

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 16–19). 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 17–18) and Majors (pages 19–20).

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

- 30 hours for majors
- 24 hours for double majors
- 18 hours must be selected at 300-level or above
- No more than 2 courses (6 hours) may be transferred from outside the department

The following requirements must be met. For details about the categories of offerings, the departmental list should be consulted. It is updated every semester and can be obtained from the undergraduate advisor.

- Reli 303 *The Craft of Religious Studies*
- 1 course from 2 of these 3 categories of offerings: textual and historical studies; philosophy, ethics, theology, and contemplative studies; and religion and the arts and science
- 1 course *taken in the senior year* from the category of offerings *400-level Senior Seminar*

- 5 elective courses for majors; 3 elective courses for double majors
- To ensure coverage of religious traditions, 2 courses selected in the major must cover 2 of 3 religious traditions (Abrahamic, Asian, African, and African-American)

Honors Program. Qualified undergraduates may choose the option of writing a senior thesis. To complete this thesis, the student must elect RELI 400 *Honors in Religious Studies*. Students must have at minimum 3.2 GPA in their religious studies courses before undertaking thesis work, and they must obtain the permission of a faculty advisor who will supervise the project during the senior year.

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 61–62). 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.