RELIgIOUS STUDIES

The Religious Studies major (27 credits) and minor (15 credits) offer Iowa State University students the opportunity to expand their knowledge about diverse religions in the United States and the world. The major and minor allow students to design their own unique program of study by taking courses that spark their interest. Religious Studies teaches students to explore religion objectively, critically, and empathetically. It equips students to apply academic theories and methods to understand how religions shape and are shaped by history, politics, culture, society, and human psychology. As their religious literacy increases, students will develop their own ideas about the nature of religion, life's big questions, and the wide range of human ideas, practices, and motivations.

The major in Religious Studies provides both breadth and depth. The program’s 200-level courses introduce students to the academic study of religion, providing a foundation that students build on throughout their undergraduate career. In 300-level courses, students closely investigate particular traditions, topics, or themes. In the 400-level capstone class, students reflect on the knowledge and skills they have learned in order to produce a research project that contributes to the field of Religious Studies. Throughout their undergraduate career, students have opportunities to connect their program of study to their own professional and personal goals.

The Religious Studies program provides students skills relevant to building a career based on their interests and passions. Contrary to popular myths, employers in today’s modern workplace value college graduates with liberal arts degrees. In Religious Studies, these include the “hard skills” of writing, reading, and conducting organized research. Students also gain so-called “soft skills.” These include communication strategies, learning to adapt to new environments, and the capacity to work with and understand people from diverse backgrounds. The flexibility of these skills opens up a wide range of career paths. Religious Studies graduates pursue careers in non-profits, community organizations, and people-focused industries. They apply to graduate and professional schools in areas such as law, education, and ministry.

A Religious Studies degree doesn’t just help students get a job. It helps them advance and grow, both professionally and personally, well into their lives.

Student Learning Outcomes

Upon graduation, students should be able to:

1. Describe religious diversity in the United States and around the world, including diversity within traditions.
2. Identify key beliefs, doctrines, practices, and expressions of multiple religions.
3. Explain how religion has shaped and been shaped by human history, culture, and society, drawing on historical, cultural, and textual analyses.
4. Distinguish between confessional and academic understandings of religion.
5. Assess data produced by and about religious communities in an objective, critical, and empathetic manner.
6. Create and convey original insights using effective reading, research, writing, and conversation skills.

Religious Studies - Undergraduate Study

Students pursuing a major in religious studies must complete a minimum of 27 credits, including the requirements below. Students may also choose to do a senior thesis under the supervision of a religious studies faculty advisor. This option may earn 3-6 credits toward the completion of the major.

One of the following introductory survey courses 3
RELIG 205 World Religions
RELIG 210 Religion in America

Five of the following 300+ level courses 15
RELIG 322 The New Testament
RELIG 328 Native American Religions
RELIG 332 Catholicism
RELIG 334 Africana Religions
RELIG 336 Religion and Gender
RELIG 339 Goddess Religions
RELIG 340 Magic, Witchcraft, and Religion
RELIG 348 Psychology of Religion
RELIG 349 Cognitive Science of Religion
RELIG 350 Philosophy of Religion
RELIG 352 Religions of India
RELIG 358 Islam
RELIG 359 The Quran
RELIG 367 Christianity in the Roman Empire
RELIG 368 Religions of Ancient Greece and Rome
RELIG 370 Religion and Politics
RELIG 380 Catholic Social Thought
RELIG 475 Seminar: Issues in the Study of Religion
RELIG 490 Independent Study
RELIG 490H Independent Study: Honors
RELIG 491 Senior Thesis
RELIG 494 Special Studies in Religious Research Languages

Capstone Course 3
Students in all ISU majors must complete a three-credit course in U.S.
diversity and a three-credit course in international perspectives. Check
(http://www.registrar.iastate.edu/courses/div-ip-guide.html) for a list of
approved courses. Discuss with your advisor how the two courses that
you select can be applied to your graduation plan.

According to the university-wide Communication Proficiency Grade
Requirement, students must demonstrate their communication
proficiency by earning a grade of C or better in ENGL 250.

LAS majors require a minimum of 120 credits, including a minimum
of 45 credits at the 300/400 level. Students must also complete
the LAS College requirements (http://catalog.iastate.edu/
collegeoffliberalartsandsciences/), including the world language
requirement.

### Religious Studies, B.A.

**Freshman**

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<th>Fall</th>
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<tr>
<td>ENGL 150</td>
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<td>Religion Choice 300+</td>
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<td>LIB 160</td>
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<td>World Language/Elective</td>
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<td>RELIG 205 or 210</td>
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<td>Humanities Choice</td>
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<td>World Language/Elective</td>
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<td>Social Science Choice</td>
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<td>Math Choice</td>
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**Sophomore**

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<td>Religion Choice 300+</td>
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<td>ENGL 250</td>
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**Junior**

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| Religion Choice 300+     | 3       | RELIG 485 (offered odd-
                          |         | numbered years)       |         |
| Elective                 | 3       | Elective              | 3       |
| Elective                 | 4       | Elective              | 3       |
|                         |         |                       | 13      |
|                         |         |                       | 12      |

1 Laboratory science recommended.

The program offers a minor that may be earned by completing a total of
15 credits in religious studies including either RELIG 205 World Religions
or RELIG 210 Religion in America. Nine hours must be in courses at the
300 level or above (no more than 3 hours of seminar and no more than 3
hours of independent study). The minor must include at least 9 credits
that are not used to meet any other department, college or university
requirement.

### Religious Studies - Graduate Study

Religious studies may be one of the three areas used for the
interdisciplinary graduate studies master's degree.