

Summer 2024

J. MICHELLE MOLINA

**REL 170-26 | 3 WEEKS**

**JUNE 17, 2024 - JULY 7, 2024**

# Introduction to Religion



Religion: we think we recognize it when we see it, and yet it is always changing. How does one study a moving target? In the first weeks of the course, we look back in time to understand how the ideas about religion that are familiar to us today are rooted in history. The emergence of the concept of "religion" as an object of comparison and study grew out of early modern European sectarian violence and colonial overseas expansion. We then turn to study some thinkers from the 19th and 20th centuries who developed theories about the best ways to study religion. These scholars developed and honed the fields of sociology, anthropology, and psychology by testing their methods on case studies about religion. To know this history is to know our present, as well as to understand the methodologies that shape the university curriculum. What do we do with this legacy? Are these methods adequate to understanding religion today? In the second half of this class, we critically evaluate these methods by putting them to work to analyze religion in the world, both past and present. We will focus on how religion moves people. People are rooted in space and place by their religious practices, while simultaneously being moved by religion. As will have become clear in the first half of the course, religion is a moving target because people themselves do not stay the same. Throughout the course, we track the tension between rootedness and mobility by examining three themes: "conversion," "borderlands," and "death/afterlives."

Summer 2024

NISHEETA JAGTIANI

**REL 210-26 | 8 WEEKS**

**JUNE 17, 2024 - AUGUST 11, 2024**

TTh 2:00-4:00 PM

# Introduction to Buddhism



**This course offers an introduction to Buddhist history, philosophy, culture, and ritual practices. We explore texts, beliefs, and practices in all the major Buddhist traditions—Theravada, Mahayana, and Vajrayana or Tantric Buddhism. As we study how the practice of Buddhism differs in different Buddhist countries and traditions, we will read teachings by Buddhist masters including Thich Nhat Hanh, Pema Chodron, and the Dalai Lama and discuss their implications in the twenty-first century. In this course, we will pay close attention to primary and secondary source texts to learn about how Buddhists describe and teach the meaning of life, death, rebirth, suffering, karma, and enlightenment. Beyond an examination of texts, we will also discuss the contemporary practice of Buddhism in Asia and the West including the place of mindfulness.**

**Northwestern** | Religious Studies

Summer 2024

BARRY WIMPFHEIMER

**REL 230-26 | 3 WEEKS**

**JUNE 17, 2024 - JULY 7, 2024**

# **Introduction to Judaism**



This course attempts to answer the questions "What is Judaism?" and "Who is a Jew?" by surveying the broad arc of Jewish history, reviewing the practices and beliefs that have defined and continue to define Judaism as a religion, sampling the vast treasure of Jewish literatures, and analyzing the unique social conditions that have made the cultural experience of Jewishness so significant. The class will employ a historical structure to trace the evolutions of Jewish literature, religion, and culture through the ages.

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