

RELIGIOUS STUDIES

Religious Studies - Undergraduate Study

Religious studies gives students the opportunity to investigate and reflect on the world's religions in an objective, critical, and appreciative manner. Though there is emphasis in religious studies on the wide variety of religious phenomena as well as on the various methods in the study of religion, the aim is to help students develop their own integrated understanding of the nature of religion and its role in individual and social life.

Graduates of the religious studies program have knowledge of the religious diversity in the United States and the world. They have the ability to interpret religion empathetically and critically and to compare and contrast historical and contemporary differences and similarities of religious systems. They understand ways in which religion influences and is influenced by the historical, social, and cultural contexts in which religious systems function. Graduates often pursue careers in non-profit, community organizations; apply to professional schools or graduate programs; or enter seminaries to prepare for ministry.

The major in religious studies seeks to provide both breadth and depth. Breadth is provided through the exploration of the world's various religious traditions and through exposure to a variety of theoretical approaches and methodologies in the academic study of religion. Depth is achieved through specialized courses in particular religious traditions and particular issues in the study of religions, culminating in research seminars. The objective is to expose the student to various components of the discipline of Religious Studies and by doing so develop skills that are valuable in a number of careers and that provide the necessary foundation for pursuing graduate studies.

Students pursuing a major in religious studies must complete a minimum of 33 credits, including the following requirements:

Two required introductory survey courses

RELIG 205	Introduction to World Religions	3
RELIG 210	Religion in America	3

Two courses from Bible or Western Religions

RELIG 220	Introduction to the Bible	
RELIG 242	History of Christianity: Beginnings to the Reformation	
RELIG 243	History of Christianity: The Reformation to the Present	

RELIG 280	Introduction to Catholicism	
RELIG 321	Old Testament	
RELIG 322	New Testament	3
RELIG 358	Introduction to Islam	3

One course from Asian Religions 3

RELIG 352	Religious Traditions of India	
RELIG 453	Buddhism	

One course from Religion, Culture and Society 3

RELIG 324	Christianity and Science	
RELIG 334	African American Religious Experience	
RELIG 336	Women and Religion	
RELIG 342	Religion and U.S. Latino/a Literature	
RELIG 360	Religious Ethics	

RELIG 380	Catholic Social Thought	
RELIG 384	Religion and Ecology	
RELIG 439	Goddess Religions	
RELIG 475	Seminar: Issues in the Study of Religion	3
One required course in Religious Studies theory and method		
RELIG 485	Theory and Method in Religious Studies	3
Minimum of 9 credits of elective Religious Studies courses		9
Total Credits		33

Religious Studies, B.A.

Freshman

Fall	Credits Spring	Credits
ENGL 150	3 Religion Choice - Area I, II, III, or IV	3
LIB 160	1 Foreign Language/Elective	4
RELIG 205 or RELIG 210	3 Humanities Choice	3
Foreign Language/Elective	4 Social Science Choice	3
Humanities Choice	3 Elective	3
Math Choice	3	
		17
		16

Sophomore

Fall	Credits Spring	Credits
Religion Choice, - Area I, II, III, or IV	3 Religion Choice - Area I, II, III, or IV	3
ENGL 250	3 Religion Choice - Area I, II, III, or IV	3
Humanities Choice	3 Natural Science Choice ¹	4
Natural Science Choice ¹	4 Social Science Choice	3
Social Science Choice	3 Humanities Choice	3
		16
		16

Junior

Fall	Credits Spring	Credits
Religion Choice	3 Religion Choice	3
RELIG 485	3 Religion Choice	3
Elective	3 Elective	3
Elective	4 Elective	3
Elective	3 Elective	3
		16
		15

Senior

Fall	Credits Spring	Credits
RELIG 475 ^(or spring)	3 Elective	3
Religion Choice	3 Elective	3
Elective	3 Elective	3
Elective	4 Elective	3
		13
		12

Total Credits: 121

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 adviser how the two courses that you select can be applied to your graduation plan.

LAS majors require a minimum of 120 credits, **including a minimum of 45 credits at the 300/400 level**. You must also complete the LAS foreign-language requirement.

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 Introduction to 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).

Communication Proficiency requirement: The department requires a grade of C or better in each of ENGL 150 Critical Thinking and Communication and ENGL 250 Written, Oral, Visual, and Electronic Composition (or ENGL 250H Written, Oral, Visual, and Electronic Composition: Honors), and requires one 300 level course in religious studies in which writing is evaluated as acceptable.

Students may choose to do a senior thesis under the supervision of a religious studies faculty adviser. This option may earn 3-6 credits toward the completion of the major.

Religious Studies - Graduate Study

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

Courses primarily for undergraduates:

RELIG 205: Introduction to World Religions

(3-0) Cr. 3. F.S.SS.

An introduction to the academic study of religions, including myths, beliefs, rituals, values, social forms. Examples chosen from oral cultures and major religions of the world.

Meets International Perspectives Requirement.

RELIG 210: Religion in America

(3-0) Cr. 3. F.S.SS.

Introductory study of the major beliefs, practices, and institutions of American Judaism, Catholicism, Protestantism, and Islam with emphasis on the diversity of religion in America, and attention to issues of gender, race, and class.

Meets U.S. Diversity Requirement

RELIG 220: Introduction to the Bible

(3-0) Cr. 3. F.S.

Basic overview of the contents of the Old and New Testament in light of their ancient socio-historical background, and with attention to a variety of interpretations and relevance to modern American society.

RELIG 242: History of Christianity: Beginnings to the Reformation

(3-0) Cr. 3. F.S.SS.

A survey of the major historical developments in Christian thought and practice that shaped Christianity from the time of Jesus through the late medieval period. Attention given to significant persons and major events, including those involving relations with Judaism and Islam.

Meets International Perspectives Requirement.

RELIG 243: History of Christianity: The Reformation to the Present

(3-0) Cr. 3. F.S.SS.

A survey of the major events, issues, and persons that contributed to the Protestant Reformation, the Catholic Counter-Reformation, and the proliferation of Christian denominations. Attention to selected responses of churches to major sixteenth-early twenty-first century developments.

RELIG 280: Introduction to Catholicism

(3-0) Cr. 3. F.

An explanation of the beliefs, spirit, and practices of Roman Catholicism, including its understanding of God, sacramentality, the human person, and community, and its relationship to other forms of Christianity and other world religions.

RELIG 321: Old Testament

(3-0) Cr. 3. F.

An in-depth study of the literature and religion of ancient Israel in light of recent archaeological discoveries, research about the ancient Near East, and a variety of interpretations.

RELIG 322: New Testament

(3-0) Cr. 3. S.

A detailed survey of the sacred scriptures of Christianity in light of recent archaeological discoveries and historical research about their Greco-Roman and Jewish background.

RELIG 324: Christianity and Science

(3-0) Cr. 3. S.

Prereq: BIOL 101, or another science course taught at ISU

Examines major challenges to Christianity's understandings of creation posed by the sciences; attention given to the relations of Christianity and science, and to Christianity's responses to ecological issues.

RELIG 334: African American Religious Experience

(Cross-listed with AF AM). (3-0) Cr. 3. F.

Prereq: Prior course work in Religious Studies or African American Studies recommended

Examination of African-American experience from the perspective of black religion with attention to political, economic, social, theological and artistic expressions, including music, that serve the life of African-American communities."

Meets U.S. Diversity Requirement

RELIG 336: Women and Religion

(Cross-listed with W S). (3-0) Cr. 3. F.

Prereq: RELIG 205, RELIG 210 or W S 201 recommended

Examines the status of women in various religions, feminist critiques of religious structures and belief systems, and contemporary women's spirituality movements.

Meets U.S. Diversity Requirement

RELIG 340: Magic, Witchcraft, and Religion

(Dual-listed with RELIG 540). (Cross-listed with ANTHR). (3-0) Cr. 3. S.

Prereq: ANTHR 201 or ANTHR 306

Survey of global religious belief and practice from an anthropological perspective. Emphasis on myth and ritual, shamanism, magic, witchcraft, beliefs in spirits, conceptions of the soul, mind and body relationships, and healing and therapeutic practices. Discussion of religious response to dramatic political and social change; effects of globalization on religious practice.

Meets International Perspectives Requirement.

RELIG 342: Religion and U.S. Latino/a Literature

(Cross-listed with US LS). (3-0) Cr. 3. Alt. S., offered odd-numbered years.

A study of the religious behavior and attitudes expressed in the literature of Mexican Americans, Puerto Ricans, Cuban Americans and other groups of people living in the U.S. who trace their ancestry to the Spanish-speaking countries of Latin America.

Meets U.S. Diversity Requirement

RELIG 348: Psychology of Religion

(Cross-listed with PSYCH). (3-0) Cr. 3.

Prereq: Nine credits in psychology

Survey of psychological theory and research investigating religious and spiritual attitudes, beliefs and practices.

RELIG 350: Philosophy of Religion

(Cross-listed with PHIL). (3-0) Cr. 3. F.

Prereq: 6 credits in philosophy

The value and truth of religious life and belief. Mystical experience; religious faith and language; arguments for God's existence; the problem of evil; miracles; and religion and morality. Historical and contemporary readings.

RELIG 352: Religious Traditions of India

(3-0) Cr. 3.

Prereq: Credit in RELIG 205 or equivalent.

Study of texts, practices, beliefs, historical development, and mutual influence of a variety of the religious traditions of India. Emphasis on Vedic religion and the diversity of traditions of Classical Hinduism; survey of Buddhist, Jain, Sikh, and South Asian Islamic traditions. Meets International Perspectives Requirement.

Meets International Perspectives Requirement.

RELIG 355: Religious Traditions of China

(3-0) Cr. 3. F.

The Religious Traditions of China. Chinese religious traditions in ancient and modern expression; indigenous forms of religious practice; development of high/deep traditions of Confucianism and Taoism; impact of religions such as Buddhism, Islam, and Christianity. Religious influences and changes in contemporary China. Meets International Perspectives Requirement.

RELIG 358: Introduction to Islam

(3-0) Cr. 3.

An introduction to Islamic religion, culture, and society from 700 to the present.

Meets International Perspectives Requirement.

RELIG 360: Religious Ethics

(3-0) Cr. 3.

Investigates different religious ethical theories and traditions of reasoning about practical moral issues (e.g., abortion, the just distribution of wealth, environmental ethics). Explores in detail the relationship between religious beliefs and moral practice.

RELIG 367: Christianity in the Roman Empire

(Cross-listed with CL ST). (3-0) Cr. 3.

An historical introduction to the rise of Christianity in the Roman empire, with special attention to the impact of Greco-Roman culture on the thought and practice of Christians and the interaction of early Christians with their contemporaries.

RELIG 370: Religion and Politics

(Cross-listed with POL S). (3-0) Cr. 3.

Prereq: Sophomore classification.

The interaction of religion and politics in the U.S. from both an historical and contemporary perspective, as well as the role of religion in politics internationally.

RELIG 376: Classical Archaeology

(Cross-listed with ANTHR, CL ST). (3-0) Cr. 3. S.

Chronological survey of the material culture of the ancient Greece-Roman world and the role of archaeological context in understanding the varied aspects of ancient Greek or Roman culture. Among other topics, economy, architecture, arts and crafts, trade and exchange, religion and burial customs will be explored.

Meets International Perspectives Requirement.

RELIG 376A: Classical Archeology: Bronze Age and Early Iron Age Greece

(Cross-listed with ANTHR, CL ST). (3-0) Cr. 3. S.

Bronze Age (Minoan and Mycenaean palatial cultures) and Early Iron Age Greece. (ca 3000-700 BCE). Chronological survey of the material culture of the ancient Greece-Roman world and the role of archaeological context in understanding the varied aspects of ancient Greek or Roman culture. Among other topics, economy, architecture, arts and crafts, trade and exchange, religion and burial customs will be explored.

Meets International Perspectives Requirement.

RELIG 376B: Classical Archeology: Archaic through Hellenistic Greece (ca 700-30 BCE)

(Cross-listed with ANTHR, CL ST). (3-0) Cr. 3. S.

Chronological survey of the material culture of the ancient Greece-Roman world and the role of archaeological context in understanding the varied aspects of ancient Greek or Roman culture. Among other topics, economy, architecture, arts and crafts, trade and exchange, religion and burial customs will be explored.

Meets International Perspectives Requirement.

RELIG 377: Social Dimensions of Religion

(Cross-listed with SOC). (3-0) Cr. 3.

Prereq: Prior course work in Religious Studies or Sociology recommended
The influence of religion in society, both as a conservator of values and as a force for social change.

RELIG 380: Catholic Social Thought

(3-0) Cr. 3. S.

Examines biblical roots of and major developments in Catholic social thought. Contemporary issues such as human rights, economic justice, the environment, and war and peace will be treated using principles of Catholic ethics, social analysis, official church documents, and contributions of notable theologians and activists.

Meets U.S. Diversity Requirement

RELIG 384: Religion and Ecology

(Cross-listed with ENV S). (3-0) Cr. 3.

Introduction to concepts of religion and ecology as they appear in different religious traditions, from both a historical and contemporary perspective. Special attention to religious response to contemporary environmental issues.

Meets International Perspectives Requirement.

RELIG 439: Goddess Religions

(Cross-listed with W S). (3-0) Cr. 3.

Prereq: RELIG 205 recommended

Exploration of the foundational myths of Goddess spirituality, including historical and cross-cultural female images of the divine and their modern usage by American women.

RELIG 453: Buddhism

(3-0) Cr. 3. S.

The various Buddhist paths to realize enlightenment and freedom. Special attention to meditation and yoga and their relationship to altered states of consciousness and to social contexts. Meets International Perspectives Requirement.

RELIG 475: Seminar: Issues in the Study of Religion

(3-0) Cr. 3. Repeatable, maximum of 6 times.

Prereq: 6 credits in religious studies

Topic changes each time offered. Closed to freshmen. Sophomores must have approval of instructor.

RELIG 485: Theory and Method in Religious Studies

(3-0) Cr. 3.

Prereq: 6 credits in Religious Studies or permission of instructor

Examines the variety of theories and methods employed in the study of religion. Application of these methods to various religions of the world.

RELIG 490: Independent Study

Cr. 1-3. Repeatable, maximum of 9 credits.

Prereq: 6 credits in religious studies and permission of instructor, approval of chairman.

Guided reading and research on special topics selected to meet the needs of advanced students. No more than 9 credits of Relig 490 may be counted toward graduation.

RELIG 490H: Independent Study: Honors

Cr. 1-3. Repeatable, maximum of 9 credits.

Prereq: 6 credits in religious studies and permission of instructor, approval of chairman.

Guided reading and research on special topics selected to meet the needs of advanced students. No more than 9 credits of Relig 490 may be counted toward graduation.

RELIG 491: Senior Thesis

Cr. 3.

Written under the supervision of a Religious Studies faculty advisor.

RELIG 494: Special Studies in Religious Research Languages

Cr. 2-3. Repeatable.

Prereq: 6 credits in Religious Studies and permission of instructor

Courses primarily for graduate students, open to qualified undergraduates:

RELIG 540: Magic, Witchcraft, and Religion

(Dual-listed with RELIG 340). (Cross-listed with ANTHR). (3-0) Cr. 3. S.

Prereq: ANTHR 201 or ANTHR 306

Survey of global religious belief and practice from an anthropological perspective. Emphasis on myth and ritual, shamanism, magic, witchcraft, beliefs in spirits, conceptions of the soul, mind and body relationships, and healing and therapeutic practices. Discussion of religious response to dramatic political and social change; effects of globalization on religious practice.

Meets International Perspectives Requirement.

RELIG 590: Special Topics in Religious Studies

Cr. 1-3. Repeatable.

Prereq: Permission of instructor, 9 credits in religious studies