Religious Studies
In the College of Arts and Letters

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Faculty
Emeritus: Downing, Frost, Gefter, Holler, Khalil, Sparks
Chair: Levitt
Professors: Levitt, Moore
Associate Professors: Hansen, Mohammed, Timalsina
Assistant Professor: Choi
Lecturers: Iammarino, Gillman, Kirkegaard, Kulkhen, Meltzer, Stewart, Swayd, Thomas, Whitaker

Offered by the Department
Major in religious studies with the B.A. degree in liberal arts
and sciences.
Minor in religious studies.

The Major
The academic study of religion is central to the creation of a
community of world citizens. Our program is designed for students
who live in a pluralistic society and who wish to investigate the role
religions play in human life and society. Because religion has shaped
the human story of almost every culture, it is difficult to understand
human behavior or to interpret world events without grasping how
religion has helped to determine them. As United States Supreme
Court Justices Clark and Goldberg wrote in their decision allowing the
study of religion in public schools, “one’s education is not complete
without a study of comparative religion or the history of religion and
its relationship to the advancement of civilization.” Part of the liberal
arts, religious studies employs critical analysis and methods from a
variety of disciplines to understand religious traditions as well as to
question the dogmas, stereotypes, and prejudices that may surround
those traditions. In addition to investigating religious symbols, texts,
practices, and belief systems, the study of religion examines the
relationship of religion to ethics, contemporary social issues, politics,
history, psychology, science, literature, and the arts.

Career Outlook
Religious studies prepares students for any career that requires
critical thinking, analysis, oral and written communication skills, and
the ability to reflect on questions of meaning and value. The study
of religion is excellent pre-professional preparation for fields such as
law, teaching, medicine, counseling, social work, conflict resolution,
international business, foreign service, journalism, various ministries
and other careers in non-profit organizations and public service. While
some of our majors go on to do graduate work in religion or related
academic fields, other graduates find themselves well prepared for
careers requiring imagination, problem solving, communication,
self-understanding, and awareness of human diversity.

Double Majors and The Minor
Because religious studies is interdisciplinary and multicultural it
is an excellent degree to complement many other majors. Double
majors are easily accommodated within a well-designed four-year
course of study, since the religious studies major has only a 36-unit
requirement. Graduates from the program have had double majors
with biology, communication, history, psychology, and other fields
where the study of religion enhances or focuses the second major.
The 15-unit minor is a less ambitious way to combine your major
interests with the academic study of religion. Anyone who is inter-
ested in human beliefs, behavior, and values would benefit from a
minor in religious studies.

Advising
All College of Arts and Letters majors are urged to consult with
their department adviser as soon as possible; they are required to
meet with their department adviser within the first two semesters after
declaration or change of major.

Impacted Program
The religious studies major is an impacted program. To be
admitted to the religious studies major, students must meet the
following criteria:
A. Complete preparation for the major;
B. Complete a minimum of 60 transferable semester units;
C. Have a minimum cumulative GPA of 2.0.

To complete the major, students must fulfill the degree requirements
for the major described in the catalog in effect at the time they are
accepted into the premajor at SDSU (assuming continuous enrollment).

Major Academic Plans (MAPs)
Visit http://www.sdsu.edu/mymap for the recommended courses
needed to fulfill your major requirements. The MAPs website was
created to help students navigate the course requirements for their
majors and to identify which General Education course will also fulfill
a major preparation course requirement.

Religious Studies Major
With the B.A. Degree in Liberal Arts and Sciences
(Major Code: 15101) (SIMS Code: 116101)

All candidates for a degree in liberal arts and sciences must complete the graduation requirements listed in the section of this
catalog on “Graduation Requirements.” No more than 48 units in
religious studies courses can apply to the degree.

A minor is not required with this major.

Preparation for the Major, Religious Studies 101. (3 units)

Language Requirement. Competency (successfully completing
the third college semester or fifth college quarter) is required in one
foreign language to fulfill the graduation requirement. Refer to section
of catalog on “Graduation Requirements.”

Graduation Writing Assessment Requirement. Students must
have fulfilled the Writing Placement Assessment with a score of B or
above before taking Religious Studies 396W and earn a grade of C
(2.0) or better. See “Graduation Requirements” section for a complete
listing of requirements.

International Experience. The department encourages interna-
tional experience for its majors. It will facilitate the transfer of religious
studies credits for appropriate study abroad, student exchange, or other
overseas programs. International internships may also receive religious
studies credit, if approved in advance by a department adviser.

Major. A minimum of 33 upper division units in religious studies
to include Religious Studies 396W, 400, and at least three units
from Texts, nine units from Traditions, three units from Theories and
at least 15 units from Critical Issues in Religion, and six additional units selected from
any of the four upper division areas.

Area A, Texts: Religious Studies 301, 305, 310, 315, 373, Asian
Studies 458. (3 units)

Area B, Traditions: Religious Studies 320, 325, 328, 330, 335,
337, 338, 339, 340, 342, 345, 351 [or Africana Studies 351], 507 [or
History 507], American Indian Studies 470, History 538*, Philosophy
351, 353, 412*, 565*. (9 units)

Area C, Theories and Methods: Religious Studies 350, 353, 354,
355, 395, Anthropology 424*, Philosophy 535*, Sociology 338*. (3 units)
Courses with variable content (496, 580, 581, 582, 583, 596) may be used in the four areas of study when deemed relevant by the department adviser.
* Additional prerequisites required.

Religious Studies Minor
(SIMS Code: 116101)
The minor in religious studies consists of a minimum of 15 units taken in the Department of Religious Studies to include at least three lower division units and 12 upper division units.

International Experience. The department encourages international experience for students in the religious studies minor. It will facilitate the transfer of religious studies credits for appropriate study abroad, student exchange, or other overseas programs. International internships may also receive religious studies credit, if approved in advance by a department adviser.
 Courses in the minor may not be counted toward the major, but may be used to satisfy preparation for the major and general education requirements, if applicable. A minimum of six upper division units must be completed in residence at San Diego State University.

Courses (REL S)
Refer to Courses and Curricula and University Policies sections of this catalog for explanation of the course numbering system, unit or credit hour, prerequisites, and related information.

LOWER DIVISION COURSES

REL S 100. Exploring the Bible (3) [GE]
Basic content and themes of the Hebrew Bible and New Testament using methods of contemporary biblical studies. Attention to ancient Near Eastern and Greco-Roman cultural settings as well as the impact of the Bible on contemporary culture.

REL S 101. World Religions (3) [GE]
Major world and selected tribal traditions from primal times to present. Broad historical development and philosophical overview including founders, teachings, beliefs, practices, and interactions with culture, such as art, literature, politics.

REL S 102. Exploring the Qur'an (3) [GE]
Basic content and themes of the Qur'an from an historical perspective using academic methods of study. Consideration of relationships to other Abrahamic scriptures. Exegetical approaches from sectarian and modern political viewpoints.

REL S 103. American Religious Diversity (3) [GE]
Religious identities and traditions of diverse peoples living in the United States. Major world religions in context of contemporary multicultural America. Religions of indigenous peoples and religious movements which have arisen in the US.

REL S 296. Experimental Topics (1-4)
Selected topics. May be repeated with new content. See Class Schedule for specific content. Limit of nine units of any combination of 296, 496, 596 courses applicable to a bachelor’s degree.

UPPER DIVISION COURSES
(Intended for Undergraduates)

NOTE: Courses for Area (A) Texts; or Area (B) Traditions; or Area (C) Theories and Methods; or Area (D) Critical Issues in Religion, are identified in the course title as (A), (B), (C), or (D).

REL S 301. Hebrew Bible (A) (3) [GE]
Prerequisites: Three units of religious studies and completion of the General Education requirement in Foundations of Learning II.C., Humanities required for nonmajors.
Literature, history, major themes of Bible; methods and concerns of contemporary biblical studies. Situates folkloric, political, heroic, poetic, and religious meanings of texts among their original audiences.

REL S 305. The New Testament (A) (3) [GE]
Prerequisites: Three units of religious studies and completion of the General Education requirement in Foundations of Learning II.C., Humanities required for nonmajors.

REL S 310. The Qur’an (A) (3) [GE]
Prerequisites: Three units of religious studies and completion of the General Education requirement in Foundations of Learning II.C., Humanities required for nonmajors.
Major themes of Qur’an including cosmology, eschatology, good and evil, gender, God and monotheism, People of the Book (Jews and Christians), and role of religion in society. Attention to historical period in which the Qur’an was compiled.

REL S 315. Sacred Texts of Yoga (A) (3)
Prerequisite: Three units of religious studies.
Primary texts from sacred literatures of Hinduism, Buddhism, Jainism that relate to yoga. Yoga as an independent contemplative tradition with analysis of mind and various techniques of meditation. Methods of interpretation, issues of translation, social and historical contexts.

REL S 320. Judaism (B) (3) [GE]
Prerequisites: Three units of religious studies and completion of the General Education requirement in Foundations of Learning II.C., Humanities required for nonmajors.
Jewish history, culture, theory, and practice. Biblical roots of modern Jewish beliefs, basic movements within modern Judaism; Jewish calendar and Jewish life cycle as seen in Hebrew Bible, short stories, and films.

REL S 325. Christianity (B) (3) [GE]
Prerequisites: Three units of religious studies and completion of the General Education requirement in Foundations of Learning II.C., Humanities required for nonmajors.
Historical development of Christian traditions and major issues confronting Christianity today. Beliefs and practices important to Christian self-understanding, debates over authority of Bible, accommodations to modern science, and relationship with non-Christian religions.

REL S 328. Islam (B) (3) [GE]
Prerequisites: Three units of religious studies and completion of the General Education requirement in Foundations of Learning II.C., Humanities required for nonmajors.
Islamic religion and culture in Asia, Africa, and Near East. History, doctrines, practices, literatures, social and intellectual movements, role of Mohammed, and gender relations within Islam as understood in global context.
REL S 376. Nature, Spirituality, Ecology (D) (3) [GE]
Prerequisites: Three units of religious studies and completion of the General Education requirement in Foundations of Learning II.C., Humanities for nonmajors.
Cross-cultural religious views of nature. Attention to sacred texts, writings of naturalists, deep ecologists, and ecofeminists on place of nature in spirituality and role of spirituality in ecology.

REL S 379. Religious Violence and Nonviolence (D) (3) [GE]
Prerequisites: Three units of religious studies and completion of the General Education requirement in Foundations of Learning II.C., Humanities for nonmajors.
Role of religion in terrorism, hate groups, scapegoating, domestic and ecological violence, versus role of religion in peacemaking and movements for social justice. Nonviolent philosophies of Gandhi, Martin Luther King, Jr., and pacifism in Jain, Buddhist, and Christian traditions.

REL S 380. Atheism, Humanism, and Secularism (D) (3) [GE]
Prerequisites: Three units of religious studies and completion of the General Education requirement in Foundations of Learning II.C., Humanities for nonmajors.
Atheism, humanism, and secularism in western culture to include the creation of institutions that support and advance these movements. Rise of unbelief in reaction to contemporary religious fundamentalism and attacks on science and reason.

REL S 390A-390B. Religion and American Institutions (D) (3-3) [AI]
Prerequisite: Three units of religious studies.

REL S 395. New Religions (C) (3) [GE]
Prerequisites: Three units of religious studies and completion of the General Education requirement in Foundations of Learning II.C., Humanities for nonmajors.
America's alternative religions, popularly called "cults" and why they attract spiritual seekers. New religions and transplanted Asian and African religions. Theoretical structures of belief systems and concrete specifics on different groups.

REL S 396W. Writing on Religion (C) (3)
Prerequisites: Satisfies Graduation Writing Assessment Requirement for students who have completed 60 units; completed Writing Placement Assessment with a score of 8 or higher (or earned a C or higher in RWS 280, 281, or LING 281 if score on WPA was 7 or lower); and completed General Education requirements in Composition and Critical Thinking.
Proof of completion of prerequisites required: Test scores or verification of exemption; copy of transcript.
Theoretical approaches in study of religion and religious phenomena. Writing in discipline of religious studies through analysis of key thinkers in history of religions.

REL S 400. Senior Seminar (C) (3)
Prerequisite: Religious Studies 396W; others with consent of department chair.
Senior capstone seminar in major. Discussion and research on topics in religious studies. Formal research paper and presentation.

REL S 496. Experimental Topics (A) (B) (C) (D) (1-4)
Prerequisite: Three units of religious studies.
Selected topics. May be repeated with new content. See Class Schedule for specific content. Limit of nine units of any combination of 296, 496, 596 courses applicable to a bachelor's degree.

REL S 499. Special Study (A) (B) (C) (D) (1-3)
Prerequisite: Twelve upper division units in religious studies.
Individual study. Maximum credit six units.

**UPPER DIVISION COURSES**
(Also Acceptable for Advanced Degrees)

NOTE: Courses for Area (A) Texts; or Area (B) Traditions; or Area (C) Theories and Methods; or Area (D) Critical Issues in Religion, are identified in the course title as (A), (B), (C), or (D).

REL S 507. The Reformation (A) (B) (C) (D) (3)
(Same course as History 507)
Continental Europe, 1500-1648. Split of Christendom; political and intellectual dissent; social fabric of family life; relationship between gender, class, and power; cultural stratification of European society.

REL S 580. Major Figure (A) (B) (C) (D) (3)
Prerequisite: Three units of religious studies.
Life, works, and significance of one major figure in a religious tradition. May be repeated with new content. See Class Schedule for specific content. Maximum credit six units.

REL S 581. Major Theme (A) (B) (C) (D) (3)
Prerequisites: Three units of religious studies and upper division or graduate standing.
Advanced systematic study of a theme or motif selected from major religious traditions. May be repeated with new content. See Class Schedule for specific content. Maximum credit six units.

REL S 582. Major Text (A) (B) (C) (D) (1-3)
Prerequisites: Three units of religious studies and upper division or graduate standing.
Advanced systematic study of a selected scripture or classic text(s) selected from one of the major religious traditions. May be repeated with new content. See Class Schedule for specific content. Maximum credit six units.

REL S 583. Major Tradition (A) (B) (C) (D) (3)
Prerequisites: Three units of religious studies and upper division or graduate standing.
Advanced systematic study of the doctrines, practices, and development of a major religious tradition. May be repeated with new content. See Class Schedule for specific content. Maximum credit six units.

REL S 596. Advanced Topics in Religious Studies (A) (B) (C) (D) (1-3)
Prerequisite: Consent of instructor.
Advanced selected topics in religious studies. May be repeated with new content. See Class Schedule for specific content. Limit of nine units of any combination of 296, 496, 596 courses applicable to a bachelor's degree. Credit for 596 and 696 applicable to a master's degree with approval of the graduate adviser.

**GRADUATE COURSES**
Refer to the Graduate Bulletin.