

RELIGIOUS STUDIES

Hebrew Bible (The Academy Exclusive)

This course will guide students in becoming more familiar with reading the ancient texts in Hebrew Bible and welcome them to explore some of their own interests in the Bible as a living cultural conversation. To meet the religious studies graduation requirement, either Hebrew Bible or New Testament History and Literature must be completed in addition to World Religions and Contemporary Religious Issues during a student's tenure in Upper School.

Grade Level: 10

Classification: Required elective (unless taking New Testament History and Literature)

Credit: .33

New Testament History and Literature

New Testament History & Literature reads the narratives about Jesus of Nazareth in the Gospels, as well as the religious and theological statements in the Pauline, Johannine, and Petrine epistles, in order to understand the events and beliefs that constituted early Christianity. These are occasionally compared with later developments. All of these topics are approached in a non-devotional manner, i.e. the course is not concerned with the truth or falsity of the claims made by the early-Christian writers, but rather with the meaning(s) of those claims. To meet the religious studies graduation requirement, either Hebrew Bible or New Testament History and Literature must be completed in addition to World Religions and Contemporary Religious Issues during a student's tenure in Upper School.

Grade Level: 10

Classification: Required elective (unless taking Hebrew Bible)

Credit: .33

World Religions

World Religions is a comparative study of Islam, Hinduism, and Buddhism. The central theme of the course is that, despite their significant differences, these religions share a basic conception of the divinity and of humanity, namely, that God—whether Allah, Brahman, or the Dharmakaya of Buddha—is the one infinite source of everything: absolute, transcendent, eternal, and uncaused; and that human beings are finite replicas of the divine reality. Of special importance are the related ideas of God as perfect love and of humans—in their interpersonal relationships—as reflections of that love.

The principal goals of World Religions are for students to develop a deeper understanding of both their own religion and those of their neighbors, and for them to come to appreciate how much the different religions have in common.

Grade Level: 11

Classification: Required elective

Credit: .33

Prerequisite: None

Contemporary Religious Issues

Contemporary Religious Issues (CRI): Religion and Technology takes a critical look at recent and emerging technologies from a generic religious perspective, namely, the view that human beings, as the likeness of God, are meant to be in loving relationship with each other. The course begins with a detailed exposition of the three aspects of love—romantic (eros), filial (storge), and friendly (philia)—and then proceeds to examine and evaluate various technological developments in the light of these aspects. Specifically, students are asked to consider whether (1) human enhancement technologies (genetic engineering, bionic prosthetics, psychotropic drugs), (2) automation technologies (robotics, artificial intelligence), and (3) technologies that mediate or replace human relationships (social media, smart devices, virtual and augmented reality, artificially intelligent companions) threaten our ability to enter into, strengthen, and preserve loving relationships.

The principal goals of Contemporary Religious Issues are for students to learn to judge technology according to an ethical standard, in this case, a religious ethical standard, and for them to begin to think about the potentially dangerous changes that new technologies will bring about in their lifetimes.

Grade Level: 12

Classification: Required elective

Credit: .33

Prerequisite: None