The Department offers two tracks for majors in Religious Studies and one track for minors in Religious Studies.

_The important thing is not to stop questioning. Curiosity has its own reason for existing. One cannot help but be in awe when he contemplates the mysteries of eternity, of life, of the marvelous structure of reality. It is enough if one tries merely to comprehend a little of this mystery every day. Never lose a holy curiosity._

Albert Einstein

**Program Description**

By asking the great questions of human existence, religion has influenced art and culture, philosophy and psychology, and social and political theory in profound ways, and its study offers rich opportunities for intellectual growth. Cross-cultural in content and multi-disciplinary in approach, Religious Studies investigates a wide variety of spiritual practices and religious traditions. We employ a broad palette of interpretive tools to assess religious values, beliefs, and practices. As a result, students in Religious Studies receive a generous and diverse training in the skills and methods of scholarship.

Religious Studies examines religion from outside the framework of any particular belief system. The Religious Studies faculty encourages students to explore critically with rigor and enthusiasm the beliefs and assumptions of the world they inhabit. The program engages students in a perennial conversation with the unanswerable questions, vital ideas, and struggle for meaning exemplified by human religiousness so as to encourage intellectual curiosity, increase insight, and create responsible citizens. Such studies contribute to the quality of work and life, and offer an academic training in critical thinking and writing greatly desirable for success in a variety of professions. The department’s program goals and objectives can be found at the department’s website.

**Requirements for the Bachelor of Arts Degree with a Major in Religious Studies**

The Bachelor of Arts Degree with a major in Religious Studies requires a minimum of 180 units which includes courses for the major and minor and courses for the other university-wide graduation requirements: General Education, American Institutions, First-Year Experience, Gender-Race-Ethnicity, and Upper Division Writing, and Foreign Language (see pages 59-63).

**Discipline-Based Requirements**

The program in Religious Studies offers the flexibility essential to the complex and diverse nature of human religious experience and practice. The department offers three avenues of study:

**I. Religious Studies Track**

This track is for students concentrating in Religious Studies and requires a minimum of twelve (12) courses plus a minor, including:

A. A minimum of two (2) Foundational courses from the following:
   - RS 100
   - RS 110
   - RS 111

B. A minimum of three (3) courses from World Religious Traditions, including one of the following: RS 301, 310, 316, 320, 321, 323, or 326.
   - RS 300
C. A minimum of two (2) courses from Approaches to the Study of Religion:
   Phil 342
   RS 345/PSYC 345
   RS 348/SOC 348
   RS 349/ANTH 349
   RS 353
   RS 360
   RS 363/PHIL 363

D. A minimum of two (2) courses from Religion and Culture in Global Perspective:
   RS 364
   RS 370
   RS 371
   RS 376
   RS 378
   RS 379
   RS 410
   RS 465

E. Sophomore Seminar: RS 290 (Completion required by end of Junior year).

F. Capstone: RS 490

G. A minor is required, selected from one of the following three options:
   1. A minor consisting of at least 20 quarter units designed by another discipline.
   2. An interdisciplinary concentration or minor in one of the specially developed areas (see
      "Interdisciplinary Concentrations and Minors").
   3. A special minor.

II. Religious Studies Double Major
This track is for students who double major in Religious Studies and fields such as Psychology,
Philosophy, Sociology, History, English, or Education (Liberal Studies).

A minimum of eight (8) courses, including a minimum of two (2) from area A, and a minimum of one (1)
course each from areas B-F, plus a minor.

A. Foundational Courses:
   RS 100
   RS 110
   RS 111

B. World Religious Traditions:
   RS 300
   RS 301
   RS 302
   RS 310
   RS 313
   RS 316
   RS 320
   RS 321
   RS 323
RS 326  
RS 333  
RS 336  

C. Approaches to the Study of Religion:
   Phil 342  
   RS 345/PSYC 345  
   RS 348/SOC 348  
   RS 349/ANTH 349  
   RS 353  
   RS 360  
   RS 363/PHIL 363  

D. Religion and Culture in Global Perspective:
   RS 364  
   RS 370  
   RS 371  
   RS 376  
   RS 378  
   RS 379  
   RS 410  
   RS 465  

E. Sophomore Seminar: RS 290 (Completion required by end of Junior year)
F. Capstone: RS 490

G. A minor is required, selected from one of the following three options:
   1. A minor consisting of at least 20 quarter units designed by another discipline.
   2. An interdisciplinary concentration or minor in one of the specially developed areas (see “Interdisciplinary Concentrations and Minors”).
   3. A special minor.

III. The Minor in Religious Studies
A minimum of four (4) courses, totaling twenty units, at least fifteen of which must be upper division.

COURSE DESCRIPTIONS

Lower Division

RS 100 Religious Studies and the Quest for Meaning (5)
A comparative study of the variety of ways persons have experienced and interpreted religion. Topics may include: religious experience, God, faith, salvation and liberation, religious mythology and art, ritual, ethics, and the effect of religion on diverse societies in the modern world. GE C5

RS 110 Introduction to Western Religions (5)
This course examines the role that Judaism, Christianity, and Islam have played in shaping the values and worldviews of Western civilization. The interaction between religion and various aspects of culture such as art, literature, politics, and society may be included. GE C5

RS 111 Introduction to Asian Religions (5)
A comparative study of the origins and development of selected religious traditions such as Hinduism, Buddhism, Jainism, Sikhism, Daoism, Confucianism, and Shinto with a focus on worldview and values. The interaction between religion and various aspects of culture such as art, literature, politics, and society may be included. GE C5

RS 289 Experiential Prior Learning (variable units)
Evaluation and assessment of learning that has occurred as a result of prior off-campus experience relevant to the curriculum of the department. Requires complementary academic study and/or documentation. Available by petition only, on a credit, no-credit basis. Not open to postgraduate students.
Interested students should contact the department office. May not be counted toward major or minor requirements.

**RS 290 Theories and Methods in the Study of Religion (5)**
Drawing upon scholars working in the fields of psychology, sociology, anthropology, art, literature and the history and philosophy of religion, we will examine the contributions of these diverse fields to the interdisciplinary study of religion. How do these writers conceive of religion? How do they explain the persistence of religion throughout human history and across different cultures? How should today’s student interpret and employ these different approaches to religious studies?

**RS 296/396 Human Corps Community Service I (variable units)**
This course provides students a volunteer community service experience working with nonprofit, governmental, educational or community-based service organizations. Offered on a credit, no-credit basis only.

**Upper Division**

**Note:** All upper division courses in Religious Studies carry as a prerequisite ENGL 110 (with a minimum grade of ‘C’) or its equivalent. Some courses may carry additional prerequisites. Any prerequisite may be waived with the consent of the instructor. Refer to www.csub/~tvivian/ for schedules of upcoming courses.

**RS 300 Sacred Scriptures of the West (5)**
This course studies the Hebrew Bible, the New Testament, and the Qur’an through a variety of interpretive methods.

**RS 301 Hebrew Bible (5)**
A study of the Hebrew Bible in English translation with special attention given to the historical development of the religion and literature of ancient Israel. Literary forms examined include historical narrative, poetry, law, prophecy, apocalyptic, and the Hebrew wisdom tradition.

**RS 302 New Testament (5)**
The history, literature, and religion of early Christianity considered within the context of the Greco-Roman world. Texts include the gospels and epistles of the New Testament, and non-canonical writings.

**RS 303 Greek 1 - Grammar (2)**
Introduces students to the basics of New Testament Greek (and English) grammar, pronunciation, and reading. Prerequisite: English 100 and 110 or their equivalents.

**RS 304 Greek 2 - Grammar and Reading (2)**
A continuation of Greek 1, the course provides a basic understanding of New Testament Greek grammar, vocabulary, and syntax with the purpose of allowing students to read the New Testament in its original language. Prerequisite: satisfactory completion of Greek 1 or its equivalent.

**RS 305 Greek 3 - Reading (2)**
A continuation of Greek 2 with a primary focus on reading New Testament texts with instruction in applied grammar. Prerequisites: satisfactory completion of Greek 1 and 2 or their equivalents.

**RS 310 Judaism (5)**
A study of the multiple histories, texts, and practices that shape and sustain Jewish civilization with particular attention to the classical rabbinic tradition and post-Enlightenment expressions of Jewish identity. Students will learn about central theological concepts, the cycle of Jewish holy days, and life cycle events. Visits to local congregations will be included.

**RS 313 Christianity (5)**
A study of the history and literature of the Christian religion from its beginnings as a Jewish sect in Judea to its transformation into a global tradition with Orthodox, Catholic, and Protestant branches. Some
attention will be given to the development of sectarian and heretical movements. Visits to local congregations will be included. **GE T2**

**RS 316 Islam (5)**
A study of the history, literature, religion, governments, and culture of Islamic civilization from its beginnings in the Arabian desert to its spread throughout Asia, Africa, and the Western world. Attention will be given to tensions between traditional Islamic culture and modern Western society. Visits to local congregations will be included. **GE T2**

**RS 320 India (5)**
A study of India's culture, especially religious, mythical, and artistic expressions; the values and living patterns of citizens; the historical events leading up to independence from Great Britain; and the social, economic and spiritual effects of independence. **GE T2**

**RS 321 Introduction to Buddhism (5)**
A study of the historical and thematic expression of Buddhist beliefs and practices from the time of Siddhartha Gautama, the Buddha, to the present. Students will learn about diverse expressions of the Dharma; the ways Buddhism has adapted and developed in diverse cultural environments; and resources offered by Buddhism to western modernity. **GE T2**

**RS 323 China and Japan (5)**
A study of China and Japan with emphasis on religious, philosophical, and artistic expressions. Attitudes towards family, community, and state will be considered. **GE T2**

**RS 326 Native American Religion (5)**
This course will study the rich and diverse religious life of Native Americans from the remote past to the present with primary focus on North American cultures. Issues relevant to gender, ritual practice, moral values, sacred stories and world views will be examined. Native and non-native sources will be studied. **GE T3**

**RS 333 Latino/a Religious Experience (5)**
Drawing upon the rich traditions of Latin American and indigenous populations, this course will examine the ways that Christianity has been reimagined to reflect the "mestizo" culture that has arisen in the American Southwest. Topics include liberation theology, Latin American mystical traditions, chicana feminist approaches to religion, Our Lady of Guadalupe, and the spiritual life of Latino leaders such as Cesar Chavez.

**RS 336 Religion in Modern America (5)**
This course studies themes and controversies in religion in American culture since the 1950’s. Students will focus upon the changing religious landscape of America as it relates to individual versus institutional religion; the civil rights movement; the peace movement of the Sixties; feminism and religion; issues of church and state; religion and politics, particularly the role of Fundamentalism in public life; religious pluralism; and religious terrorism and responses to 9/11. **GE T2**

**PHIL 342 Philosophy of Religion (5)**
An examination of the following issues: the nature of religion and religious experience, various conceptions of God, evidence for the existence of God including the classical arguments, faith and its relationship to knowledge, the problem of evil, the meaning and the logical status of religious language, the possibility and nature of personal immortality. Carries credit in either Religious Studies or Philosophy. **GE T2**

**RS 345/PSYC 345 Psychology of Religion (5)**
This course is a survey of psychological perspectives on religious experience. Students will be introduced to theoretical, empirical, and existential approaches to the intersections of religion, spirituality, and psychology. Topics may include: development through the lifespan, conversion, meditation, health and well-being, and mysticism. Carries credit in either Psychology or Religious Studies.
RS 348/SOC 348 Sociology of Religion (5)
A study of the social dimensions of religion in comparative perspective. Topics may include: sociological theories of religion, including those of Durkheim and Weber; religion and social change; the social aspects of religious experience; and religious institutionalization with particular attention to the function of religion in contemporary secular societies. Carries credit in either Sociology or Religious Studies.

RS 349/ANTH 349 Anthropology of Religion (5)
Theoretical study of religious ritual emphasizing comparative study from selected non-Western societies. Particular emphasis will be given to exploring the application of various theoretical approaches to the study of ritual and shamanism. Carries credit in either Anthropology or Religious Studies.

RS 353 Myth and Ritual (5)
An exploration of the nature, function, and types of myth and ritual in comparative religions. The course investigates topics such as myth and truth, literal vs. symbolic modes of comprehension and expression, rites of passage, and current developments in ritual studies.

RS 360 Women, Religion, and Sexuality (5)
In this course we will investigate the various ways major religious traditions, Western and Asian, represent and legislate women and sexuality in their literatures and institutions in diverse historical contexts. Using a range of methodologies, with particular emphasis on feminist critique, we will also examine the nature of women’s participation and leadership in these traditions as well as religious choices made by "post" Jewish and Christian feminists. GE T3

RS 363/PHIL 363 Philosophy, Religion and Literature (5)
This course examines concepts such as freedom, love, morality, God, death, afterlife, faith, friendship, and meaninglessness in novels, short stories, poetry, and dramatic literature. Authors from various historical periods, cultures, and backgrounds will be included. This course carries credit in Religious Studies or Philosophy. GE T2

RS 364 Religion and Film: Screening the Sacred (5)
This course offers students the opportunity to study how religion is represented in the genre of film. Working at the intersection of cultural studies and religious studies, we will examine how films use, modify, or allude to religious themes and values. Students will explore techniques that filmmakers employ to shape viewers' responses to religious subjects and will examine the methods involved in the analysis of film as related to religion and questions of faith.

RS 370 Spirituality and Mysticism (5)
A study of spirituality and mysticism in comparative perspective. Topics include meditation and prayer; spiritual art and music; nature mysticism; and the relationship between spirituality and organized religion.

RS 371 Spiritual Autobiography (5)
This course introduces students to the lives of persons who attain spiritual insight that transforms self and world. Guiding concerns include self-representation in language and narrative; the role of gender in autobiographical writing; and the relationship between self-knowledge and knowledge of God/ultimate reality.

RS 376 New Religious Movements (5)
An historical and sociological examination of popular cults and sectarian movements in contemporary America. Groups this course may highlight include the Shakers, Adventists, Jehovah’s Witnesses, Mormons, Unification Church, Hare Krishna, the Nation of Islam, and the so-called religions of the New Age.

RS 377 Special Studies in Religion (1-5)
Topics to be offered will be announced prior to registration. May be repeated for different course content.
RS 378 The Holocaust and Its Impact (5)
A critical consideration of the moral and religious implications of Nazi Germany’s destruction of European Jewry. The course examines religious, historical, and social forces, ideas and events leading up to the Holocaust; the role of the churches in Nazi Germany; and the moral and spiritual values and beliefs of individuals who acted as perpetrators, victims, bystanders, resistance fighters, and/or rescuers. The course considers the influence of the Holocaust on postwar thought and culture, particularly religious belief and political developments. GE T2

RS 379 Religion, Conflict, and Peacemaking (5)
An investigation of the various ways religious ideas and traditions have motivated and expressed violence. Cases studied may include Gandhian non-violence in India; religion and racism in South Africa and the United States; anti-Semitism; religious violence against women; and religious terrorism. Of primary concern is to investigate the values and ideas available within religious thought and belief for resolving religious violence and creating peace.

RS 396 Human Corps (5)
RS 410 Religion, Ethics, and Moral Values (5)
This course asks the question: What is the relationship between religious belief and the moral choices we make? We will explore various answers to this question through an examination of both tradition-based approaches to ethics in the world religions and the contemporary social concerns that shape our current moral debates (e.g. abortion, health care, separation of church and state, homosexuality, the environment, poverty, war).

RS 465 The Meaning of Death (5)
A study of the meaning of death in the major religious traditions of the world. Topics may include the stages of grief, physician-assisted suicide and euthanasia, deathbed visions and the near-death experience, and problems of aging, and afterlife theories. GE T2

RS 477 Special Studies in Religion (1-5)
Topics to be offered will be announced prior to registration. May be repeated for different course content.

RS 489 Experiential Prior Learning (variable units)
Evaluation and assessment of learning that has occurred as a result of prior off-campus experience relevant to the curriculum of the department. Requires complementary academic study and/or documentation. Available by petition only, on a credit, no-credit basis. Not open to postgraduate students. Interested students should contact the department office. May not be counted toward major or minor requirements.

RS 490 Senior Seminar (6)
Seniors in the major or minor will carry out extended research and write a final essay that serves as the culmination of their study for the degree.

RS 496 Internship in Applied Religious Studies (1-5)
Supervised field experience in applying religious studies skills in dealing with individuals and in community organizations and institutions, including CSUB. Career-oriented experience in community setting is combined with academic activities in the college setting. Hours in the field, placement and academic requirements such as conferences, reports, and readings are arranged in consultation with the work supervisor and faculty supervisor. Prerequisites vary depending on the specific internship, but enrollment is limited to students with good academic records who are committed to understanding the religious elements present in professional life.

RS 497 Cooperative Education (5)
The Cooperative Education program offers a sponsored learning experience in a work setting, integrated with a field analysis seminar. The Cooperative Education office contracts the field experience on an individual basis, subject to approval by the department. The cooperative education coordinator and the
faculty liaison (or course instructor) work with the field supervisor to direct the field experience, including
the seminar and reading assignments. Students are expected to enroll in the course for at least two
quarters. The determination of course credits, evaluation, and grading are the responsibility of the
departmental faculty. Offered on a credit, no-credit basis only. Department will determine application of
credit.

**RS 499 Individual Study (1-5)**
Individual program with regular consultations and/or examinations as instructor may require. Admission
with consent of department chair.

**RS 577 Special Studies in Religion (1-5)**
Topics to be offered will be announced. May be repeated for different course content. Requires graduate
level standing.

**RS 580 Advanced Research Participation (1-5)**
Individual investigation under the supervision of an identified instructor. (Experience as a research or
teaching assistant does not count for credit.) Prerequisite: 3.0 GPA and consent of department chair.

**RS 599 Advanced Individual Study (1-5)**
Special projects developed by the individual in consultation with an identified instructor. Prerequisite: 3.0
GPA and consent of department chair.

**RS 677 Special Studies in Religion (1-5)**
Topics to be offered will be announced. May be repeated for different course content. Requires graduate
level standing.