. Offered as a study abroad course in Bali, Indonesia, in tandem with MUSC 341.

THRS 330 | FOUNDATIONS OF CHRISTIAN ETHICS  
Units: 3  Repeatability: No  
A study of the life of Christian discipleship, centered on the development of moral character, on the role of communities in the living of Christian life, and on norms for the personal and social actions of Christians.

THRS 331 | SEXUAL ETHICS IN THE CATHOLIC TRADITION  
Units: 3  Repeatability: No  
An examination of human sexuality from the perspective of the Roman Catholic tradition. After an introduction to Catholic ethical method, the course examines traditional and contemporary understandings of sexuality, gender, sexual orientation, love, and justice. This provides a foundation for consideration of moral norms regarding such issues as marriage, non-marital sex, LGBTQ sexuality, masturbation, pornography, birth control, prostitution, and prevention of sexually transmitted infections including HIV/AIDS.

THRS 332 | HIV/AIDS AND CHRISTIAN ETHICS  
Units: 3  Repeatability: No  
An examination of the intersection of Christian theological ethics and the dilemma of human immunodeficiency virus/acquired immune deficiency syndrome (hereafter, HIV/AIDS). We begin with an introduction to ethical method in the Christian tradition, an overview of the science of HIV/AIDS, and an overview of the sociological and statistical data pertaining to the global pandemic. From there we have the foundation to discuss a range of ethical issues on the topic of HIV/AIDS. Students will select a topic to explore in further detail in an individual research paper project. Our class format will include lecture, group work (including analysis of case studies), discussion with guest speakers, field trips, and facilitated discussion. In addition to required readings, required films and site visits to community organizations will challenge students to engage the personal stories of HIV-positive and AIDS-diagnosed persons.

THRS 334 | CHRISTIAN SOCIAL ETHICS  
Units: 3  Repeatability: No  
This course is designed to introduce students to the field of Christian social ethics. Students will read selections from Christian thinkers, examine various sources of and approaches to Christian ethical reflection, and critically assess a variety of contemporary moral issues.

THRS 335 | CATHOLIC SOCIAL THOUGHT  
Units: 3  Repeatability: No  
A study of modern Catholic social teaching with a focus on major official Catholic documents since the late nineteenth century that have dealt with moral issues of contemporary social problems: from the economic aftermath of the Industrial Revolution to globalization, international relations, environmental change, and contemporary warfare.

THRS 336 | RELIGIOUS PEACEBUILDING AND RECONCILIATION  
Units: 3  Repeatability: No  
An exploration of the theory and practice of religious peacebuilding and a survey of constructive resources for conflict transformation, violence prevention, and reconciliation processes in divided societies.

THRS 338 | FAITH & ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE  
Units: 3  Repeatability: No  
This course explores how faith rooted approaches to ecological issues can play a pivotal role in addressing our current environmental crisis.

THRS 341 | CHRISTIAN WORSHIP  
Units: 3  Repeatability: No  
An introduction to the study of Christian liturgy through an examination of the history of liturgical practice, of myth and symbol as dimensions of sacramentality, and of theological and cultural principles of celebration.

THRS 342 | CHRISTIAN SACRAMENTAL PRACTICE  
Units: 3  Repeatability: No  
A study of the practice, history, and theology of Christian initiation, eucharist, penance, anointing of the sick, holy orders, and matrimony.

THRS 343 | CHRISTIAN MARRIAGE  
Units: 3  Repeatability: No  
A theological study of Christian marriage with consideration of the historical development and current pastoral understanding of this sacrament.

THRS 353 | EARLY CHRISTIANITY  
Units: 3  Repeatability: No  
A study of the theology and religious practices of the first five centuries of Christianity.

THRS 354 | THE MEDIEVAL CHURCH  
Units: 3  Prerequisites: THRS 114 or THRS 116 or THRS 119 or THRS 202

A study of the theology and religious practices of Western Christianity from the sixth through the 15th centuries.
A study of the theology of the Catholic Church in the United States of America. Emphasis on racial and ethnic diversity in the Church, with attention to how social, political, and ecclesial power dynamics have shaped Catholics’ varied experiences. Required any lower division THRS course or permission of the instructor.

THRS 357 | SAINTS AND SINNERS IN U.S. PROTESTANTISM
Units: 3
The histories and theologies of Protestantism in the United States from the perspective of individuals and movements that have had significant intellectual and cultural influence, for example on issues of gender, politics, or science. This course is usually taught through role-playing simulation games. Prereq: Any lower division THRS course or consent of instructor.

THRS 358 | LATINO/A CATHOLICISM
Units: 3 Repeatability: No
A culturally contextualized study of the beliefs and practices of Latino/a Catholics in the U.S., with particular emphasis on popular Catholicism.

THRS 360 | WHO IS JESUS?
Units: 3 Repeatability: No
A critical investigation of the person and ministry of Jesus in light of Scripture, the Christian tradition, and contemporary concerns.

THRS 361 | CHRISTIAN UNDERSTANDING OF THE HUMAN PERSON
Units: 3
Prerequisites: THRS 114 or THRS 116 or THRS 119 or THRS 202
A theological exploration of the meaning and dignity of human persons in terms of their relationships to God and to creation.

THRS 362 | CHRISTIAN UNDERSTANDINGS OF SALVATION
Units: 3 Repeatability: No
An examination of Christian understandings of salvation from biblical, historical, and contemporary perspectives.

THRS 363 | BELIEF AND UNBELIEF
Units: 3
An investigation in the context of modern atheism and secular humanism into the validity of the claim of religion to speak truthfully of God and to describe the adequate response of human beings to the divine being.

THRS 364 | THEOLOGY OF THE CHURCH
Units: 3
Prerequisites: THRS 114 or THRS 116 or THRS 119 or THRS 202
An investigation of the origin, nature, and function of the Church, primarily from the Catholic perspective.

THRS 365 | BLACK AND WOMANIST THEOLOGIES
Units: 3 Repeatability: No
This course will explore Black and Womanist theologies in historical context, paying particular attention to the historical movements, foundational thinkers, and critical voices that have shaped and are reshaping Black and Womanist theologies.

THRS 366 | THE PROBLEM OF GOD
Units: 3 Repeatability: No
The questions “What is God?,” “Does God exist?” and “What does it mean to believe in God?” are investigated against the background of classical theism and modern thought.

THRS 367 | FEMINIST THEOLOGY AND ETHICS
Units: 3 Repeatability: No
An exploration of contemporary feminist theologies and ethics from the Christian perspective to gain knowledge of feminist contributions and challenges to the whole of Christian traditions. Included is a survey of the historical emergence of feminist theologies, methods, major theological themes, and feminist Christian approaches to contemporary problems (from different contexts and multiple perspectives).

THRS 368 | LATINO/A THEOLOGIES
Units: 3 Repeatability: No
Prerequisites: THRS 114 or THRS 116 or THRS 119 or THRS 358
An analysis of the contexts, major themes, authors, and texts of U.S. Latino/a and/or Latin American theologies. Liberation and cultural theologies will be emphasized.

THRS 369 | LIBERATION THEOLOGY
Units: 3 Repeatability: No
A study of the origin, characteristics, method, central themes, and current expressions of liberation theology. Special emphasis on the understanding of revelation, God, Jesus Christ, the Church, the human being, Christian ethics, social justice, and Christian spirituality.

THRS 370 | GENDER AND RELIGION IN THE UNITED STATES
Units: 3 Repeatability: No
An examination of religion’s role in shaping womanhood and manhood, and the roles men and women have played in shaping religious communities in the U.S.

THRS 371 | CULTS AND SECTS IN THE UNITED STATES
Units: 3
An examination of new religious movements commonly called cults and sects in the U.S. Prereq: Any lower division THRS course, or consent of instructor.

THRS 375 | FAITH AND POLITICS: THEOLOGICAL PERSPECTIVES
Units: 3 Repeatability: No
A theological study of the public and political roles of religion, including evaluation of the impact of religious beliefs on political behavior.

THRS 376 | RACIAL JUSTICE: CATHOLIC PERSPECTIVES
Units: 3 Repeatability: No
A study of Catholic approaches to the struggle for racial justice in US society and the US Catholic Church.

THRS 381 | THE FIVE BOOKS OF MOSES
Units: 3
Prerequisites: THRS 116
A study of the first five books of the Bible (Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy), the history of their composition, and their theological contributions to Judaism and Christianity.

THRS 382 | THE PROPHETIC TRADITION OF ISRAEL
Units: 3 Repeatability: No
A study of Old Testament prophets in their historical, social, and political backgrounds. Attention is given to the contribution of the prophets to Jewish-Christian theologies and their significance for the contemporary world.

THRS 383 | GOSPELS OF MATTHEW, MARK & LUKE
Units: 3
Prerequisites: THRS 116
A study of the sayings and deeds of Jesus as handed down by the early Christians and recorded in the first two Gospels.

THRS 385 | PAUL, THE MAN & HIS MESSAGE
Units: 3 Repeatability: No
A study of the Pauline writings and theological thought. Major themes are reviewed with respect to their applications to present-day Christian life.
THRS 386 | JOHANNINE THEOLOGY
Units: 3
Prerequisites: THRS 116
A study of the Johannine writings, particularly the Gospel. Some of the major themes examined are Christology, Trinitarian doctrine, and eschatology.

THRS 388 | THE WORLD OF THE BIBLE
Units: 3 Repeatability: No
A survey of historical, political, social, cultural, and religious conditions of selected periods in biblical history.

THRS 390 | THE HOLOCAUST: RELIGIOUS QUESTIONS
Units: 3 Repeatability: No
A study of the Holocaust focused on the moral and religious dilemmas it raises for Jews and Christians.

THRS 394 | SPECIAL TOPICS IN THEOLOGY AND RELIGIOUS STUDIES
Units: 3-4 Repeatability: Yes (Can be repeated for Credit)
A study of selected major figures or problems or movements or periods in either Christianity and/or other religions. Specification will be made by the instructor.

THRS 450W | THEMES IN THEOLOGICAL STUDIES
Units: 3 Repeatability: Yes (Can be repeated for Credit)
Prerequisites: THRS 301
A study of selected issues, problems, or themes of relevance across the various specialties and subfields in theological studies. The selected issue or theme will be explored both deeply and broadly. Specification will be made by the instructor. The course may be repeated for credit with different course content. This course meets the requirements for a USD W course. Students will produce and orally present substantial term papers. Prereq: THRS 301; declared major or minor in THRS.

THRS 451W | THEMES IN RELIGIOUS STUDIES
Units: 3 Repeatability: Yes (Can be repeated for Credit)
Prerequisites: THRS 301
A study of selected issues, problems, or themes of relevance across the various specialties and subfields in religious studies. The selected issue or theme will be explored both deeply and broadly. Specification will be made by the instructor. The course may be repeated for credit with different course content. This course meets the requirements for a USD W course. Students will produce and orally present substantial term papers. Prereq: THRS 301; declared major or minor in THRS.

THRS 499 | DIRECTED INDIVIDUAL STUDY
Units: 1-3 Repeatability: Yes (Can be repeated for Credit)
Prerequisite: Consent of instructor and approval of the department chair and the dean.