

RELIGION and PHILOSOPHY

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The Religion and Philosophy Program offers a major in religious studies and minors in religious studies and philosophy.

Religious Studies Major (36 credits)

Bachelor of Arts

The religious studies major provides an in-depth study of Christian traditions and a basic understanding of religious traditions such as Judaism, Islam, Buddhism, Hinduism and Native American traditions. The major prepares students for ministry, graduate school, or leadership in the community

Learning Outcomes for Religious Studies

Upon successful completion of major requirements students should be able to:

1. Articulate how religion has the power to shape individual lives and social values.
2. Critically read, evaluate, and write on the foundational texts and the significant ideas, concepts, and questions in the study of religion.
3. Demonstrate an in-depth knowledge of Christian traditions including critically reflecting on the Hebrew Bible, New Testament, and Christian history and theologies.
4. Show a basic understanding of a breadth of religious traditions including Judaism, Islam, Buddhism, Hinduism and Native American traditions.
5. Use library research tools specific to religious studies, and religious studies methodologies to construct papers, essays and class presentations.
6. Use these perspectives and skills to become a responsible citizen in a religiously plural world.
7. Identify, analyze, and compare understandings of the meaning of life, the human condition, and the nature of the good life in several religious traditions.

Core Courses

A. Two introductory courses (100 level):

Religious Studies 106, Understanding Religion

Religious Studies 102, Introduction to the Hebrew Bible or

Religious Studies 103, Introduction to the New Testament

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- B. Six intermediate courses (200 and 300 level); at least two must be from 300 level:
Two in Christian Tradition
Choose one from:
Religious Studies 230, Foundations of Christianity
Religious Studies 231, Christianity in the Modern World
Choose one from:
Religious Studies 201, Jesus of Nazareth
Religious Studies 202, Religious Traditions in America
Religious Studies 210, Suffering and Hope
Religious Studies 291/391, Topics Courses
Religious Studies 310, Power, Politics and Pluralism in Biblical Interpretation
Two in Religious Traditions
Religious Studies 215, Women in Religion
Religious Studies 306, Asian Religions
Religious Studies 316, Judaism, Christianity, and Islam
Two electives
Religious Studies courses, 200 level or above
Philosophy 206, Ethics
Philosophy 308, Philosophy of Religion
- C. One advanced course (400 level)
Religious Studies 499, Capstone Seminar

Required Support Courses (Required for primary majors only)

Option 1

Completion of a Modern Language through 202 or

Option 2

English 255
English 305
History 103 or 104
Politics 201

Philosophy Minor (20 credits)

Philosophy 101, Introduction to Philosophy

Philosophy 105, Introduction to Logic

Philosophy 206, Ethics

Two additional philosophy courses; at least one must be at the 300 level

Religious Studies Minor (20 credits)

Two introductory courses (100 level)

Religious Studies 102, Introduction to the Hebrew Bible or

Religious Studies 103, Introduction to the New Testament

Religious Studies 106, Understanding Religion

One course in Christian Tradition

Religious Studies 201, Jesus of Nazareth

Religious Studies 202, Religious Traditions in America

Religious Studies 210, Suffering and Hope

Religious Studies 230, Foundations of Christianity

Religious Studies 231, Christianity in the Modern World

Religious Studies 291/391, Topics Courses

Religious Studies 310, Power, Politics and Pluralism in Biblical Interpretation

One in Religious Traditions

Religious Studies 215, Women in Religion

Religious Studies 306, Asian Religions

Religious Studies 316, Judaism, Christianity and Islam

One elective in Religion or Philosophy, 300 or above

PHI 101. Introduction to Philosophy

P1

4 credits

A historical introduction to the major fields of Western philosophy including logic, metaphysics, epistemology, and ethics. This course helps students better understand the world by studying significant interpretations of self, the world, and morality that have been offered by thinkers, past and present. (*Fa, Sp*)

PHI 105. Introduction to Logic

P1

4 credits

A study of the principles and methods of logical reasoning. The class will focus primarily on formal mathematical deductive logic but will also include principles of inductive logic and Aristotelian syllogistic logic. (*Fa*)

PHI 206/206H. Ethics

P1

4 credits

An introductory investigation of alternative systems for determining and justifying ethical values. The course explores both theories of conduct (What should I do?) and theories of character (Who should I be?) through an exploration of the contemporary significance of theorists such as Aristotle, Kant, and Mill. (*Fa, Sp, Su*)

PHI 207. History and Philosophy of Science

P1

4 credits

A study of the philosophical foundations of science. The class will discuss the nature, purpose and methodologies of scientific inquiry starting with Aristotelian science and tracing the development to the modern period. The class will also discuss the nature of scientific proof, the evaluation of evidence for scientific claims, and the formation and evaluation of scientific theories. (*Fa, odd years*)

PHI 298/398. Independent Study in Philosophy

1-4 credits

Qualified students will undertake an independent study project. Prerequisites: Junior or senior standing, approval of the divisional dean and consent of instructor.

PHI 308. Philosophy of Religion

P2

4 credits

This is an advanced introduction to the main issues in the philosophy of religion. Topics that may be covered are the rationality of religious belief, cognitive experience of the divine, the compossibility of divine attributes, the efficacy of prayer, the problem of evil, and other issues that arise in philosophical theology. Also offered as REL 308. (*Sp, odd years*)

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PHI 320. Ancient and Mediaeval Philosophy P2 4 credits
An advanced survey of philosophical thought from the Pre-Socratics to Late Scholasticism. The course will trace the development of western philosophical thought and the seminal ideas of western civilization as found in the work of the leading thinkers of the ancient and mediaeval world. (*Fa, even years*)

PHI 321. Modern and Contemporary Philosophy P2 4 credits
An advanced survey of philosophical thought from the modern period beginning with Descartes through key 20th century and current philosophers. The course will trace the development of western philosophical thought and the seminal ideas of western civilization as found in the work of the leading thinkers since approximately 1600. (*Sp, even years*)

REL 102. Introduction to the Hebrew Bible P1 4 credits
An introduction to the history, literature, and interpretation of the Hebrew Bible/Old Testament. The course includes a study of the historical and cultural traditions of the ancient Israelites and the use of archaeological, historical, and literary methods in studying the Hebrew Bible literature. (*Fa, Sp*)

REL 103. Introduction to the New Testament P1 4 credits
An introduction to the history, literature, and interpretation of the New Testament. The course includes the study of the Jewish and Greco-Roman historical backgrounds of Jesus and the earliest church and the use of historical, sociological, and literary methods to examine the New Testament writings. (*Fa, Sp*)

REL 106. Understanding Religion P1 4 credits
We can describe religion; we can compare our own experiences with one another; we can watch other people when they are being 'religious'; we can see films, listen to music, look at advertising and watch news reports to discover where religion shows up, but what does it take to actually define religion? To begin the task of defining religion in this course, we will consider what religious people do, including: creating rituals, reading sacred texts, making sacred spaces, using special language, behaving ethically and sometimes behaving violently. We will look at ideas and practices across religious traditions but this is not a course in religions of the world. Rather, it is an introduction to the big ideas and common practices that help define what religion is. (*Fa, Sp*)

REL 200. Religions of the Contemporary World P1 4 credits
This course is a survey of religions practiced around the world today, including "world" religions like Hinduism, Judaism, Buddhism, Christianity, Islam, Taoism, and Confucianism, but also touching on native and folk religions, Baha'i, Sikhism, and others. The approach is interdisciplinary, addressing historical development in addition to central beliefs and practices of a wide range of religions. Students will leave with a better sense of the variety of religious thought and practice, and of the importance of historical context in the formation and development of religions. The course also prepares the student for further study of particular religious traditions.

REL 201. Jesus of Nazareth**PI****4 credits**

A study of Jesus in his first-century historical context as a Jew and in the different literary contexts of the New Testament (e.g. the Gospels, Paul, Revelation). The course will also include an examination of how Jesus is interpreted in today's global context (e.g. Africa, Latin America, Asia, and North America). (*Fa*)

REL 202. Religious Traditions in America**4 credits**

A variety of religious traditions has played and continues to play important roles in our communities, small and large. This course focuses on the origins of contemporary religious traditions in the US, their basic beliefs, and their impact on life. The course may include presentations by local representatives of traditional faiths as well as more recent developments, and may involve visits for participants' exposure to new religious experiences. (*Sp*)

REL 210. Suffering and Hope**PI, CCD****4 credits**

An in-depth examination of the theme of suffering and hope through a survey of foundational primary texts and contemporary theologies in different cultural and religious traditions. Students will learn several major perspectives on suffering and hope, explore assumptions that are made regarding suffering, and examine the ethical implications of the different views of suffering. ENG 170 recommended prior to enrollment. (*Fa, odd years*)

REL 215. Women in Religion**4 credits**

A reading of world religions through the lens of women's experience. In studying religions such as Hinduism, Islam, Buddhism, Christianity, and Native American traditions, we will not only discuss the essential teachings of the religion but we will consider how women have changed those teachings and the backlash against them for it. (*Fa, even years*)

REL 230. Foundations of Christianity**PI****4 credits**

This course examines Christian teachings about God, Christ, and Salvation developed from 100 to 1650 C. E. The study of the concepts, practices, and experiences of this formative period of Christianity is background for a critical understanding of Christianity in our times. (*Fa*)

REL 231. Christianity in the Modern World**PI****4 credits**

How has Christianity been involved in the life of the modern world from 1650 to the present? We will consider how Christians rethought their faith commitments while science and philosophy challenged their traditional assumptions. We will also examine recent Christian theological and ethical responses to such topics as gender and sexuality, environmental concerns, poverty, global conflicts, and the relationships among religions. (*Sp*)

REL 291/391. Topics in Religious Studies**4 credits**

A study of a selected topic in religious studies that is not covered in regular course offerings. Different topics in the fields of Bible, theology, history, ethics and current issues in culture and religion will be offered.

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REL 298/398. Independent Study

1-4 credits

A course for students who are interested in working with a faculty member on a specific area of study. (*Fa, Sp*) Prerequisites: Junior standing, approval of divisional dean and consent of instructor.

REL 306. Asian Religions

4 credits

In this course, students will explore the sacred literature, practices and cultures of Islam, Buddhism, Hinduism, Jainism, Sikhism, Confucianism, Taoism, and the religions of Japan. (*Fa, odd years*) Prerequisite: Junior standing or consent of the instructor.

REL 308. Philosophy of Religion

4 credits

This is an advanced introduction to the main issues in the philosophy of religion. Topics that may be covered are the rationality of religious belief, cognitive experience of the divine, the compossibility of divine attributes, the efficacy of prayer, the problem of evil, and other issues that arise in philosophical theology. Also offered as PHI 308. (*Sp, odd years*)

REL 310. Power, Politics, and Pluralism in Biblical Interpretation

4 credits

This class examines how the Bible has been interpreted to support certain positions regarding politics, class, race, gender, and sexual orientation. The class will explore how the Bible has been interpreted in global contexts and will focus in particular on how those in the United States have read and lived out the Bible through history. Topics may include slavery, roles of women, politics, same-sex relations, class relations, postcolonialism, anti-Semitism, end-time beliefs, and religious cults. (*Sp, odd years*)

REL 316. Judaism, Christianity and Islam

4 credits

In this course students will explore the foundational texts, histories, beliefs, and practices of the three western monotheistic religions: Judaism, Christianity and Islam. An emphasis will be placed on learning each of the three traditions on their own as well as the variety of perspectives expressed within each tradition. A comparative study on several topics will also be included. Contemporary issues and conflicts involving these traditions will be explored. (*Sp, even years*)

REL 362. New Testament Greek Tutorial

2 credits

Independent study with instructor. Specifically offered for those planning to attend graduate school in religious studies. Does not count toward major or minor. *S/U* graded. (*Offered when requested*)

REL 364. Hebrew Tutorial

2 credits

Independent study with instructor. Specifically offered for those planning to attend graduate school in religious studies. Does not count toward major or minor. *S/U* graded. (*Offered when requested*)

REL 380/480. Internship in Religious Studies

1-4 credits

An opportunity for students to work for local churches, social service agencies or other appropriate institutions under faculty supervision. The program provides practical experience supported by study and reading. The student may choose to participate in the program for a semester or a year. The work is S/U graded. Prerequisite: Consent of the instructor.

REL 499. Capstone: Senior Seminar

4 credits

Seniors research and write a substantial research paper which demonstrates their competency in religious studies and their ability to incorporate general education skills. Students will also give an oral presentation of the paper to faculty and interested students. As part of the seminar, students are required to complete an intentional plan for their transition from undergraduate school to a career and/or to graduate/professional school. Prerequisite: Senior standing.