

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	6
RELIG 205 Introduction to World Religions	
RELIG 210 Religion in America	
Two courses from Bible or Western Religions	6
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	
RELIG 333 Introduction to Judaism	

RELIG 358 Introduction to Islam	
One course from Asian Religions	3
RELIG 352 Religious Traditions of India	
RELIG 353 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	
One required Capstone Course	3
RELIG 485 Theory and Method in Religious Studies	
Minimum of 12 credits of elective Religious Studies courses	12
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 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 ²	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

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.

² 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.

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). The minor must include at least 9 credits that are not used to meet any other department, college or university requirement.

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

(Cross-listed with WLC). (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 328: American Indian Religions

(Cross-listed with AM IN). Cr. 3.

An introduction to the beliefs and rituals of Native American religious traditions, with attention to cultural and historical contexts and implications.

Meets U.S. Diversity Requirement

RELIG 333: Introduction to Judaism

(3-0) Cr. 3.

An introduction to basic Judaism. Special attention is given to Jewish sacred texts, rituals, social practices, and modern forms.

Meets International Perspectives Requirement.

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

Prereq: RELIG 205, RELIG 210 or WGS 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

(Cross-listed with WLC). (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 353: Buddhism

(Cross-listed with PHIL, WLC). (3-0) Cr. 3. S.

Prereq: PHIL 201 or PHIL 230

Central Buddhist positions and arguments on topics such as personal and social ethics, moral psychology, metaphysics, and the relationship between Buddhist thought and the sciences. Differences between Buddhist and Western approaches to philosophy.

Meets International Perspectives Requirement.

RELIG 358: Introduction to Islam

(Cross-listed with WLC). (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 368: Religions of Ancient Greece and Rome

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

Nature, origins and development of religious beliefs and practices in ancient Greece and Rome from earliest times up to the rise of Christianity. Roles of divinities and rituals in lives of individuals and families and the governing of city-states and empires. Emphasis on historical contexts of the Graeco-Roman world and influences of neighboring cultures in Africa and Asia. None.

Meets International Perspectives Requirement.

RELIG 370: Religion and Politics

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

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 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 WGS). (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 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