

WOODSWORTH COLLEGE
University of Toronto
Summer 2023 Program at the University of Siena

RLG290Y0 Special Topics: Religions in Tuscany

1. Instructor:

Dr. Ken Derry is Associate Professor (Teaching Stream) in the Department of Historical Studies at UTM. His teaching and research focus on the ways in which modern literature and film relate to more “traditional” religious beliefs and practices. What might the Bible tell us about *Iron Man*, and vice versa? He has several publications on religion and culture including *The Myth Awakens*, the first book on *Star Wars* by scholars of religion. Ken has received numerous awards for teaching, including the 2013 UTM Teaching Excellence Award and the 2022 UofT President’s Teaching Award. He has 2 cats.

2. Course Description:

In addition to its many (many!) churches, the region of Tuscany is filled with synagogues, temples, and mosques, all with rich histories tied to the history of Italy itself. This course will consider general concepts of religion (e.g., ritual, text, art, and community) in relation to the specific yet very diverse religious life of Tuscany. Our focus will be on the traditions of Buddhism, Christianity, Hinduism, Islam, and Judaism. Students will explore these religions – plus an ancient Roman temple – through visits to many sites throughout Tuscany, including locations in or near Florence, Pisa, Rome, and of course Siena itself.

3. Evaluation:

The requirements for this course are as follows:

Participation	10%
Critical reflection	10%
Group presentation.....	20%
Two in-class tests (15% each)	30%
Final project	30%

4. Course Readings:

Readings will consist of several short texts that provide information on specific religious traditions, as well as on the historical and political context of religious life in Tuscany.

