

RELIGIOUS STUDIES

THE SCHOOL OF HUMANITIES

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DEGREES OFFERED: BA, PHD

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 BA IN RELIGIOUS STUDIES

For general university requirements, see Graduation Requirements (pages 14–15). In addition, students also must 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 15–16) and Majors (pages 17–18).

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 (1 Western; 1 non-Western)
- At least 3 courses concentrated in one of the following fields: Judaism, Christianity, African religion, Buddhism, comparative studies, cross-cultural studies, Islam, Hinduism, 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 3.5 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 PHD 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 57–58). Students admitted into the program normally will 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 perform a minimum amount of services in return for their stipend by assisting the department as needed.

The PhD in religious studies is normally a 5-year program. Course requirements for students without a relevant MA or MDiv (based on 3 courses per semester):

- 18 courses (54 hours required); 36 hours for students with a relevant MA or MDiv
- 2 department seminars to be taken in each of the 1st 2 years
- Passing grades on reading examinations in 2 secondary research languages approved by the faculty before taking qualifying exams.
- Passing grades in 4 qualifying examinations
- Oral discussion of dissertation proposal
- Satisfactory completion of dissertation and oral defense

Reading Lists—Reading lists are available for all Qualifying Exams. 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.

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Opportunities may be available to teach undergraduate courses in the department or in local colleges and universities. Limited funds also are 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.