RELIGIOUS STUDIES

Departmental Notes

Subject Code: RELS
World Wide Web Address: www.queensu.ca/religion/ (https://www.queensu.ca/religion/)

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Overview

Religion plays a major role in shaping and influencing various cultures and historical and political movements around the world. Thus, understanding religious traditions and their impact on diverse modern issues is vital preparation for building a career in the global marketplace. Studying religion involves examining the history of religious traditions, comparing the ideas and values of different religious systems, and understanding the place and function of religion in society. Students of Religious Studies investigate why people are religious, where religion comes from, and how it should be defined and understood.

Faculty


Programs

• Religious Studies – Major (Arts) – Bachelor of Arts (Honours) (https://queensu-ca-public.courseleaf.com/arts-science/schools-departments-programs/religious-studies/religious-studies-major-arts-ba-honours/
• Religious Studies – Medial (Arts) – Bachelor of Arts (Honours) (https://queensu-ca-public.courseleaf.com/arts-science/schools-departments-programs/religious-studies/religious-studies-medial-arts-ba-honours/)
• Religious Studies – General (Arts) – Bachelor of Arts (https://queensu-ca-public.courseleaf.com/arts-science/schools-departments-programs/religious-studies/religious-studies-general-arts-ba/)
• Religious Studies – Minor (Arts) (https://queensu-ca-public.courseleaf.com/arts-science/schools-departments-programs/religious-studies/religious-studies-minor-arts/)

Courses

RELS 131 World Religions/Religious Worlds Units: 6.00
Introduces religion in India, China and Japan; also the movements of Judaism, Christianity, Islam and Humanism. NOTE Also offered online. Consult Arts and Science Online. Learning Hours may vary.
LEARNING HOURS 228 (48L;24T;156P)
Requirements: Prerequisite None.
Course Equivalencies: RELS131; RELS131B
Offering Faculty: Faculty of Arts and Science

RELS 137 Religion and Film Units: 3.00
This course will explore how religion is portrayed in film, noting particularly the depiction of religious belief, practices, practitioners, and institutions, and the use of religious symbols and metaphors.
LEARNING HOURS 126 (12L24G;90P).
Requirements: Prerequisite None. Equivalency RELS 237.
Offering Faculty: Faculty of Arts and Science

RELS 140 Religion and Science Units: 3.00
This course examines the categories of both science and religion and attempts to explore the possible relationships between them. Case studies involve: medicine and health, relationships with other animals, concepts of human nature, super/natural ontologies, and science-and-technology-based religions.
LEARNING HOURS 120 (24L12T;84P).
Requirements: Prerequisite None.
Offering Faculty: Faculty of Arts and Science
RELS 161 Contemporary Problems in Religion and Culture Units: 6.00
Explores religious issues in culture, literature, politics and social ethics.
LEARNING HOURS 228 (48L;24T;156P).
Requirements: Prerequisite None.
Offering Faculty: Faculty of Arts and Science

RELS 162 Religion, News and Media Units: 3.00
This course will identify and describe characteristics of religion as they appear in news reports of social, political, and economic aspects of public life and analyze how the news presents, shapes, and creates perceptions of religion in public discourse.
LEARNING HOURS 120 (24L;12T;84P).
Requirements: Prerequisite None.
Offering Faculty: Faculty of Arts and Science

RELS 163 Religion and Popular Culture Units: 3.00
This course will identify and describe characteristics of religion as they appear in popular culture (e.g. fashion; comics; movies; art; music; novels; sitcoms; dramas; video games) and analyze how such depictions present, shape, and create perceptions of religion in public discourse.
LEARNING HOURS 120 (24L;12T;84P).
Requirements: Prerequisite None.
Offering Faculty: Faculty of Arts and Science

RELS 200 Religion and Global Development Units: 3.00
This course will examine the vital role that different religious ideas and groups play in major development organizations and initiatives. Students will look at how religious ideas and groups have influenced issues around global poverty, pandemics, child welfare, economics and debt relief, education, etc.
LEARNING HOURS 120 (36L;9G;75P).
Requirements: Prerequisite Level 2 or above and 6.0 units in RELS at the 100-level.
Offering Faculty: Faculty of Arts and Science

RELS 201 Topics in Religious Studies I Units: 3.00
A topic of current interest in Religious Studies not covered in other available courses.
LEARNING HOURS 120 (36L;84P).
Requirements: Prerequisite Level 2 or above or (6.0 units in RELS at the 100-level).
Offering Faculty: Faculty of Arts and Science

RELS 202 Traditions in Religious Studies Units: 3.00
A topic of current interest in Religious Studies not covered in other available courses.
LEARNING HOURS 120 (36L;84P).
Requirements: Prerequisite Level 2 or above or (6.0 units in RELS at the 100-level).
Offering Faculty: Faculty of Arts and Science

RELS 209 Radical Jews Units: 3.00
This course examines the life and work of Jewish radical thinkers: analysts, anarchists, communists, feminists, environmentalists, and anti-nationalists. We will be interested both in the ways they created difficulties for dominant cultural and political institutions, and traditional Jewish authorities.
LEARNING HOURS 126 (12L;12T;12O;90P).
Requirements: Prerequisite Level 2 or above and 6.0 units in RELS at the 100-level.
Offering Faculty: Faculty of Arts and Science

RELS 210 Hebrew Bible Units: 3.00
Introduction in the light of the political, cultural, and religious history of ancient Israel and Judah.
LEARNING HOURS 120 (36L;84P).
Requirements: Prerequisite Level 2 or above or (6.0 units in RELS at the 100-level).
Offering Faculty: Faculty of Arts and Science

RELS 212 Mythology of the Ancient Near East Units: 3.00
Similarities and differences in the myths of ancient Egypt and Mesopotamia will be explored on the basis of material remains (e.g., the pyramids and temple architecture) and texts.
LEARNING HOURS 120 (36L;84P).
Requirements: Prerequisite Level 2 or above or (6.0 units in RELS at the 100-level).
Offering Faculty: Faculty of Arts and Science

RELS 214 The New Testament Units: 3.00
As religious literature expressing the witness to Jesus; and as source for the history, trends and problems of early Christianity.
LEARNING HOURS 120 (36L;84P).
Requirements: Prerequisite Level 2 or above or (6.0 units in RELS at the 100-level).
Offering Faculty: Faculty of Arts and Science

RELS 218 Christianity Units: 3.00
Introduction to Christianity as a religious tradition through its texts, its history and its contemporary forms.
LEARNING HOURS 120 (36L;84P).
Requirements: Prerequisite Level 2 or above or (6.0 units in RELS at the 100-level).
Offering Faculty: Faculty of Arts and Science
**RELS 221  New Religious Movements Units: 3.00**
All religions were once new, small, and unusual to the cultures around them - often therefore attracting suspicion. This course examines the practices, beliefs, and histories of several NRMs, and why some gain legitimacy while others get derided as "cults." Doing so illuminates broader processes like mythmaking, Othering, and (de)secularization.
LEARNING HOURS 126 (24L;12G;6O;84P).
**Requirements:** Prerequisite Level 2 or above or (6.0 units in RELS at the 100-level).
**Offering Faculty:** Faculty of Arts and Science

**RELS 222  The Hindu World Units: 3.00**
Developments through 3,000 years of Indian history; the Upanishads, the Bhagavad Gita, Yoga and Vedanta, mythology of Vishnu and Shiva, and recent Hindu thinkers (e.g., Tagore, Aurobindo).
LEARNING HOURS 120 (36L;84P).
**Requirements:** Prerequisite Level 2 or above or (6.0 units in RELS at the 100-level).
**Offering Faculty:** Faculty of Arts and Science

**RELS 223  Buddhism Units: 3.00**
Buddhism in India, the life and teaching of Gautama the Buddha, and the growth of the Theravadin and Mahayanist traditions.
LEARNING HOURS 120 (36L;84P).
**Requirements:** Prerequisite Level 2 or above or (6.0 units in RELS at the 100-level).
**Offering Faculty:** Faculty of Arts and Science

**RELS 224  Taoism Units: 3.00**
The philosophy, worldview, spirituality and ethics of Taoism, China's organized indigenous religion, in Chinese history and in the contemporary world.
LEARNING HOURS 120 (36L;84P).
**Requirements:** Prerequisite Level 2 or above or (6.0 units in RELS at the 100-level).
**Offering Faculty:** Faculty of Arts and Science

**RELS 226  Islam Units: 3.00**
Historical and topical survey of Islam, its development through the study of its rise, institutionalization of its beliefs and practices, formation of its theology, law, mysticism; as well as its modern interpretations and practices.
LEARNING HOURS 120 (36L;84P).
**Requirements:** Prerequisite Level 2 or above or (6.0 units in RELS at the 100-level).
**Offering Faculty:** Faculty of Arts and Science

**RELS 227  Indigenous Tradition in North America Units: 3.00**
Introduction to the study of Indigenous traditions in North America.
LEARNING HOURS 120 (36L;84P).
**Requirements:** Prerequisite Level 2 or above or (6.0 units in RELS at the 100-level).
**Offering Faculty:** Faculty of Arts and Science

**RELS 228  Sages, Scholars and Rabbis Units: 3.00**
The religious institutions produced by the Jews from the second to the seventh centuries. This course will explore in critical fashion the principal areas of rabbinic activity including: topics on jurisprudence, philosophy, social and political thinking, the role of tradition and scriptures.
LEARNING HOURS 120 (36L;84P).
**Requirements:** Prerequisite Level 2 or above or (6.0 units in RELS at the 100-level).
**Offering Faculty:** Faculty of Arts and Science

**RELS 229  Confucianism Units: 3.00**
The philosophy, worldview, spirituality and ethics of Confucianism in its classical, modern and contemporary forms.
LEARNING HOURS 120 (36L;84P).
**Requirements:** Prerequisite Level 2 or above or (6.0 units in RELS at the 100-level).
**Offering Faculty:** Faculty of Arts and Science

**RELS 232  Religion and Social Movements Units: 3.00**
This course will examine the field of social movements studies, with a particular focus on how religion has played a role in the rise of social movements, how religious communities have been influenced by social movements, and how mobilization and activism around social justice issues is coloured by religion and culture.
LEARNING HOURS 120 (36L;9G;75P).
**Requirements:** Prerequisite Level 2 or above or (6.0 units in RELS at the 100-level).
**Offering Faculty:** Faculty of Arts and Science

**RELS 234  Judaism Units: 3.00**
An introduction to the self-definition of Judaism through an analysis of the concepts of God, Torah and Israel past and present. Also, a preliminary study of the struggles facing Jews in Europe, the State of Israel and North America.
LEARNING HOURS 120 (36L;84P).
**Requirements:** Prerequisite Level 2 or above or (6.0 units in RELS at the 100-level).
**Offering Faculty:** Faculty of Arts and Science
RELS 235  Religion and Environment  Units: 3.00
Examines how religious traditions shape human values and
behaviours towards the environment and how environmental
problems are shaping the evolution of religious and spiritual
traditions.
LEARNING HOURS 120 (36L;84P).
Requirements: Prerequisite Level 2 or above or (6.0 units in
RELS at the 100-level).
Offering Faculty: Faculty of Arts and Science

RELS 236  Religion and Sex  Units: 3.00
Views of and attitudes toward sexuality in selected world
religions; the place of sexuality in religious traditions;
relationship between sex and the sacred; specific topics such
as marriage, gay and lesbian issues, contraception will be
chosen.
LEARNING HOURS 126 (36L;12G;6O;72P).
Requirements: Prerequisite Level 2 or above or (6.0 units in
RELS at the 100-level).
Offering Faculty: Faculty of Arts and Science

RELS 239  Religion and Sport  Units: 3.00
This course will provide an overview of the relatively new and
expanding body of research that examines the relationship
between sport, spirituality and religion. Topics including
play, games, flow, ritual, prayer, sports stars as role models,
doping, fandom and miracles in sport will be explored.
LEARNING HOURS 129 (36L;93P).
Requirements: Prerequisite Level 2 or above or (6.0 units in
RELS at the 100-level).
Offering Faculty: Faculty of Arts and Science

RELS 240  Magic, Witchcraft, and the Supernatural  Units: 3.00
Studies the differences between the categories of religion,
magic, witchcraft, the supernatural, etc., as constructed
in scholarship, popular culture, and practice. Focuses on
examples such as New Religious Movements, depictions of
magic in film and TV, and moral panics over alleged occult
practices, and the histories that let us make sense of them.
LEARNING HOURS 120 (24L;6G;12O;78P).
Requirements: Prerequisite Level 2 or above or (6.0 units in
RELS at the 100-level).
Offering Faculty: Faculty of Arts and Science

RELS 250  Mythology of Heroes, Heroines and Saints  Units: 3.00
Their place in religious consciousness with a variety of
examples.
LEARNING HOURS 120 (36L;84P).
Requirements: Prerequisite Level 2 or above or (6.0 units in
RELS at the 100-level).
Offering Faculty: Faculty of Arts and Science

RELS 252  Mysticism  Units: 3.00
The academic study of mysticism; mystical movements; and
mystics.
LEARNING HOURS 120 (36L;84P).
Requirements: Prerequisite Level 2 or above or (6.0 units in
RELS at the 100-level).
Offering Faculty: Faculty of Arts and Science

RELS 255  Research Methods in Religious Studies  Units: 3.00
An investigation into the techniques of critical reading and
writing for research in Religious Studies.
LEARNING HOURS 120 (36S;84P).
Requirements: Prerequisite Level 2 or above or (6.0 units in
RELS at the 100-level). Equivalency RELS 355.
Offering Faculty: Faculty of Arts and Science

RELS 256  Religion and Social Ethics  Units: 3.00
Moral problems and religious responses: e.g., sexual morality;
vigilance; civil disobedience.
LEARNING HOURS 120 (36L;84P).
Requirements: Prerequisite Level 2 or above or (6.0 units in
RELS at the 100-level).
Offering Faculty: Faculty of Arts and Science

RELS 296  Islam in Canada  Units: 3.00
This course examines the historical and contemporary
expressions of Islam in Canada. Starting from early
Muslim migrants to Canada to current issues of media
representations, Islamophobia, and gender and sexuality, as
they are unfolding in Canadian contexts for Muslims.
LEARNING HOURS 138 (18L;18S;12G;90P).
Requirements: Prerequisite Level 2 or above or (6.0 units in
RELS at the 100-level).
Offering Faculty: Faculty of Arts and Science

RELS 301  Themes in Religious Studies  Units: 3.00
A topic of current interest in Religious Studies not covered in
other available courses.
LEARNING HOURS 132 (36L;96P).
Requirements: Prerequisite Level 3 or above or (6.0 units in
RELS at the 100-level).
Offering Faculty: Faculty of Arts and Science

RELS 302  Traditions in Religious Studies  Units: 3.00
A topic of current interest in Religious Studies not covered in
other available courses.
LEARNING HOURS 120 (36L;84P).
Requirements: Prerequisite Level 3 or above or (6.0 units in
RELS at the 100-level).
Offering Faculty: Faculty of Arts and Science
RELS 312 Christian Feminist Theology Units: 3.00
Issues raised by the feminist critique of traditional Christian theology and feminist attempts at theological reconstruction. LEARNING HOURS 132 (36L;96P).
Requirements: Prerequisite Level 3 or above or (6.0 units in RELS at the 100-level).
Offering Faculty: Faculty of Arts and Science

RELS 321 Greek and Roman Religions Units: 3.00
A study of the development and organization of non-civic religious associations in the Greek and Roman empires using inscriptions, papyri, and literary texts. Insight into religious practices of the Greco-Roman period comes through exploration of groups organized by deity, cult, occupation, or ethnic identity, and the so-called mystery religions. LEARNING HOURS 132 (36L;96P).
Requirements: Prerequisite Level 3 or above or (6.0 units in RELS at the 100-level).
Offering Faculty: Faculty of Arts and Science

RELS 331 Religion and Violence Units: 3.00
Links between violence and religious beliefs, practices and institutions; for example, sacrifice, holy wars, scapegoating, and suicide. LEARNING HOURS 132 (36L;96P).
Requirements: Prerequisite Level 3 or above or (6.0 units in RELS at the 100-level).
Offering Faculty: Faculty of Arts and Science

RELS 322 Yoga in India and the West Units: 3.00
Surveys the history and philosophy of yoga in India and the West.
NOTE Yoga practicum: estimated cost $85.
LEARNING HOURS 128 (36L;80C;84P).
Requirements: Prerequisite Level 3 or above or (6.0 units in RELS at the 100-level).
Offering Faculty: Faculty of Arts and Science

RELS 326 Religion and Politics in Muslim Societies Units: 3.00
Explores the role of religion in the politics of Muslim societies with particular attention to the modern period. LEARNING HOURS 132 (36L;96P).
Requirements: Prerequisite Level 3 or above or (6.0 units in RELS at the 100-level).
Offering Faculty: Faculty of Arts and Science

RELS 328 Interpretation of Apocalyptic Literature Units: 3.00
The primary focus of the course will be the theological perspectives and social functions of apocalyptic in select religious traditions. The course will also survey the appropriation of apocalyptic themes throughout history in artistic forms such as art, fiction, and film, with particular attention to our modern times and cultures. LEARNING HOURS 132 (36L;96P).
Requirements: Prerequisite Level 3 or above or (6.0 units in RELS at the 100-level).
Offering Faculty: Faculty of Arts and Science

RELS 332 Race, Ethnicity, and Religion Units: 3.00
The course will explore the intersection of race, ethnicity, and religion, alongside gender, sexuality, culture and more. It will challenge students to think about how racial identities, theories, and movements implicate(d) the way religious communities construct their own systems and worldviews. LEARNING HOURS 128 (18L;18S;12G;80P).
Requirements: Prerequisite Level 3 or above or (6.0 units in RELS at the 100-level).
Offering Faculty: Faculty of Arts and Science

RELS 334 Jewish Views of the Other Units: 3.00
A study of the tensions that come into play as Jews formulated views of the Other to balance co-existence with them. Source materials include authoritative writings of Jewish commentary and law and social scientific views of them. LEARNING HOURS 132 (36L;96P).
Requirements: Prerequisite Level 3 or above or (6.0 units in RELS at the 100-level).
Offering Faculty: Faculty of Arts and Science

RELS 340 Religion and Democracy Units: 3.00
Deals with the role of religion in the public sphere and its relation to liberal democracy. It examines the (in)compatibility of some tenets of certain religions with modern democratic principles. LEARNING HOURS 132 (36L;96P).
Requirements: Prerequisite Level 3 or above or (6.0 units in RELS at the 100-level).
Offering Faculty: Faculty of Arts and Science

RELS 341 Spirituality, Secularity, and Nonreligion Units: 3.00
A study of the tensions that come into play as Jews formulated views of the Other to balance co-existence with them. Source materials include authoritative writings of Jewish commentary and law and social scientific views of them. LEARNING HOURS 126 (24L;6G;12O;84P).
Requirements: Prerequisite Level 3 or above or (6.0 units in RELS at the 100-level).
Offering Faculty: Faculty of Arts and Science
RELS 345  Religion and Art  Units: 3.00
An examination of discursive, historiographical, and affective aspects of a variety of historical and contemporary artistic expressions (e.g., painting, sculpture, video) through the lens of Religious Studies.
NOTE Field trip: estimated cost $38.
LEARNING HOURS 126 (12L;24G;90P).
Requirements: Prerequisite Level 3 or above or (6.0 units in RELS at the 100-level).
Offering Faculty: Faculty of Arts and Science

RELS 353  Interpretation Of Religion  Units: 6.00
Requirements: (RELS2### AND 99999999)
Offering Faculty: Faculty of Arts and Science

RELS 354  Theory in Religious Studies  Units: 3.00
An introduction to major theoretical approaches to the study of religion.
LEARNING HOURS 132 (36L;96P).
Requirements: Prerequisite Level 3 or above and 6.0 units in RELS at the 200-level. Exclusion A maximum of 6.0 units from RELS 353; RELS 354; RELS 355.
Offering Faculty: Faculty of Arts and Science

RELS 367  Religion and Biomedical Ethics  Units: 3.00
The aim of this course is to provide an overview of some ethical issues that arise at the intersection of biomedicine and religion. These ethical issues include moral distress, consent, beginning of life issues, indigeneity and healing, medically assisted death, gene editing, and anti-aging interventions.
LEARNING HOURS 120 (18L18S;84P).
Requirements: Prerequisite Level 3 or above or (6.0 units in RELS at the 100-level). Equivalency RELS 268.
Offering Faculty: Faculty of Arts and Science

RELS 368  Religion and Business Ethics  Units: 3.00
Students will develop background knowledge and analytic skills necessary to identify and negotiate religious commitments in business relationships and resolve ethical issues around the role of religion in business contexts. We will analyze case studies to explore various ways in which business practitioners can and do address questions arising in everyday interactions in the business world.
LEARNING HOURS 132 (36L;96P).
Requirements: Prerequisite Level 3 or above or (6.0 units in RELS at the 100-level).
Offering Faculty: Faculty of Arts and Science

RELS 385  Religious Fundamentalisms  Units: 3.00
Religious fundamentalism is a modern phenomenon not exclusive to any religion. In the past few decades, religious fundamentalist movements have been shaping new social, cultural and political norms in a predominately secular age. The course explores theoretical aspects and examines specific case studies across various religions and cultures.
LEARNING HOURS 126 (36L;200;70P).
Requirements: Prerequisite Level 3 or above or (6.0 units in RELS at the 100-level).
Offering Faculty: Faculty of Arts and Science

RELS 393  Buddhism in the Modern World  Units: 3.00
Encounter between Buddhism and the West, major movements and thinkers, and socio-politically engaged Buddhism.
LEARNING HOURS 120 (36L;84P).
Requirements: Prerequisite Level 3 or above or (6.0 units in RELS at the 100-level).
Offering Faculty: Faculty of Arts and Science

RELS 394  Religion and Politics in Contemporary China  Units: 3.00
Examines Chinese and foreign religions in mainland China from 1949 to the present day. Topics include the status of established religions, the political control of new religious movements and the resurgence of traditional Chinese religions and ideologies including Daoism and Confucianism.
LEARNING HOURS 132 (36L;96P).
Requirements: Prerequisite Level 3 or above or (6.0 units in RELS at the 100-level).
Offering Faculty: Faculty of Arts and Science

RELS 396  Islam in the Modern World  Units: 3.00
Exploration of Islamic developments since the 19th century: major thinkers, trends of thought, and contemporary movements as responses to modernity.
LEARNING HOURS 132 (36L;96P).
Requirements: Prerequisite Level 3 or above or (6.0 units in RELS at the 100-level).
Offering Faculty: Faculty of Arts and Science

RELS 398  Judaism in the Modern Age  Units: 3.00
The development of modern Jewish thought and practice, including the Reform, Orthodox, Conservative and Reconstructionist movements. The consequences of the Holocaust and the establishment of the modern State of Israel.
LEARNING HOURS 132 (36L;96P).
Requirements: Prerequisite Level 3 or above or (6.0 units in RELS at the 100-level).
Offering Faculty: Faculty of Arts and Science
RELS 401  Honours Seminar  Units: 3.00
Advanced seminar providing detailed reading of one
contemporary theme or thinker in religious studies.
LEARNING HOURS 120 (6L;30S;12O;72P).
Requirements: Prerequisite Level 4 or above and registration
in a (RELS Major or Medial Plan) and a (minimum GPA of 2.60
in 24.0 units in RELS). Corequisite (RELS 354 and [RELS 255 or
RELS 355]) or RELS 353.
Offering Faculty: Faculty of Arts and Science

RELS 451  Contemp Religious Situation  Units: 6.00
Requirements: RELS353
Offering Faculty: Faculty of Arts and Science

RELS 452  The Contemporary Religious Situation  Units: 3.00
Religion in modernity; traditional groups, newer religious
movements, contemporary ideologies and social trends of
religious significance.
LEARNING HOURS 120 (36L;84P).
Requirements: Prerequisite Level 3 or above and registration
in a (RELS Major or Medial Plan). Corequisite (RELS 354 and
[RELS 255 or RELS 355]) or RELS 353. Exclusion RELS 451.
Offering Faculty: Faculty of Arts and Science

RELS 501  Directed Special Studies I  Units: 3.00
Reading courses on topics not covered in other available
courses, arranged with individual members of the
Department.
LEARNING HOURS 120 (12I;108P).
Requirements: Prerequisite Level 4 or above and registration
in the RELS Major Plan and permission of the Department.
Offering Faculty: Faculty of Arts and Science

RELS 502  Directed Special Studies II  Units: 3.00
Reading courses on topics not covered in other available
courses, arranged with individual members of the
Department.
NOTE RELS 502/3.0 may be taken independently or as a
continuation of RELS 501/3.0.
Requirements: Prerequisite Level 4 or above and registration
in the RELS Major Plan and permission of the Department.
Offering Faculty: Faculty of Arts and Science