

# Religious Studies

## The School of Humanities

### Chair

William B. Parsons

### Professors

Werner H. Kelber  
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### Professor Emerita

Edith Wyschogrod

### Associate Professors

Elias K. Bongmba  
Jeffrey J. Kripal

### Assistant Professors

David Cook  
Matthias Henze  
Gregory Kaplan

### Adjunct Professor

Stanley J. Reiser

### Adjunct Associate Professor

Elizabeth Heitman

### Lecturer

Beverlee Jill Carroll

*Degrees Offered:* B.A., Ph.D.

The undergraduate major includes courses in methodology (textual, historical, normative, and sociocultural approaches to the study of religion) and religious traditions (African religions, Buddhism, Christianity, comparative religions, Hinduism, Islam, and Judaism). For research degrees in the graduate program, see below. Within these clearly defined fields, students acquire a broad knowledge of religious studies with enough flexibility for interdisciplinary pursuits.

### Degree Requirements for B.A. in Religious Studies

For general university requirements, see Graduation Requirements (pages 20–23). In addition, students must also satisfy the distribution requirements and complete no fewer than 60 semester hours outside the departmental requirements for a program totaling at least 120 semester hours. See Distribution Requirements (pages 21–22) and Majors (pages 23–24).

Students majoring or double-majoring in religious studies must complete:

- 30 hours for majors
- 24 hours for double majors
- 24 hours for majors at 200, 300, or 400 level
- 18 hours for double-majors at 200, 300, or 400 level
- No more than 2 courses outside the Department of Religious Studies

To ensure breadth and depth to the major, students are encouraged to work out a program of study with the undergraduate advisor. The 30 hours (24 for double-majors) must include the following requirements:

- RELI 101 *Introduction to Religion*
- 2 introductory courses in religious traditions (one Western; one non-Western)
- At least 3 courses concentrated in one of the following fields: Judaism, Christianity, African religion, Buddhism, comparative studies, cross-cultural studies, methodological studies, or ethics/philosophy of religion

**Honors Program.** Qualified undergraduates may choose the option of writing a senior thesis. To complete a thesis, the student must enroll for 6 hours in addition to the 30 hours (24 for double majors) required for the major. Students are expected to have at least a 3.50 average in their religious studies courses before undertaking thesis work and must obtain the permission of a faculty advisor who will supervise the project, usually during the second semester of the junior year and first semester of the senior year. Any additional supervisors and readers of the completed thesis (if any) will be arranged in advance by the primary faculty advisor in consultation with relevant faculty.

### **Degree Requirements for Ph.D. in Religious Studies**

The graduate program accepts a limited number of qualified students. A distinguished undergraduate record and high scores on the Graduate Record Examination (GRE) are essential and an advanced degree in the humanities is desirable. For general university requirements, see Graduate Degrees (pages 65–70). Students admitted into the program will normally receive financial assistance in the form of a tuition waiver and a stipend. As part of their training and in return for their stipends, students in their second year and beyond are expected to serve as research assistants or teaching assistants. Students receiving stipends may also be asked on occasion to assist the department in other ways.

The Ph.D. in religious studies is normally a five-year program. Requirements are as follows:

- 18 courses (54 hours required):
  - 6 courses in the major field
  - 3 courses in each of two minor fields (see list of fields below)
  - 2 department seminars (one or more of which may count as a major or minor course) to be taken in each of the first two years
  - 4 to 6 elective courses chosen in consultation with the student's adviser
- Passing grades on reading examinations in 2 foreign languages, at least 1 of which must be a language of scholarship in the student's chosen field
- Passing grades in 5 qualifying examinations: 3 in the student's major field, 1 in each of the students 2 minor fields. (In place of examinations, the student may, in consultation with the faculty member, substitute papers that demonstrate a thorough grasp of the field.) The nature and content of the examinations or papers will be determined one year prior to the date the student expects to write them, which is ordinarily the end of the third or beginning of the fourth year in the program.
- Oral discussion of dissertation proposal
- Satisfactory completion of dissertation and oral defense

**Reading Lists.** Students should become broadly familiar with the literature of their majors and minors; reading lists will be provided. Students are expected to familiarize themselves with this material enough that they draw on it on their exams and the dissertation itself. The graduate seminar is, in part, an introduction to areas of the reading list and to the techniques for engaging in deep, independent reading.

**Fields of Study.** Religion and contemporary cultures, scriptural interpretation, ethics and philosophy of religion, mysticism, psychology, and religious practices are fields of study in this program. These fields will include courses covering one or more of the following traditions: African and African-based religions, Buddhism, Christianity, Hinduism, Judaism, and new and alternative religions. Students may concentrate in one or more of these traditions in the context of their major and minor fields.

**Professional Development**

Opportunities may be available to teach undergraduate courses in the department or in local colleges and universities. Limited funds are also available for students to attend conferences to present their research. The department encourages these and other efforts to prepare students for academic careers.

**See RELI in the Courses of Instruction section.**