Religious Studies Major

51-52 units

Mission Statement

The religious studies major offers courses in religious studies by employing a dialogical perspective that invites conversation between Christians and people from non-Christian global religious traditions. Our program exists to prepare undergraduate students for responsible understanding of, and engagement with, people of a variety of global religious traditions in order to be faithful, well-informed, and culturally sensitive participants in intercultural and interreligious dialogue. We prepare students to engage the world from a place of sincere Christian faith, awareness, and praxis, and we accomplish this by training our students in interreligious approaches and by focusing on praxis, religious experience, theology, and philosophy with respect to those traditions.

Introduction

The religious studies major equips students to understand and engage the major global religious traditions of the world. Using a dialogical approach, students learn to comprehend Christianity as it relates to major religious traditions within North America as well as the world. Students develop and employ skills in a variety of academic disciplines, including theology, sociology, philosophy, ritual and liturgical studies, and anthropology, as a way of explaining and comprehending their own location in relation to those global religious traditions. Students then develop and cultivate responsible dialogical approaches in order to engage people from non-Christian religious traditions in a manner consistent with the Gospel of Jesus Christ. The religious studies major equips students to critically and responsibly engage people from religious traditions throughout the world in respectful and fruitful dialogue. Graduates are prepared to enter graduate programs in religion, law, medicine, social sciences, theology, public policy, and philosophy. They also are prepared to enter careers that demand sustained intercultural awareness, including missions, interreligious nonprofit work, and public service.

A minimum 2.5 cumulative GPA is required in all major courses.

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<tr>
<th>Code</th>
<th>General Education</th>
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**Writing 3**

Select one of the following:

- PHIL 340 Concepts of Human Nature
- THEO 428 Global Christianity
- UBBL 476 Writing 3: Women in the Biblical Tradition

**Biblical, Theological, and Philosophical Formation**

- MIN 108 Christian Life, Faith, and Ministry
- UBBL 100 Introduction to Biblical Literature: Exodus/Deuteronomy
- UBBL 230 Luke/Acts
- UBBL 3XX - Any General Education Bible Course
- THEO 354 Church History from the Eve of the Reformation to the Present

**Suggested GE Courses**

- WRIT 203 Writing 2: Writing in Religious Studies & Visual Studies
- UBBL 496 Senior Seminar: Biblical Theology and Ethics
- or THEO 496 Senior Seminar: Theology and Social Issues
- or PHIL 496 Senior Seminar: Professional Ethics

**Major Course Requirements**

- RELG 200 Introduction to the Study of Religion

Select one of the following

- PHIL 220 Introduction to Philosophy
- HUM 224 Core Texts in Philosophy (3 units on Azusa Campus; 4 units at High Sierra Semester)

Select three of the following

- RELG 350 Introduction to Judaism
- RELG 351 Introduction to Islam
- RELG 352 Introduction to Hinduism and South Asian Traditions
- RELG 353 Introduction to Buddhism and East Asian Traditions
- GLBL 345 Urban Religious Movements (only offered at LA term)
Religious Studies Major

Select two of the following

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Course</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Units</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>SOC 360</td>
<td>Sociology of Religion</td>
<td>6</td>
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<tr>
<td>PHIL 410</td>
<td>Philosophy of Religion</td>
<td>6</td>
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<tr>
<td>PSYC 440</td>
<td>Psychology of Religion</td>
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Required

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<th>Course</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Units</th>
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<tr>
<td>THEO 363</td>
<td>Contemporary Christian Theology</td>
<td>3</td>
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<tr>
<td>RELG 400</td>
<td>Special Topics in the History of Religion</td>
<td>3</td>
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<tr>
<td>RELG 495</td>
<td>Special Topics Seminar—Contemporary Christianity and Religious Studies</td>
<td>3</td>
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<tr>
<td>RELG 498</td>
<td>Religious Studies Capstone Course</td>
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Total Units: 51-52

1. Meets the General Education Writing 2 requirement.
3. Meets the General Education Intercultural Competence requirement.

RELG 200, Introduction to the Study of Religion, 3 Units
This course offers a study of global religious traditions in their cultural and historical contexts. Students will critically examine various definitions and methodologies of global religious studies from the perspectives of confessing Christians. Traditions examined will include Hinduism, Primal Religions, Buddhism, Confucianism, Taoism, Islam, Judaism, and Christianity. Meets the General Education Requirement: Intercultural Competence.
Prerequisites: UBBL 100, MIN 108 or Department Consent

RELG 350, Introduction to Judaism, 3 Units
This course offers an introduction to the texts, the traditions, and the practices of Judaism as they have developed over the centuries. The students will be exposed to the literature of classical Judaism, including the Hebrew Bible, the Mishnah, Midrash, and Talmud. These texts will be read in conjunction with a study of the historical, sociological, and phenomenological environments in which they developed and which mediated them from one generation to the next. The course includes a study of how Judaism has responded to the changes wrought by modernity and the creation of the State of Israel. Meets the General Education Requirement: Intercultural Competence.

RELG 351, Introduction to Islam, 3 Units
This course offers an introduction to the texts, the traditions, and the practices of Islam as they have developed over the centuries. The course will focus on rituals, ethics, and practices of Islam, along with discussion of Islam's holiest text, the Qur'an. It will include study of the historical, sociological, and phenomenological environments in which these elements developed and which mediated them from one generation to the next. The course includes a study of how the various forms of Islam have responded to the changes wrought by the modern world. Meets the General Education Requirement: Intercultural Competence.

RELG 352, Introduction to Hinduism and South Asian Traditions, 3 Units
This seminar course will explore the major indigenous religions of South Asia with particular emphasis on shared concepts such as karma, the cycle of rebirth (samsara), and the transcendence of rebirth (nirvana/moksha) in order to equip Christians for global Christian praxis and inter-religious theological and philosophical dialogue. We will trace the evolution of Indian religion from its roots in the Vedas and the Upanishads through the development of Jainism, Hinduism, and Sikhism, and we will conclude with an examination of "inclusivist" and "exclusivist" approaches to religious pluralism in contemporary Indian thought. Meets the General Education Requirement: Intercultural Competence.

RELG 353, Introduction to Buddhism and East Asian Traditions, 3 Units
This seminar course examines East Asian (or Taoist) religions including Mayahana or Ch'an Buddhism, Confucianism, and Taoism, with minor emphasis on Chinese folk religions and Shinto in their Chinese, Korean and Japanese contexts, with minor emphasis on Vietnamese perspectives in order to equip Christians for global Christian praxis and inter-religious theological and philosophical dialogue. Meets the General Education Requirement: Intercultural Competence.

RELG 400, Special Topics in the History of Religion, 3 Units
Students explore selected epochs, movements, or issues in the history of the Church as it relates to various non-Christian global religious traditions.
Prerequisites: RELG 200, PHIL 220/HUM 224, THEO 354, any 300-level RELG course, or Department Consent.

RELG 495, Special Topics Seminar—Contemporary Christianity and Religious Studies, 3 Units
Students explore movements or issues related to contemporary Christianity as it relates to various non-Christian global religious traditions.
Prerequisites: RELG 200, PHIL 220/HUM 224, THEO 354, any 300-level RELG course, or Department Consent.
RELG 498, Religious Studies Capstone Course, 3 Units
This course develops and offers practical opportunities to master the concepts and methodologies used within the field of Religious Studies and apply them to a particular religious tradition. It will culminate in a Capstone Paper, which is a significant religious studies project requiring extensive research and writing and conducted under the guidance of an approved faculty member. The Capstone Paper is equivalent in work to a typical senior thesis, with the focus on research methods, analysis, and critical evaluation.

Prerequisites: Senior Standing, three 300-level RELG courses, UDWI course, or Department Consent.