

RELIGIOUS STUDIES

Degree: B.A., Philosophy and Religious Studies

Department of Classics, Philosophy, and Religion (<https://cas.umw.edu/clpr/>)

The academic discipline of the study of religion investigates the religious dimension of human experience throughout history, across cultures, and around the world. Courses in religious studies acquaint students with the world's major traditions, texts, and figures. Students learn the methodologies of religious studies and engage in critical discussion of diverse themes, issues, and theories related to the study of these traditions. Leading to a Bachelor of Arts degree in Philosophy and Religious Studies, the major in religion offers close faculty guidance and a high degree of flexibility such that individual interests are both encouraged and supported. Well-trained in the tools of a liberal arts education necessary for many careers, graduates of the major enter the world beyond college with a broad cultural awareness that appreciates the challenges of diversity and the ability to engage in dialogue skillfully. They are trained to conduct research, to think critically, and to write and express ideas persuasively. Religious studies majors have pursued careers in fields such as public relations, journalism, teaching, library science, service organizations, business, and the arts. The Religious Studies major also prepares students for graduate or divinity school in the study of religion, as well as for graduate study in other fields such as law and social work.

Honors are awarded in Religious Studies on the basis of excellence both in coursework for the major and in a final project for RELG 401 Guided Research. Only students who complete 401 are eligible for Honors. Internships are available to qualified students.

Courses in other disciplines are accepted towards the Religious Studies major, which allows students to have an interdisciplinary approach in the formation of their major. Various religious studies offerings also complement work in American studies, anthropology, classics, drama, English, history, international affairs, philosophy, and psychology, among other disciplines. The Religious Studies program contributes to several minors, including Contemplative Studies and Asian Studies, as well as to the American Studies Program.

The Khatib Program in Religion & Dialogue (<https://cas.umw.edu/cprd/khatib-program-in-religion-dialogue/>) supports inter- and multi-faith dialogue efforts, connecting the expertise of faculty from across the campus and country with faith leaders and community activists. The program is grounded in the belief that through mutual understanding and respect, tolerance and coexistence is possible between all religious traditions. In its short time at the university, the Khatib Program has held events each semester, encouraging conversations on topics involving religion and democracy, violence, elections, history, and more. The program also sponsors the Khatib Award, an educational and financial opportunity for upper-level Religious Studies majors. In coordination with the Department of Classics, Philosophy, and Religion, the Khatib Program promotes the academic understanding of world religions and their individual and interconnected histories. The Khatib Program in Religion & Dialogue was established at the University of Mary Washington in 2019 through the generosity of Dr. Reza Khatib and Mrs. Georgianna Clifford Khatib.

Student Learning Outcomes

1. Students will acquire and synthesize factual information about different religious traditions.
2. Students will be able to apply critical methods as they interpret a variety of texts in the discipline.
3. Students will be able to effectively communicate in writing in the field of Religious Studies.
4. Students will be able to effectively communicate orally in the field of religion.
5. Students will demonstrate appreciation of the diversity and richness of various religious traditions.

Major Requirements

Code	Title	Credits
RELG 101 & RELG 102	Introduction to World Religions and Introduction to the Study of Religion	6
Select one Abrahamic Religions course of the following:		3
RELG 103	The Abrahamic Religions	
RELG 205	Ancient Jewish Literature	
RELG 206A	Christian Beginnings	
RELG 208	Christianity After the New Testament	
RELG 210	Islam	
RELG 252	Religion and Politics in Islam	
Select one Non-Abrahamic Religions course of the following:		3
RELG 251	Native American Religions	
RELG 283	Hinduism	
RELG 284	Buddhism	
Select 15 additional credits ¹		15
RELG 401	Guided Research ²	3
Total Credits		30

¹ Nine of which must be at the 300- or 400-level (at least two of these must be religion courses or CPRD 104 Peacefulness: Here and Now, CPRD 299 Mysterium Humanum Studies, CPRD 304 Contemplative Practice II, PHIL 301 Medieval Philosophy). MDFL 250 Antisemitism from Antiquity to Today and MDFL 253 Remembering the Holocaust may count as electives towards the major. Additional courses (such as Special Topics in other disciplines) may count as electives towards the major with the approval of the Chair.

² Or another 300- or 400-level course.

General Education Requirements

The general education requirements for Bachelor of Arts/Bachelor of Science degrees (<https://catalog.umw.edu/undergraduate/general-education/requirements-bachelor-arts-bachelor-science-degrees/>) apply to all students who are seeking to earn an undergraduate B.A., B.S. or B.S.Ed. degree.

Students seeking a Bachelor of Liberal Studies degree have a separate set of BLS general education requirements (<https://catalog.umw.edu/undergraduate/general-education/requirements-bachelor-liberal-studies-degrees/>).

Electives

Elective courses are those that are not needed to fulfill a general education requirement or major program requirement but are chosen by the student to complete the 120 credits required for graduation with a B.A./B.S./B.S.Ed. degree or the BLS degree. These courses may be taken graded or pass/fail (or S/U in the case of physical education and 100-level dance). No student in a regular B.A./B.S./B.S.Ed. program may count more than 60 credits in a single discipline toward the 120 credits required for graduation.

Total Credits Required for the Degree: 120 credits

Plan of Study

This suggested plan of study should serve as a guide to assist students when planning their course selections. It is not a substitute for a student's Degree Evaluation or the Program Requirements listed for this major in the catalog. Academic planning is the student's responsibility, and course selections should be finalized only after speaking with an advisor. Students should familiarize themselves with the catalog in effect at the time they matriculated at the University of Mary Washington. Students should also familiarize themselves with general education requirements (<https://catalog.umw.edu/undergraduate/general-education/>) which can be fulfilled through general electives as well as major/minor course requirements. Course requirements and sequencing may vary with AP, IB, CLEP, Cambridge or previous coursework, transfer courses, or other conditions. To be considered full-time, an undergraduate student must be enrolled in 12 or more credits for the semester.

Course	Title	Credits
Freshman		
Fall		
FSEM 100	First-Year Seminar	3
RELG 101	Introduction to World Religions	3
General Education Courses		9
Credits		15
Spring		
RELG 102	Introduction to the Study of Religion	3
General Education Courses		12
Credits		15
Sophomore		
Fall		
RELG 103 or RELG 205 or RELG 206A or RELG 208 or RELG 210 or RELG 252	The Abrahamic Religions or Ancient Jewish Literature or Christian Beginnings or Christianity After the New Testament or Islam or Religion and Politics in Islam	3
Any Level Religion Course		3
General Education Courses		9
Credits		15
Spring		
RELG 251 or RELG 283 or RELG 284	Native American Religions or Hinduism or Buddhism	3
Any Level Religion Course		3
General Education Courses		9
Credits		15
Junior		
Fall		
Any 300 or 400 Level Religion Course		3
General Education Courses or Electives		12
Credits		15

Spring	
Any 300 or 400 Level Religion Course	3
General Electives	12
Credits	
15	
Senior	
Fall	
Any 300 or 400 Level Religion Course	3
General Electives	12
Credits	
15	
Spring	
Any 300 or 400 Level RELG Course	3
General Electives	12
Credits	
15	
Total Credits	
120	

Classics, Philosophy, and Religion Faculty

Laura H. Mentore, Chair

Jason P. Matzke, Career and Pre-Law Advisor (Philosophy)

Mary Beth Mathews, Career Advisor (Religion)

Professors

Mary Beth Mathews (Religion)

Jason P. Matzke (Philosophy)

Angela L. Pitts (Classics)

Associate Professors

Jennifer A. Barry (Religion)

Assistant Professors

Kalpesh Bhatt (Religion)

Senior Lecturer

Michael J. Reno (Philosophy)