

University of Ghana
Department for the study of Religions
Sample Fall Courses

SREL 301 Theology and Ethics of the Old Testament

Knowledge of God, Covenant, Theology of kingship, Messianic expectation, Problem of suffering, The Destiny of Man, Old Testament perspective on death. Basic characteristics of Old Testament Ethics, the concept of truth, possession and use of wealth, real estate. The Decalogue, work and worship, concept of law and administration of justice.

SREL 303 Qur'anic Studies

Pre-Islamic Arabia, a century before Islam. Life of the Prophet Muhammad in Mecca and Medina. Revelation, preservation and compilation - The Mecca and Madinan Suwar. Exegesis - textual study of selected Suwar of the Qur'an, including Suwar 1 – 5.

SREL 305 African Indigenous Religion

Critical study of existing sources. Methods and approaches to studying African Traditional Religion. Reflections on some themes on the structure and characteristics of African Traditional Religion with emphasis on their relevance for society. Rituals. Reflections on some basic issues in relation to beliefs in African Traditional Religion, e.g., Life, the hereafter, humanity in relation to nature/ ecology. Concepts of community, ethics and destiny. Cult personnel. Current trends.

SREL 307 Introduction to Biblical Exegesis and Hermeneutics

Definition of terms (exegesis; Hermeneutics); Biblical Hermeneutics and Exegesis in historical perspective. Historical-critical exegesis; Structuralist exegesis; Post-modern exegesis - the philosophical presuppositions and cultural conditions, the methods and the advantages and disadvantages of each of these approaches. An Integrated Hermeneutical Model of Contextual exegesis.

SREL 317 Background to the New Testament

The political, economic, social and religious situation of Palestine at the time of Christ. The attempts at the hellenization of Palestine under Antiochus IV Epiphanes. Roman involvement in Palestine from 63 B.C. to the Bar Cochba Revolt (A.D. 132-135). Religious groups and institutions in Judaism; feasts and festivals.

SREL 319 New Testament Introduction

The history of the formation of the New Testament canon. Outstanding literary problems found in the Gospels (e.g., Synoptic Problem, Proto-Luke hypothesis). Questions of authorship, date, place and purpose of writing, etc, of the New Testament books.

SREL 325 The History of the Early Church

The Jewish and Graeco-Roman setting and the beginnings of the Church. Christianity and the Roman Empire. Attacks on Christianity and the work of the Apologists. Outstanding religious movements and personalities. Asceticism and Monasticism. Christianity in North Africa.

SREL 327 The Reformation

The background to the Reformation. The causes of the Reformation. Erasmus and Martin Luther. Martin Luther and the Holy Roman See. The Formation of Lutheran Churches. The Roman Catholic Reformation (The Counter-Reformation). The Reformation and the emergence of Missionary Societies.

SREL 335 Christian Ethics

General introduction to ethics. Distinctive characteristics of Christian Ethics. Development of Old Testament Ethics. Some ethical teachings of Jesus, Paul, the Reformers. The Place of the Holy Spirit in the moral life. Christian decision-making process. Some contemporary social problems considered from Christian ethical and moral perspectives, e.g., genetic engineering, abortion, extra-marital relations, teenage pregnancy, gambling, drug addiction, Church-State relations, work ethic, gospel and culture.

SREL 337 The Life of Muhammad

Arabia in the age of Jahiliyya. Arabia's relationship with Persian, Byzantine and Abyssinian empires. Early life of Muhammad. Call to prophethood. Muhammad at Mecca. Muhammad at Medina. Death of Muhammad. The Prophet Muhammad in the writings of the Orientalists.

SREL 341 Islamic Ethics

General introduction to ethics. Characteristics of Muslim Ethics and morality. Selected moral philosophers and theologians, e.g., Imam Ghazzali. Inner and external actions. Moral education and enforcement of morals. Ethical and moral issues, e.g., human rights, abortion, AIDS, usury, teenage pregnancy.

SREL 347 Religion in Ghana

Living expression of Religion in Ghana: Attitudes of individual religions in Ghana with regard to the State and Politics, Education, Trade, Agriculture and Social Work, Health and Healing, and the Media. Current religious trends and Inter-Religious dialogue.

SREL 353 Gender Issues in Religion and Culture

Definition of religion, gender and culture and how these are related. Theoretical and methodological issues; critique and deconstruction of religious traditions, beliefs and practices with regard to gender; reconstructing images of gender and power relationship. New and renewing models of gender relationship in the work of such groups and bodies as Circle of Concerned African Theologians, Institute of Women in Religion and Culture, FOMWAG, etc. leadership structures in major religions in Ghana. Violence and religion.

SREL 355 African Traditional Ethics

Diversity and uniformity of Values in Traditional African Societies. The moral standard. Survey of moral ideals and practices in African societies. Virtues and Vices. Critical study of methods of moral education and enforcement of morality. The place of community, tradition and religion in morals. Study of the works of selected writers on African ethics. Modernism and traditional values and practices. Reform. Discussion of some contemporary social problems from the traditional perspective.

SREL 357 Introduction to the Pentateuch

Historical background of Ancient Israel and the Text of the Old Testament; The formation of the Pentateuch: principal theories and their values; relationship between narrative and legal Texts; the Sinaitic covenant and its importance in the history of Israel; exegetical study of selected texts.

SREL 359 Introduction to the Synoptic Gospels

The issue of the authorship of the Synoptic Gospels, their dating, place of writing, background, addressees and purpose. The Synoptic Problem. The contents, concerns and main theological themes of these gospels.

SREL 361 New Testament Greek I

Introduction to the grammar, syntax and morphology of New Testament Greek.

SREL 365 Religion and the Renaissance

The rise of the Renaissance. Renaissance and Reformation. The rise of rationalism and Religion. The influence of Liberal Protestantism. The Renaissance and the 19th Century Missions in Ghana. The Renaissance and Religions in Ghana: effects and impact. The future of Religion in Ghana.

SREL 367 Christianity in the Middle Ages

The Growth of Christianity 700 to 1300. Christianity and Islam. The Papacy. The Religious Orders. Dissent and Pentecostalism in the Middle Ages. Magic and Witchcraft: European and Ghanaian. Religion and the Decline of Magic. The Rise and fall of scholasticism. Late Medieval Missions and Ghana.

SREL 371 History of Religions in West Africa

Introduction to the history of the major religious traditions in West Africa, i.e., Traditional Religion, Islam and Christianity. Their modes of growth, and main institutions; their encounter with each other; modern religious trends in the West African region.

SREL 373 Historical Studies of Africa Indigenous Religions

Historical development of African Indigenous Religions (A.I.R.) as an academic subject, definitions and problems. Attitudes and stereotypes that affect the research and study of AIR. Historical encounter between African Indigenous Religions and Islam, Christianity etc. Current developments in the study area.

SREL375 Arabic II (Pre-req.: SREL 314; Unavailable to students of Arabic)

Lessons in Grammar. Selected long passages from both the Qur'an and the Hadith. Local and foreign drama and novels on religious topics.

SREL 401 The Comparative Study of Religion

Treatment of themes in Religions comparatively in order to uncover universal conceptual patterns of religiosity and how these are expressed contextually in different Faiths.

Treatment of such themes as conceptions and categories of Ultimate reality; the concept of Man; Soteriology; Rituals, etc.

SREL 411 Islamic Spirituality

The origin and development of Sufism. Asceticism, mysticism and pantheism. Al-Ghazzali and Sufism. The Fraternities. The origin and development of Islamic Philosophy. Orthodoxy, Rationalism. Al-Ashari, Al-Kindi, Al-Farabi, Ibn Sina and Al-Ghazzali.

SREL 413 Islamic History and Civilization

The study of the Umayyads, the Abbasids and the Fatimids: the rise of the Caliphate (Khilafa). The conflict between Mu'awiya and Ali. The transfer of power to Mu'awiya. The genealogy of the Umayyads. The achievements and fall of the Umayyads. Administration of the territories. Greek, Jewish and Christian influence. Theological developments. Intellectual, scientific and cultural achievements. Call of the Abbasids. The origin of the Fatimids. Genealogy of their Caliphs. Mahdi Ubayd Allah. Fatimid Caliphate in Egypt. Jawhar and the foundation of al-alhira (Cairo). Cairo as the seat of Fatimid Empire. The achievements and fall of the Fatimids.

SREL 415 Religion and Society

Religion and Ethics as socializing influences. Religion and development. Elements of individuality and plurality in religious communities and their relevance for Ghanaian society. Religious faith, property and wealth. Religion and politics in Ghana. Religious communities and the State in Ghana.

SREL 417 Religion and Human Rights

The cultural and historical connections between religion and human rights – paradigms that enable an appreciation of the differences and agreements between religious traditions and the modern human rights movement. Religious and cultural roots of human rights; human dignity as a religious concept; human rights natural rights and 'divine' law; the universality of international human rights; African religious values and human rights; religious pluralism and the right to freedom of religion; religion as an instrument of abuse; religion as a resource for the protection and promotion of human rights.

SREL 419 Introduction to Old Testament Prophetic and Apocalyptic Literature

General Issues: historical and social contexts of the Prophets; origin and final form of the prophetic books: textual types; texts and prophetic phenomenon in the Ancient Near East. The four great collections (Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, and the Twelve Minor Prophets); structure, summary of the content and the redaction history of selected books; reading of some significant passages and theological reflection. Apocalyptic literature; origin and characteristics. The book of Daniel: introduction and reading of important passages.

SREL 421 Introduction to Johannine Literature

The Fourth Gospel; introduction: author, date of composition, relationship with the Synoptics; structure and some characteristic themes; exegetical study of selected passages. The Letters: their relation with the fourth Gospel; their literary structures; exegetical study of selected passages from the First Letter. Revelation: historical background; literary genre and structure; exegetical study of selected passages

SREL 423 Ecological Ethics

Ecology: Definitions. Development of ecological philosophies/ethics. Religion and ecology; Culture and ecology. Approaches to ecological ethics. Theological approaches to ecology. Anthropocentrism/ Ecocentrism. Life ethics and anima: 1 rights. Eco-tourism. Sustainability of the ecosystem.

SREL 425 African Indigenous Religions and Development

Defining major concepts: African, indigenous, religion(s), development. Indigenous beliefs and practices, concepts of development. Attitudes towards African Indigenous Religions, knowledge systems and their roles in modern concepts of development. Impact and problems. Emerging trends: leadership systems e.g. priest and priestesses, Nkomo, chiefs, queen-mothers and other traditional leaders and local government in relation to community development.

SREL 427 Intra and Inter-faith Relations

The origins of the Ecumenical Movement. International Ecumenical Movements, e.g., World Council of Churches (WCC) and all African Conference of Churches (AACC). The Second Vatican Council. Inter-faith dialogue, Christian –Muslim relations at the international, regional, national and grassroots levels in West Africa, especially Ghana. The Parliament of World Religions, etc.

SREL 431 Advance Quranic Studies

General introduction to the Quran as a Revelation, Quranic exegesis, Peculiarities in Interpretation of the Quran, Approaches to the study of the Quran, Early schools of classical and medieval exegesis, Survey of Tafsir literature, Studies on the Translation of the Quran, Modern Quranic Translations and Commentaries, Themes in the Quran.

SREL 433 Hebrew I

Elementary knowledge of Hebrew grammar, simple sentence formation, noun sentence, verbal sentence, etc.

SREL 435 The Theology of the Gospels

The historical Jesus; the individual gospels of Mark, Matthew, Luke and John and their presentations of Jesus. E.g., Mark's presentation of Jesus as a miracle worker; the relationship between the old Israel and the Church in Matthew and Jesus as a teacher of ethics; universalism in Luke; the Logos and Paraclete concepts in John; etc.

SREL 437 The Doctrine of the Early Church (Pre-req.: SREL 325)

Doctrinal beginnings in the Early Church. Trinitarian heresies (e.g., modalism), Christological heresies (e.g., Arianism) and the Church's response to these heresies. The development of Trinitarian and Christological doctrines. Christ's saving work. Sin, grace and human freedom. The Christian community. The Doctrine of the sacraments. The Christian hope.

SREL 439 Islam in West Africa

North Africa and the spread and dissemination of Islam to the Western and Central Sudan. Islam in the ancient kingdom of the Western Central Sudan. The spread of Islam to the Volta basin. Modes of and factors facilitating the dissemination of Islam. The Fulani Jihads. Islam, Western colonization and decolonization. The Sufi brotherhood. Education in Islam and Islamic Institutions. Current trends in Islam with special attention to Ghana.

SREL 441 The Old Testament and African Life and Thought

Attitude to the Old Testament in the history of the Church. African Christians and the Old Testament. Comparative study: theology of nature, spirit possession, the individual and the community, the concept of alienation, death and beyond, etc.

SREL 443 Comparative Ethics

A study of the teachings of some ethical systems and moral theologians, e.g., African Traditional, Christian, Muslim, Humanist, ethical systems. Analysis and comparison of basic themes and values such as the summum bonum and the ideals of life; the moral standard: scales of values; guides to action: moral education, enforcement of morals; and moral reformation: moral decision-making process; virtues and vices; cherished values and abhorred vices. Religion and Ethics. Problem of a national ethic. Discussion of attitudes to some contemporary social problems, e.g., human rights, abortion, homosexuality, drug trafficking and addiction, war and violence, work and discipline.

SREL 445 Modern Trends in Islam

Contemporary global trends in Islam. Important themes such as misconceptions about Islam, Islam and human rights, Islam and terrorism, especially after September 11, 2001, Islam and the West, Islam and the mass media, Islam and global peace and development, Islam and Western democracy, etc.