

Religious Studies

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Web: divinity.uchicago.edu/degree/undergraduate.shtml

Program of Study

The field of Religious Studies engages perennial questions about religion and human society. It investigates religions and how they shape and are shaped by human cultures. The program in Religious Studies exposes students to different sources, problems, and methodologies in the study of religion. Students explore one particular question in depth by writing a senior paper. The program is designed to attract students who wish to take interdisciplinary approaches to the study of religion, including those that are historical, philosophical, theological, sociological, or literary-critical. The interests of such students may be descriptive, explanatory, or normative.

Program Requirements

A major in Religious Studies consists of twelve courses, including one introductory course and a two-quarter senior seminar. It is preferable that students consult the Director of Undergraduate Studies and declare their major in Religious Studies before the end of their second year. Students and the Director of Undergraduate Studies will work together to create a program of study. The goal is to develop depth in one area so that a satisfactory B.A. paper will be written in the fourth year.

Students will typically be permitted to count up to two language courses at the second-year level or above if they are pertinent to their B.A. paper research. Placement credit may not be used for these courses. With the consent of the Director of Undergraduate Studies, students may also count two additional extra-departmental courses toward the major. Students are encouraged to explore more than one religious tradition in their courses.

Introductory Course. Students in Religious Studies are required to take Introduction to Religious Studies (RLST 10100). It need not precede other course work in the major, but students are advised to have completed it by the end of their second year. It will typically be offered every year during Autumn Quarter. This course will introduce students to some of the central themes in Religious Studies; its particular focus will vary according to the interests of the individual instructor.

Course Distribution. Religion is expressed in many forms throughout the world's cultures, and the academic study of religion therefore requires multiple

perspectives on its subject. Students of religion should have some knowledge of the historical development of specific religious traditions, understand and critically engage the ethical and intellectual teachings of various religions, and begin to make some comparative appraisals of the roles that religions play in different cultures and historical periods. To introduce students to these multiple perspectives on religion and to provide a sense of the field as a whole, students are required to take at least one course in each of the following areas. To identify the areas, refer to the boldface letter at the end of each course description.

(A) *Historical Studies in Religious Traditions*: courses that explore the development of particular religious traditions, including their social practices, rituals, scriptures, and beliefs in historical context (RLST 11000 through 15000, 20000 through 22900).

(B) *Constructive Studies in Religion*: courses that investigate constructive or normative questions about the nature and conduct of human life that are raised by religious traditions, including work in philosophy of religion, ethics, and theology (RLST 23000 through 25900).

(C) *Cultural Studies in Religion*: courses that introduce issues in the social and cultural contingencies of religious thought and practice by emphasizing sociological, anthropological, and literary-critical perspectives on religion, and by raising comparative questions about differing religious and cultural traditions (RLST 26000 through 28900).

Senior Seminar and B.A. Paper. The two-quarter senior sequence (RLST 29800 and 29900) will assist students with the preparation of the required B.A. paper. During May of their third year, students will work with a preceptor to choose a faculty adviser and a topic for research, and to plan a course of study for the following year. These must be approved by the Director of Undergraduate Studies. Students will take part in the B.A. Paper Seminar convened by a preceptor during Autumn and Winter Quarters. This seminar will allow students to prepare their bibliographies, hone their writing, and present their research. Students will register for RLST 29800 in the Autumn Quarter and for RLST 29900 in the Winter Quarter. The B.A. paper will be due early in the Spring Quarter. The length is typically between thirty and forty pages, with the upward limit being firm.

This program may accept a B.A. paper or project used to satisfy the same requirement in another major if certain conditions are met and with the consent of the other program. Approval from both departments is required. Students should consult with the departments by the earliest B.A. proposal deadline (or by the end of their third year, if neither program publishes a deadline). A consent form, to be signed by both departments, is available from the College adviser. It must be completed and returned to the College adviser by the end of Autumn Quarter of the student's year of graduation.

Grading. Religious Studies majors must receive quality grades in all courses in the major. Nonmajors may take Religious Studies courses on a *PIF* basis if they receive the prior consent of the faculty member for a given course. Faculty will determine the criteria that constitute a *Pass*.

Honors. Honors are awarded by the Divinity School's Committee on Undergraduate Studies. Students who write senior papers deemed exceptional by their faculty advisers will be eligible for consideration for graduation with honors. To be considered for honors, students must also have a 3.5 GPA or higher in the major and a 3.25 GPA or higher overall.

Summary of Requirements

1	Introduction to Religious Studies (RLST 10100)
1	course in historical studies in religious traditions
1	course in constructive studies in religion
1	course in cultural studies in religion
6	additional courses in Religious Studies
1	B.A. Paper Seminar (RLST 29800)
<u>1</u>	B.A. Paper (RLST 29900)
12	

Faculty

D. Arnold, A. Boden, C. Brekus, K. Culp, A. Davidson, W. Doniger, J. Elshstain, M. Fishbane, T. Frymer-Kensky, F. Gamwell, W. C. Gilpin, D. Hopkins, M. Kapstein, H. Klauck, B. Lincoln, C. Lindner, J.-L. Marion, D. Martinez, F. Meltzer, P. Mendes-Flohr, M. Mitchell, M. Murrin, M. Nussbaum, W. Olmsted, L. Pick, M. Riesebrodt, J. Robinson, R. Rosengarten, S. Schreiner, W. Schweiker, M. Sells, K. Tanner, D. Tracy, C. Wedemeyer, M. Zeghal

Courses: Religious Studies (RLST)

Boldface letters in parentheses refer to the areas noted in the preceding Course Distribution section.

10100. Introduction to Religious Studies. (=RELH 10100) *Required of students majoring in Religious Studies.* This course introduces students to some of the central concerns, problems, and materials of Religious Studies. Students are exposed to a range of primary and secondary source material grouped around a set of themes chosen by the instructor. Possible themes include canon, prophecy, revelation, initiation, priesthood, sacred space, discipline, and ritual. *J. Z. Smith. Autumn.*

12000. Introduction to the New Testament. (=BIBL 32500, FN DL 28202, NTEC 21000/32500) This course is an immersion in the texts of the New Testament with the following goals: through careful reading to come to know well some representative pieces of this literature; to gain useful knowledge of the historical, geographical, social, religious, cultural, and political contexts of these

texts and the events they relate; to learn the major literary genres represented in the canon (i.e., “gospels,” “acts,” “letters,” “apocalypse”) and strategies for reading them; to comprehend the various theological visions to which these texts give expression; and to situate oneself and one’s prevailing questions about this material in the history of interpretation. *M. Mitchell. Winter. (A)*

20701. *The Autobiography of Teresa of Avila.* (=FNDL 23112, GNDR 20701, HIST 19801) In this course we do a close reading of *The Autobiography of Teresa of Avila* in which we pay attention to her attitudes towards prayer and religious practice, mystical experience, community organization, sin and redemption, and gender. Our reading is supplemented by other texts written by Teresa, as well as secondary works that help us interpret her in her historical context. *L. Pick. Spring, 2007. (A)*

20800. Medieval Europe and Its Encounter with Islam. (=HIST 19900) Europe was confronted with Islam across military, economic, theological, philosophical, scientific, and cultural spheres during the Middle Ages. The nature of these different encounters evoked at times very different kinds of responses from hostility to curiosity to admiration to appropriation and assimilation. This course examines these very different kinds of encounters to understand the numerous types of impressions Islam made on medieval Europe. We begin with the origins of Muslim contact with the Christian world in the seventh century and end with the fall of Constantinople and the fall of Granada in the fifteenth century. *L. Pick. Autumn, 2006. (A)*

21001. Christianity and Slavery in America, 1619 to 1865. (=HIST 19901) This course explores the relationship between Christianity and slavery from 1619, when the first shipment of slaves arrived in Virginia, to the Emancipation Proclamation in 1865. We discuss proslavery theology, the rise of abolitionism, and slave worship and theology. *C. Brekus. Autumn, 2006. (A)*

21300. Religion and American Social Reform. (=HIST 18400) This course examines the relation of religion to a wide variety of American social reforms (i.e., the abolition of slavery, temperance, fair labor practices, the vote for women) from approximately 1790 to 1990. Class discussions focus on the writings of nineteenth- and twentieth-century reformers (e.g., Harriet Beecher Stowe, Frederick Douglass, Elizabeth Cady Stanton, Dorothy Day, Martin Luther King). *W. C. Gilpin. Spring, 2007. (A)*

21401. Latin American Religions, New and Old. (=HIST 29000/39000) For course description, see History. *D. Borges. Spring, 2007. (A)*

21800. Religion and Society in the Medieval West. (=HIST 22101/32101) For course description, see History. *R. Fulton. Autumn, 2006. (A)*

22601. The Radical Reformation of the Sixteenth Century. This course examines the reformers and sects that were persecuted by both Catholics and Protestants as heretics, fanatics, anarchists, and revolutionaries. Our objective

is to understand the goals and ideals of these reformers and communities. We examine the beginnings of Anabaptism in Zurich after the German Peasants' Revolt (1524-25); the Kingdom of Münster (1534-35); later Anabaptist groups such as the Dutch Mennonites and Moravian Hutterites; and sympathizers and "Spiritualist" reformers like Thomas Müntzer, David Joris, Sebastian Franck, and Casper Schwenckfeld. *A. Darlage. Winter, 2007. (A)*

23401. Terror, Religion, and Aesthetics. (=BPRO 28000, HMRT 28801, ISHU 28201) *PQ: Third- or fourth-year standing.* For course description, see Big Problems. *A. Boden, M. Browning. Autumn, 2007. (C)*

23501. Spiritual Exercises and Moral Perfectionism. (=CMLT 28200/38200, DVPR 31202, PHIL 21202/31202) For course description, see Philosophy. *A. Davidson. Autumn, 2006. (B)*

23601. Christian and Anti-Christian: Luther and Nietzsche on Christian Faith and Morality. (=FNDL 28502) For course description, see Fundamentals. *W. Schweiker. Autumn, 2006. (B)*

23702. Calvin on Idolatry and True Religion. (=FNDL 29202) For course description, see Fundamentals. *K. Culp. Spring, 2007. (B)*

24201. Indian Philosophy I: Origins and Orientations. (=DVHR 30200, DVPR 30200, HREL 30200, SALC 20901/30901) This course is a survey of the origins of Indian philosophical thought, emphasizing the Vedas, Upanisads, and early Buddhist literature. Topics include concepts of causality and freedom, the nature of the self and ultimate reality, and the relationship between philosophical thought and ritual or ascetic religious practice. *M. Kapstein. Winter, 2007. (B)*

24202. Indian Philosophy II: The Classical Traditions. (=DVHR 30300, DVPR 30300, HREL 30300, SALC 20902/30902) *PQ: RLST 24201.* Continuing and building upon *RLST 24201*, we focus on the development of the major classical systems of Indian thought. The course emphasizes Indian logic, epistemology, and philosophy of language. *D. Arnold. Spring, 2007. (B)*

24801. Eighteenth- and Nineteenth-Century Philosophy of Religion. (=DVPR 34801, PHIL 24801/34801) For course description, see Philosophy. *D. Brudney. Autumn, 2006. (B)*

24900. Women, Religion, and Human Rights. (=RETH 31300) This course examines the intersection of both gender and religion in the practice of human rights. Topics include theological conflicts with rights norms for women; questions of privacy, relativism, and agency; and the role of human rights law in supporting religious freedom, women's rights, and resolving conflicts between the two. *A. Boden. Spring, 2007. (B)*

25501. Augustine's *Confessions*. (=FNDL 27600, GNDR 27601, HUMA 22700) *Knowledge of Latin not required.* For course description, see Fundamentals. *W. Olmsted. Winter, 2007. (B)*

25701. Environmental Ethics. (=ENST 28001) For course description, see Environmental Studies. *M. Hogue. Spring. (B)*

25900. Medieval Philosophy. (=JWSC 24600, JWVG 34600, PHIL 23600/33600) *PQ: PHIL 25000.* For course description, see Philosophy. *J. Stern. Winter, 2007. (B)*

26300. Religion and Medicine. (=CHSS 36301) Islamic medicine, Ayurvedic medicine, and even biomedicine as it has developed in the West all have roots in religious beliefs and practices. Furthermore, there is growing interest today in alternative health care strategies that attempt to move beyond a strictly scientific understanding of medicine and healing the human body. This course first looks at particularly religious aspects in the historical development of Western medicine. Second, we investigate the nature and development of select non-Western medical systems and their religious contexts. Finally, significant attention is given to recent trends regarding traditional medicine in Africa and other contemporary alternative healing strategies with religious connotations. *B. Dorsey. Spring. (C)*

26400. Milton's *Paradise Lost*. (=FNDL 21900, GNDR 21600, HUMA 20800, IMET 31900) *Class limited to twenty-five students.* For course description, see Fundamentals. *W. Olmsted. Winter, 2008. (C)*

26601. The Representation of Jesus in Modern Jewish Literature. (=CMLT 25800, JWVG 24800, NEHC 20457) For course description, see Comparative Literature. *N. Stahl. Autumn, 2006. (C)*

27200. Religious Redeemers. (=HIST 25405, HUDV 27200) This course focuses on a number of self-proclaimed religious redeemers from diverse historical and cultural backgrounds (e.g., Buddha, Sabbatai Sevi, David Koresh, Sai Baba). Our aim is to think through several issues surrounding religious redeemers, such as the usefulness of a general term for culturally and historically very different phenomena, the possibility to develop psychological models for redeemers and for their followers, whether there are specific patterns in comparative redemptive theologies, and whether we can point out specific sociohistorical contexts that are fertile for the emergence of redeemers. *A. van der Haven. Spring. (C)*

27401. Hinduism: A Chronicle. (=HREL 35400, SALC 30302) This course is a survey of the history of Hinduism with a focus on setting texts in historical contexts. *W. Doniger. Winter, 2007. (C)*

27600. The Art of Ancestor Worship: Chinese Art from Prehistorical to the Third Century. (=ARTH 20100/30100) For course description, see Art History. *W. Hung. Spring, 2007. (C)*

27700. Music of South Asia. (=MUSI 23700/33700, SALC 20800/30800) *PQ: Any 10000-level music course or consent of instructor.* For course description, see Music. *P. Bohlman. Winter, 2008. (C)*

28100. Rewriting the Past: Narrative, Ritual, and Monument. (=AASR 30001, BPRO 26000, FNDL 23102, HUDV 27102, PSYC 25400) *PQ: Third- or fourth-year standing.* For course description, see Big Problems. *B. Cobler, P. Homans. Spring, 2007. (C)*

28201. Narrative, Image, Thought. (=RLIT 39600, RUSS 29601/39601) *Knowledge of Russian not required.* For course description, see Slavic Languages and Literatures (Russian). *R. Bird. Spring, 2007.*

28301. Multi-Cultural Literatures in Medieval England. (=CMLT 26000, ENGL 15801) For course description, see English Language and Literature. *M. Murrin. Autumn, 2006. (C)*

28401. Poetic Cinema. (=CMLT 29000/39000, CMST 25501/35501, ISHU 29002, RLIT 39000, RUSS 29001/39001) For course description, see Slavic Languages and Literatures (Russian). *R. Bird. Winter, 2007. (C)*

28501. Tolstoy's Late Works. (=ISHU 22201/32201, RLIT 32900, RUSS 22201/32201) For course description, see Slavic Languages and Literatures (Russian). *R. Bird. Autumn, 2007. (C)*

28800. Body and Soul: Historical and Ethnographic Approaches to Prayer. (=BPRO 25200, HIST 29406, HUDV 25200) *PQ: Third- or fourth-year standing.* For course description, see Big Problems. *T. Luhrmann, A. Boden. Offered 2007-08; not offered 2006-07. (C)*

29700. Reading and Research Course. *PQ: Consent of faculty supervisor and Director of Undergraduate Studies. Students are required to submit the College Reading and Research Course Form.* *Autumn, Winter, Spring.*

29800. B.A. Paper Seminar. *RLST 29800 and 29900 form a two-quarter sequence that is required of fourth-year students majoring in Religious Studies.* This course meets weekly to provide guidance for planning, researching, and writing the B.A. paper. *Autumn.*

29900. B.A. Paper. *RLST 29800 and 29900 form a two-quarter sequence that is required of fourth-year students majoring in Religious Studies. A second quarter of seminar attendance is required for students while in RLST 29900.* The purpose of this course is to assist students in the preparation of drafts of their B.A. paper, which are formally presented and critiqued. *Winter.*