

Department of Philosophy and Religious Studies

School of Arts and Humanities

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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 is inherently inter-disciplinary in nature; to encourage inter-disciplinary approaches to the study of religion, the program offers a special degree path for students pursuing a double major.

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. Through its association with the Institute of Religion, Education, and Public Policy (IREPP), the department offers students the opportunity to engage with major public issues of the day. The annual CSUB Philosophy and Religious Studies Undergraduate Conference provides a forum for the presentation of work by undergraduates from CSUB and other universities in all areas of philosophical and religious studies.

Religious Studies Program Learning Outcomes

Goal 1 – Students will come to understand and appreciate religion as a phenomenon that brings meaning to human lives in diverse cultures, traditions, and historical moments.

1. Students will learn the major beliefs and practices that constitute diverse religious traditions.
2. Students will be able to analyze and compare religious traditions.
3. Students will be able to discuss how religious beliefs and practices reflect a conception of the human purpose and dilemma.

Goal 2 – Students will learn about the religious history of different geographic regions and cultures (e.g., Africa, Asia, the Americas, and Europe).

1. Students will be able to identify the different religious traditions, ideas, and values that have emerged from diverse cultures.

Goal 3 – Students will demonstrate critical thinking skills using the methods of the academic study of religion.

1. Students will learn the diverse theories and major debates among scholars in a variety of academic fields (e.g., religious studies, philosophy, psychology, and sociology) on the nature and meaning of religion.
2. Students will be able to identify central definitions of the concept of religion and the debates that have informed them (e.g., what is Freud's view of religion, and how does it differ from Durkheim's position?).
3. Students will be able to distinguish theology from the academic study of religion.
4. Students will be able to discuss various interpretations of religion in addressing theoretical questions (e.g., what role does gender play in religious experience? What is the meaning of sacrifice?).

Goal 4 – Students will learn to read and write according to the standards and conventions of scholarship in the study of religion, and will be introduced to appropriate technology for reading and research in religious studies.

1. Students will acquire the necessary skills to develop an essay topic, conduct research, construct arguments, and write cogent essays in religious studies incorporating Chicago style documentation.
2. Students will be able to locate and distinguish primary and secondary sources; students will be able to use appropriate collections, articles, bibliographies, and web resources; students will be able to critically appropriate these sources in order to amplify their research and writing; and students will be able to cite such sources accurately.

RELIGIOUS STUDIES

Requirements for the Bachelor of Arts Degree in Religious Studies

Total Units Required to Graduate	120 units
Major Requirements	
Religious Studies Major	36 units
Double Major Degree Path	24 units
General Education Requirements	38-54 units
First-Year Seminar	2
LD Area A Foundational Skills	12
LD Area B Natural Sciences	6
LD Area C Arts and Humanities	6
LD Area D Social and Behavioral Sciences	6
American Institutions	6
SELF	0-3*
Junior Year Diversity Requirement	0-3*
UD Thematic Areas B and D	0-6*
Capstone	0-1*
GWAR (Exam) or Class	0-3*

*The SELF requirement may double count with B, C, or D. JYDR may be satisfied in major, minor or other university requirement. Students are waived from UD area of their program. GWAR may be satisfied with waiver exam. Capstone may be satisfied within the senior seminar.

*A modification to the standard GE program has been approved that allows the possibility of satisfying some GE requirements through the major. (MATH 2010 satisfies Area A4.)

**Some major requirements may be used to satisfy GE: (PSYC 1008 counts toward the LD Area D requirement and Senior Seminar RS 4908 satisfies the GE capstone requirement.)

Requirements for the Major in Religious Studies (12 courses)

Thirty-six (36) units consisting of::

1. Introductory courses (6 units)
RS 1128 or 1138, and one additional course from RS 1108, 1118, 1128, or 1138
2. World Religious Traditions (9 units)
 - One required course from RS 3208, 3210, 3220, or 3230
 - One required course from RS 3240, 3250, or 3260
 - One additional World Religious Traditions course
3. Approaches to the Study of Religion (6 units)
2 required courses from RS 3340, 3350, 3368, or ANTH 3350
4. Religion and Culture in Global Perspective (6 units)
2 required courses from RS 3518, 3528, 3538, 3548, 4518, or 4528
5. RS 3480 and, 4900, plus one upper-division RS course (9 units)

Requirements for the Double Major Degree Path (8 courses)

Twenty-four (24) units consisting of::

1. Introductory courses (6 units)
RS 1128 or 1138, and one additional course from RS 1108, 1118, 1128, or 1138
2. World Religious Traditions (6 units)
 - One required course from RS 3208, 3210, 3220, or 3230
 - One required course from RS 3240, 3250, or 3260
3. Approaches to the Study of Religion (3 units)
1 required course from RS 3340, 3350, 3368, or ANTH 3350
4. Religion and Culture in Global Perspective (3 units)
1 required course from RS 3518, 3528, 3538, 3548, 4518, or 4528
5. RS 3480 and, 4900 (6 units)

Requirements for the Minor in Religious Studies

The minor requires twelve units, at least nine of which must be upper division.