

QUESTIONS ABOUT THE  
MAJOR/MINOR?

Contact  
Us

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MAJOR/MINOR  
IN

**Religious  
Studies**



# **Fields you can enter with a Religious Studies Major...**

(...based on the careers of our recent alumni!):

- Medicine and Public Health
  - Law
  - Secondary and Higher Education
  - Politics, Government, Community Organizing, International Affairs
  - Human Rights and Global Development
  - Business, Finance, and Marketing
  - Environmental Advocacy
- ...And many more!

## **DISTINGUISHED MAJORS PROGRAM**

Students interested in adding an independent research project to their program of study can apply for entry into the Distinguished Majors Program (DMP). In consultation with a faculty advisor, DMP students devise and undertake a course of research in a topic of interest to them, culminating in a thesis of 30–50 pages that they have an opportunity to present publicly. They learn how to conduct and present research in RELG 4800-“Crafting a Research Project in Religious Studies.” Students are eligible to receive, at graduation, the honor of “Distinction,” “High Distinction,” or “Highest Distinction.”

## **What is Religious Studies at UVA?**

Religious Studies is an academic field rooted in the humanities and liberal arts. Here at UVA, our faculty offer a comprehensive curriculum that spans traditions, geographies, and methodologies, including historical, philosophical, philological, ethnographic, and literary approaches. Since its founding in 1967, Religious Studies at UVA has played a leading role in encouraging nuanced discourse about religion across the globe.

Here at UVA, we aim to advance a conversation that considers the complex reality of religion and religions in our world today. The range of topics that are researched and taught explore the rich diversity of religious life: from the spiritual lives of the religiously unaffiliated to communities in Judaism, Christianity, and Islam, from the traditions of East and South Asia, to the religions of Africa and its diasporas, from global Buddhism to local traditions here in the United States.

## ALUMNI QUOTES

"A relatively common misconception about religious studies is that it is limited in its application and relevance to actual practitioners of particular faiths. On the contrary, religious studies is a gateway into the minds of others—often those most different from you—through the intersections of nearly every other discipline in the humanities. It makes philosophy more practical, politics more personal, and the past more palpable by equipping students with the tools to uncover the deeper meanings of text, language, and behavior. In terms of skills, students develop indispensable expertise in analytical reading and writing, critical thinking, and verbal communication through rigorous interdisciplinary coursework. Ultimately, religious studies students learn about what makes people tick, which is key to building relationships based on mutual respect and understanding. This year, I have returned to UVA as a student in the School of Law, where I constantly encounter the same fundamental questions of ethics, motivations, and values in my legal training. My undergraduate experience in the Department of Religious Studies has prepared me to excel not only as an insightful professional in my particular field, but as a thoughtful member of my community. "

*Isabelle Foley, UVA Religious Studies Grad, '19  
University of Virginia School of Law, J.D. 24*

## SAMPLE COURSES

- **Jerusalem**
- **Global Ethics and Climate Change**
- **American Religious Autobiography**
- **Religion, Ethics, Health Care**
- **Ballots, Bullets, Bibles: On Black Liberation**
- **The Religious Quest**

## SAMPLE COURSES

- **African Religions-** Religious Themes in African Literature and Film
- **Buddhism** - Buddhist Meditation Traditions
- **Christianity-** The Black Church
- **Hinduism-**The History of Yoga
- **Islam-** Introduction to Islam in Africa Through the Arts
- **Judaism-** Jewish Feminism

## ALUMNI QUOTES

"Ultimately, religious studies is a study of humanity – the values that influence our society, the history that determines how we arrived to where we are, and the psychology that guides our decision-making. It is the study of who we are and what matters to us. As I've navigated the world after college, I've become increasingly aware that the trajectories we set for our lives are not always what we expect. Having experience with different cultures, religions, and texts, understating how to find commonalities amidst differences, parsing out intention versus meaning; and grappling with your own heritage and identity are perhaps the best ways to prepare for life "in the real world," regardless of your eventual chosen industry. More specific to the University of Virginia, I could not have found a more welcoming, nurturing faculty that was invested in my growth professionally and personally. Those relationships gave me the guidance, confidence, and skills to thrive after college."

Carrie Filipetti, UVA Religious Studies Grad, '11,  
Executive Director of the Vandenberg Coalition (a network of U.S foreign policy professionals); Former Deputy Assistant Secretary for Cuba and Venezuela, U.S. Department of State.

## \*(New!) MAJOR REQUIREMENTS\*

**\*30 Credits total\***

### 1. Concentration

Take three courses (9 credits) in one of the world's major religious traditions as a primary concentration; or choose from one of the forthcoming thematic concentrations (to be announced soon!).

### 2 Major Sequence

Take three courses that introduce you to key tools, questions, and topics in the academic study of religion.

RELG 1000 *Questions in the Study of Religion*

RELG 3730 *Theories and Methods in Religious Studies*

RELG 4500 *Majors Seminar*

### 3. Breadth

Take two courses (6 credits) learning about some *other* religious tradition or theme than that covered in your concentration. A chance to diversify your knowledge!

### 4. Electives

Take two courses (6 credits) in any topic you choose to reach the required 30 credits. Here you can deepen your concentration or continue diversifying your knowledge!

**NB: Three out of your ten courses must be at the 3000 level or above. A grade of C or above must be achieved in all courses that count towards the Major.**

## MINOR REQUIREMENTS

**\*15 Credits total\***

- **The completion of two courses (6 credits) in one of the world's major religious traditions as a primary concentration.**
- **At least one of the five required courses (3 credits) must be taken at the 3000 level, or above.**
- **A grade of C (2.0) or above must be achieved in each course offered for the completion of the Religious Studies minor.**

**The Religious Studies Department  
offers more than 30 classes every  
semester directed at  
undergraduates!**