

## Dr. Jonathan Geen

Jonathan Geen, who obtained his degrees at the University of Toronto (B.Sc., M.Sc.) and McMaster University (M.A., Ph.D.), teaches courses on religion in India, China and Japan. His research focuses on the intersection between medieval Hindu and Jain mythology, for the purposes of reconstructing the early history of Hindu-Jain interactions. He has published numerous articles on this topic, based upon an examination of Hindu and Jain texts in Sanskrit, Ardha-Māgadhī and Jain Mahārāṣṭrī.



## Dr. Gyongyi (Ginger) Hegedus

Gyongyi (Ginger) Hegedus holds a Ph.D. from the Catholic University of Leuven (Belgium) and an L.M.S. from the University of Toronto. She is cross-appointed in Philosophy and Religious Studies at King's. She is interested in Medieval Islamic and Jewish thought, especially rational theology and the cross-sections of Islamic and Jewish mysticism. Her publications include books, translations of the works of Saadya Gaon and articles in diverse languages.



...peace begins with mutual understanding

### For more information

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# KING'S

## World Religions



## Department of Religious Studies

Get connected. Make a difference.



## Why study World Religions?

For thousands of years, the great religions of the world, both East and West, have served as treasure chests brimming with the collected brilliance of some of the wisest and most influential people ever to have walked the earth. In addition to theology, philosophy, ethics, art, music, ritual, and guidelines for personal conduct and communal living, these religious traditions contain profound insights into human nature, the meaning of life, ways to overcome suffering, ways to achieve mystical union with the divine, the need for compassion and understanding, and many other various and sundry pearls of wisdom. Thus, World Religions & Cultures is a fascinating study all on its own, for its own sake.

But the study of World Religions & Cultures is also highly practical. In an ever-shrinking world, we constantly find ourselves surrounded by peoples of different religions and cultures, many of whom we simply do not understand. And a lack of understanding often leads to tragic consequences, as is made evident every night on the evening news. Before you can change the world for the better, however, you first need to understand it. On its own, or combined with other fields such as Psychology, Sociology or Social Work, a study of the religions and cultures of the globe is an essential ingredient in bringing positive change to the world.



## Course Offerings

The World Religions & Cultures program provides a wide variety of courses covering most of the major religious traditions, including:

- Buddhism
- Christianity
- Confucianism
- Daoism
- Hinduism
- Islam
- Jainism
- Judaism
- Shinto
- Sikhism

### Many Courses Available as Electives

Many of our courses have no pre-requisites, and thus make for fascinating electives for those specializing in other areas of study.



## Endless Questions World Religions and Cultures

How did the Buddha achieve Enlightenment, and what does that even mean? If Judaism, Christianity and Islam all related to one another, why do they have such a hard time getting along? Why is a man known as Confucius still venerated in China 2500 years after he passed away? What does that cool-looking Yin-Yang symbol actually symbolize? Why was the spread of Islam so rapid and so successful? How and why did Yoga, born in India, become so popular in the West? Was Jesus a Christian or a Jew? What do Japanese Zen monks think about while they sit for hours in meditation (and why does the Zen master smack his disciples on the head with a stick)? Where did Mahatma Gandhi get his ideas about non-violent resistance? What does it mean to “keep kosher”? Why do “Whirling Dervishes” whirl? And so it goes ... on and on and on!

### What graduates are saying

“For me, religion has always been one of the most intriguing and thought-provoking aspects of humanity. Religion has undoubtedly had a central place in the lives of individuals across all places and times, and I think it is impossible to understand world history and cultures without looking at the influence of religion. The World Religions & Cultures program has allowed me to fulfill my desire to better understand human nature and help shape my own philosophy of life.”

Daphné Gagnon '16  
World Religions & Cultures (Honors Specialization)