

# Religious Studies

## 2010 -- Maymester Courses

**May--RLST 202. Natural Science and Religious Life. Anderson (M-F 9:10-12:00)** Maimonides held that both the natural science and religious thinking have the same goal, namely to understand the nature of the universe we inhabit so that we can learn how to best live our lives as human beings. Both believe that if we have accurate knowledge of reality, we will be able to lead happier, healthier and more fulfilled lives. This course is an examination of the ways that religion and science interact, offering their various descriptions of the world and the ways that all things are related. The course focuses on particular areas where science and religion clash. Some theories of the after life, and the environmental crisis. The course will make use of a wide range of materials from philosophical, ethical and religious literatures to historical documentaries and representations of religion and science in science fiction. There will be four short essays (5-7 pages).

**May – RLST 255. Job and Ecclesiastes. Crenshaw (M-F 9:10-12:00)** The rise of doubt in these and other biblical books (including Psalms) and in related literature from Mesopotamia, Egypt, and Syria. The ways in which biblical books and other literature of the time struggle to address the perennial theodicy questions: i.e. Where is God when good people suffer? When evil triumphs?

**May – RLST 294.01 – Special Topics: Culture, Religion, and Politics of Contemporary Arab World. Hamad (M-F 9:10-12:00)** The course starts with the period before Islam (roughly the two centuries before the birth of Prophet Muhammad in 570 A.D.). It explores the importance of poetry and language for the Arabs, the establishment of Islam in Madinah, and the impact of expansion on both Muslims and the Qur'an as a text. Gives a brief historical background about the destruction of Baghdad by the Mongol hordes, the establishment of Mamluk power in Cairo, the rise of the Ottomans, and the impact of an impinging European domination on Arab societies. The course focuses on the modern period. It evaluates the nineteenth and twentieth-century Islamic movements and their legacy for present-day Islam. The role of women, both past and present, and the Muslim-Christian encounters as reflected in the works of famous Arab writers and novelists, will also be investigated. Because of the time constraints of the Maymester, we may not explore these and other issues in great details. Videos and slides are used where appropriate. There is no prerequisite for this course and no knowledge of Arabic is necessary. Students will take a short exam, write short paper(s) and present to class their findings on topics of their choice. In lieu of the exam, students may write a short term paper not exceeding 10 pages in length.

**May – RLST 294.02 – Special Topics: Religion and Culture of Egypt [3].** Two weeks of travel in Egypt plus lectures on campus. *Sail the Nile River, swim the Red Sea; climb Mt. Sinai.* .  
Est. cost: \$6,500 including airfare  
For more info contact Sherif Barsoum, Director, SSS at 3-0812

or [sherif.barsoum@vanderbilt.edu](mailto:sherif.barsoum@vanderbilt.edu).

*Students will visit numerous sites while in Cairo, Alexandria and Sharm El Sheikh including religious sites such as a 6th century Jewish Temple, a 7th century church and a 14th century Mosque; and historic sites such as the Pyramids of Giza, the Alexandria Library, the National Museum, and the Sphinx.*

*Eligibility - The program is open to all majors with good academic standing, and with consent of instructor.*

## Religious Studies

### 2010-- Summer Courses

**First Summer Session—ARA 210A. Elementary Arabic I. Hamad (M-F 10:10-1:30)** Arabic is one of the most widely spoken languages in the world and one of the official languages of the United Nations. It's the vehicle of a great civilization that embodies thousands of years of heritage and has contributed significantly to the Renaissance.

This course aims at providing you with a solid background in all four skills, i.e., listening, speaking, reading, and writing in Arabic. It seeks to establish a useful vocabulary base that you can use to converse at the elementary level, and familiarize you with the basic structure of the Arabic sentence. It also introduces you to the fundamentals of Arabic grammar to produce simple Arabic sentences and sustain conversation orally, and to produce sentences and paragraphs in writing within the range of vocabulary and grammar taught. The course will emphasize the comprehension of simple sentences both spoken and *written* within the attained range of Arabic grammar and vocabulary. Understanding some cultural facets of the Arab world is an important component of the course. Five contact hour per week and individual work in the language laboratory. Students with prior Arabic experience will have to take a placement test. No exceptions.

**Second Summer Session—ARA 210B. Elementary Arabic II. Gure (10:10-1:30)** Don't miss part two of Arabic made EASY and Fun through interactive teaching methods. Starting with a thorough review of basic Arabic grammar and vocabulary. This intermediate course in Classical Arabic will focus on Arabic grammar and conversation, and will enhance students' reading, writing, and speaking skills. Arabic is one of the most widely spoken languages in the world and one of the official languages of the United Nations, and the vehicle of a great civilization, which embodies thousands of years of heritage, and has contributed greatly to the Renaissance and to the whole of European Culture.