

Religious Studies

Spring 2026 Courses



Law & Order in China: Ancient Roots, Modern Impact (AILT, IFWC)

Occult America (AIHS, IFWC)

Religion, Sports, and Social Justice (AIHS, IFPE)

Sex and the Hebrew Bible (AILT, IFPE, GSS)

**The Hebrew Bible, the Climate, and the End of the World
as We Know It (AILT, IFWC)**

Introduction to New Testament (AIHS, CLEL, FSHT)

Richmond: City of the Dead (AMER)

God is Dead (AILT, IFWC)



Religious Studies ♦ Spring 2026 Courses

Electives & General Education

Law & Order in China: Ancient Roots, Modern Impact (RELG 206, AILT, IFWC)

MW 12:00-1:15 PM (01); 1:30-2:45 PM (02)

Jane Geaney

The concept of the Rule of Law invites comparison across cultures, and “Law & Order in China” approaches the development of law in Early China through this lens. Distinct from morality and custom, the idea of law emerged as a consistent impersonal standard for governance. Though later associated with authoritarianism and anti-intellectualism, Chinese legal thinking arose in response to historical change, challenging the notion of an idealized past and divine mandates. This course encourages students to critically examine the foundations, advantages, and limitations of the Rule of Law, while exploring how early Chinese legal ideas might shape global issues today.

Occult America (RELG 210, AIHS, IFWC)

TR 3:00–4:15 (01); 4:30-5:45 (02)

Doug Winiarski

This course introduces students to historical methods through an investigation of selected occult—meaning “hidden” or “mysterious”—religious traditions in early America. Topics include supernatural phenomena ranging from witchcraft, hauntings, and poltergeists to dreams, trances, visions, and spirit possession.

Religion, Sports, and Social Justice (RELG 222, IFPE, AIHS)

MW 9:00-10:15 AM

Mimi Hanaoka

This course explores the intersection of religion, sports, and social justice, focusing on the 20th and 21st centuries. We will ask these types of questions: what sports have their origins in religious movements? How and why have athletes used their platform to advocate for social justice? Where do race, gender intersect with religion, social justice, and sports? We will consider examples from basketball, baseball, boxing, tennis, lacrosse, soccer, judo, and football.

Sex and the Hebrew Bible (RELG 233, AILT, IFPE, GSS)

TR 10:30–11:45 AM (01); 12:00-1:15 PM (02)

Rhiannon Graybill

What does the Hebrew Bible say about sex and sexual desire? Gender and gender identity? Bodies and bodily pleasure? This class explores a range of biblical texts and perspectives on sex, sexual desire, rape and sexual violence, sex work, homoeroticism and homosexuality, gender and gender identity, and laws regulating bodies. We will also explore how key biblical passages about sex, sexuality, and gender have been interpreted over time.

The Hebrew Bible, the Climate, and the End of the World as We Know It (RELG 233, AILT, IFWC)

MW 10:30–11:45 AM

Rhiannon Graybill

This class will explore what the Hebrew Bible has to say about and against climate change, the Anthropocene, and prophecies of environmental collapse and dystopia. What does the Bible, an ancient book, teach us about caring for the earth, dominion and domination, our relationship to other living creatures (human and nonhuman), and what we owe the future? How do contemporary literature and film use the Bible to explore these questions? And what if it's too late?

Introduction to New Testament (RELG 241, AIHS, CLEL, FSHT)

TR 1:30–2:45 PM (01); 3:00–4:15 PM (02)

Stephanie Cobb

CRIMINAL! LIAR!

What does it mean to worship a man who was summarily executed as a political insurgent by the Roman government? Why would anyone devote themselves to a dead man?

Introduction to New Testament investigates these questions and more through a study of the earliest Christian literature—the literature that makes the first claims about what it means to be a follower of a crucified criminal. The New Testament is not just a set of religious texts, it also contains political critiques about power, authority, justice, and society. This course highlights the political nature of these texts in their original historical, social, and cultural context within the Roman empire. It also explores ways these texts have informed political debates in U.S. history.

Religious Studies Seminars

Richmond: City of the Dead (RELG 358; AMER)

WF; W: 12:00–1:15 PM and F: 12:00–2:40 PM

Doug Winiarski

This advanced community-based learning seminar explores attitudes toward death in early America as expressed through material culture: gravestones, landscape architecture, and monuments, as well as mourning art, postmortem photography, jewelry, and clothing. Seminar participants conduct fieldwork at cemeteries, museums, and Civil War sites in and around Richmond, including Hollywood Cemetery, one of the finest examples of the rural cemetery movement in the United States. Assignments emphasize the strategic use of new technologies to convey historical research to a public audience.

God is Dead (RELG 367, AILT, IFWC)

R 3:00-5:40

Jane Geaney

What are the strongest modern arguments against religion? The “Masters of Suspicion”—Marx, Nietzsche, and Freud—are known for their influential and persuasive attacks on religion. This course examines these and other assaults on faith from the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. We explore the suspicions within these arguments, and we investigate the compelling questions they raise about the nature of interpretation, reason, truth, and power.