

Religious Studies

Fall 2026 Courses



The Bible as Literature (AILT)

Leadership Ethics: Early China (AILT, IFWC)

Gods of the Pharaohs (AIHS, IFPE, GSS)

Genesis (AILT, IFWC)

Women in Early Christianity (AILT, AIHS, GSS)

Witchcraft (FYS)



Religious Studies & Fall 2026 Courses

Electives & General Education

The Bible as Literature (RELG 201, AILT)

MW 9:00-10:15 AM (01)

Rhiannon Graybill

The Bible is among the world's most famous works of literature. But what does it mean to read the Bible AS literature? In this class, we will treat the Hebrew Bible (Old Testament) as a literary work, while also using literature from a variety of authors, time periods, and genres to read the Bible. Biblical texts will include Genesis, the Song of Songs, Job, and other biblical narrative and poetry.

Leadership Ethics: Early China (RELG 206, AILT, IFWC)

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

Jane Geaney

Two questions lie at the heart of classical Chinese texts: how to live and how to lead. This course explores moral visions of life and leadership composed in China two millennia ago and still influencing China's leaders today— from the uniquely Chinese “Non-Action” method to Chinese Virtue Ethics, Consequentialism, and Divine Command Theory. Topics include Confucian, Daoist, Legalist, and Mohist treatment of Heaven's Mandate and the ancestral Dao, as well as Sunzi's *Art of War*, and contemporary Chinese Social Justice Leadership and Transformational Leadership.

Gods of the Pharaohs (RELG 223, AIHS, IFPE)

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

Stephanie Cobb

Ancient Egyptian religion—its pharaohs, pyramids, gods, and rituals—has fascinated people for centuries. From the discovery of King Tutankhamun's tomb to modern Hollywood films, Egypt continues to capture our historical, social, and religious imaginations. In *Religions of the Pharaohs*, we will study the religious traditions of ancient Egypt through literature, inscriptions, and material culture, paying close attention to their social and political contexts. We will explore how ancient Egyptians understood their world and how religious beliefs and rituals helped them make sense of life, death, and divine power. The course will also examine the place of ancient Egypt in modern popular culture and consider contemporary attempts to revive ancient Egyptian religious practices.

Religious Studies Seminars

Genesis (RELG 330, AILT, IFWC)

MW 10:30-11:45 AM

Rhiannon Graybill

Genesis, the first book of the Bible, remains among the most important literary, historical, and theological works ever written — at once beautiful, funny, perplexing, and challenging. In this class, we will take a deep dive into Genesis, while also exploring literary, historical, mythological, feminist, postcolonial, and other responses to the text. We will also consider the history of interpretation, with a particular interest in the reception of Genesis in literature and in popular culture.

Women in Early Christianity (RELG 347, AIHS, IFWC, GSS)

W 3:00-5:40 PM

Stephanie Cobb

The Virgin Mary and Mary Magdalene may be the most famous women in Christian history, but alongside them stand countless women who were preachers and prophets, patrons and martyrs, saints and sinners. In this course we will explore these women and their roles in the early Church. Who were they? What power did they exercise and what constraints did they face? How did the church memorialize them, reimagine them, and sometimes erase them? Did Christianity offer opportunities that weren't available to Jewish and Roman women? We will put literary texts in conversation with material culture as we ask whether these reveal more about early Christian women's historical practices or the wishful thinking of male authors.

First Year Seminars

Witchcraft (FYS 100)

MW 3:00-4:15 PM; 4:30-5:45 PM

Douglas Winiarski

Every American high school student learns the history of the Salem Witch Hunt. The very name of the infamous Massachusetts town conjures images of superstition, violence, scapegoating, and legal procedures run amok. But few people know the deeper, and far more interesting history of witchcraft in New England or its place in broader history of the age of European witch hunts. In this First-Year Seminar, we'll examine the original trial records of notable pre-Salem witchcraft cases and engage in original research using rare historical documents, including a recently discovered seventeenth-century witchcraft manuscript that has never been studied by professional historians.



  @urreligiousstudies

<https://religiousstudies.richmond.edu>