

# 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

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RELIG 485 Theory and Method in Religious Studies	
Minimum of 6 credits of elective Religious Studies courses	6
<b>Total Credits</b>	<b>27</b>

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/previouscatalogs/2022-2023/collegeofliberalartsandsciences/>), including the world language requirement.

## Religious Studies, B.A.

### Freshman

Fall	Credits Spring	Credits
ENGL 150	3 Religion Choice 300+	3
LIB 160	1 World Language/Elective	4
RELIG 205 or 210	3 Humanities Choice	3
World Language/Elective	4 Social Science Choice	3
Humanities Choice	3 Elective	3
Math Choice	3	
	<b>17</b>	<b>16</b>

### Sophomore

Fall	Credits Spring	Credits
Religion Choice 300+	3 Religion Choice 300+	3
ENGL 250	3 Natural Science Choice <sup>1</sup>	4
Humanities Choice	3 Social Science Choice	3
Natural Science Choice <sup>1</sup>	4 Humanities Choice	3
Social Science Choice	3 Elective	3
	<b>16</b>	<b>16</b>

### Junior

Fall	Credits Spring	Credits
Religion Choice 300+	3 Religion Choice 300+	3
Religion Choice 300+	3 RELIG 485 (offered odd-numbered years)	3
Elective	3 Elective	3
Elective	4 Elective	3

Elective	3 Elective	3
	<b>16</b>	<b>15</b>

### Senior

Fall	Credits Spring	Credits
Religion Choice 300+	3 Elective	3
Elective	3 Elective	3
Elective	3 Elective	3
Elective	4 Elective	3
	<b>13</b>	<b>12</b>

<sup>1</sup> 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.