RELIGION AND CULTURE (RELC)

The courses listed on this page are exclusive to the LPS BAAS degree (https://lpsonline.sas.upenn.edu/features/what-bachelor-applied-arts-and-sciences-degree) and LPS Online certificates (https://lpsonline.sas.upenn.edu/academics/certificates).

RELC 101 Greek and Roman Mythology
Myths are traditional stories that have endured many years. Some of them have to do with events of great importance, such as the founding of a nation. Others tell the stories of great heroes and heroines and their exploits and courage in the face of adversity. Still others are simple tales about otherwise unremarkable people who get into trouble or do some great deed. What are we to make of all these tales, and why do people seem to like to hear them? This course will focus on the myths of ancient Greece and Rome, as well as a few contemporary American ones, as a way of exploring the nature of myth and the function it plays for individuals, societies, and nations. We will also pay some attention to the way the Greeks and Romans themselves understood their own myths. Are myths subtle codes that contain some universal truth? Are they a window on the deep recesses of a particular culture? Are they entertaining stories that people like to tell over and over? Are they a set of blinders that all of us wear, though we do not realize it? We investigate these questions through a variety of topics creation of the universe between gods and mortals, religion and family, sex, love, madness, and death.
Taught by: Peter Struck
Also Offered As: CLSC 100
Activity: Online Course
1.0 Course Unit

RELC 200 Gods, Ghosts, Monsters
This course seeks to be a broad introduction. It introduces students to the diversity of doctrines held and practices performed, and art produced about "the fantastic" from the earliest times to the present. The fantastic (the uncanny or supernatural) is a fundamental category in the scholarly study of religion, art, anthropology, and literature. This course focuses on both theoretical approaches to studying supernatural beings from a religious studies perspective while drawing examples from Buddhist, Shinto, Christian, Hindu, Jain, Zoroastrian, Egyptian, Central Asian, Native American, and Afro-Caribbean sources from earliest examples to the present—including mural, image, manuscript, film, codex, and even comic books. It also introduces students to related humanistic categories of study: material and visual culture, theodicy, cosmology, shamanism, transcendentalism, soteriology, eschatology, phantasmagoria, spiritualism, mysticism, theophany, and the historical power of rumor.
Taught by: McDaniel
Activity: Online Course
1.0 Course Unit

RELC 201 Monsters of Japan
Also Offered As: CINM 201
Activity: Online Course
1.0 Course Unit