



Twin Cities Campus

Religious Studies B.A.

Classical and Near Eastern Religions and Cultures

College of Liberal Arts

- Program Type: Baccalaureate
- Requirements for this program are current for Fall 2017
- Required credits to graduate with this degree: 120
- Required credits within the major: 31 to 34
- Degree: Bachelor of Arts

Students in religious studies are trained in the critical study of religious thought, practice, institutions, and communities throughout the world and across time periods. The subject of religion is by its very nature interdisciplinary, attracting interest from many perspectives, including textual and literary studies, history, sociology, anthropology, the arts, and philosophy.

Students in the religious studies program select one of two tracks. The religion, culture, and society track is designed for students who seek to study religious traditions broadly or comparatively. The texts and traditions track is for students who seek to study a single tradition deeply, reading its foundational texts in their original language. Both tracks examine religion as a social and cultural force affecting fundamental issues of our world. All majors take courses in at least two religious traditions and develop an interdisciplinary concentration area consisting of four courses, selected from a variety of departments and focused on a theme, tradition, time period, location, practice, or set of questions. The concentration area must be approved by the major advisor.

Program Delivery

This program is available:

- via classroom (the majority of instruction is face-to-face)

Admission Requirements

For information about University of Minnesota admission requirements, visit the [Office of Admissions website](#).

General Requirements

All students are required to complete general University and college requirements including writing and liberal education courses. For more information about University-wide requirements, see the [liberal education requirements](#). Required courses for the major or minor in which a student receives a D grade (with or without plus or minus) do not count toward the major or minor (including transfer courses).

Program Requirements

Students are required to take 4 semester(s) of Track I: Any language. Track II: Any language approved by the major adviser.

CLA BA degrees require 4 semesters or the equivalent of a second language.

CLA BA degrees require 18 upper-division (3xxx-level or higher) credits outside the major designator. These credits must be taken in designators different from the major designator and cannot include courses that are cross-listed with the major designator. The major designator for the Religious Studies BA is RELS.

A minimum of 12 upper division program credits must be taken at the University of Minnesota - Twin Cities campus. Students who double major and choose to complete the senior project requirement in their other CLA major are still required to take at least 30 credits in the religious studies program. Students may earn a BA or a minor in religious studies, but not both.

The following restrictions apply to students also completing a major in Jewish studies or Biblical studies: (1) the Major Breadth Course requirement should be fulfilled using courses on traditions fully distinct from the focal tradition in the sub-plan and well outside of the scope of the other major in question; (2) the chosen sub-plan should include a comparative element that distinguishes it from the other major.

All incoming CLA freshmen must complete the First Year Experience course sequence.

Preparatory Courses

The preparatory course ensures that students are introduced to the academic study of religion and understand how it is different from what they may have experienced in their own families or religious institutions. Courses that do not appear on this list may be accepted with prior consent by the major adviser.

Take exactly 1 course(s) totaling exactly 3 credit(s) from the following:



- [RELS 1001](#) - Introduction to the Religions of the World [GP] (3.0 cr)
- [RELS 1002](#) - Contemporary Issues in Religion, Culture, and Society: An Introduction to Religion [AH] (3.0 cr)
- [AMST 1011](#) *{Inactive}*[CIV] (3.0 cr)
or [RELS 1011](#) *{Inactive}*[CIV] (3.0 cr)
- [JWST 1034](#) - Introduction to Jewish History and Cultures [HIS] (3.0 cr)
or [RELS 1034](#) - Introduction to Jewish History and Cultures [HIS] (3.0 cr)
or [HIST 1534](#) - Introduction to Jewish History and Cultures [HIS] (3.0 cr)
- [CNRC 1082](#) - Jesus in History, Art & Culture [HIS] (3.0 cr)
or [RELS 1082](#) - Jesus in History, Art & Culture [HIS] (3.0 cr)
- [CNRC 1201](#) - The Bible: Context and Interpretation, World of the Hebrew Bible. [LITR] (3.0 cr)
or [RELS 1201](#) - The Bible: Context and Interpretation, World of the Hebrew Bible [LITR] (3.0 cr)
or [JWST 1201](#) - The Bible: Context and Interpretation, World of the Hebrew Bible [LITR] (3.0 cr)

Theory and Methods

Take the following course for 3 credits.

- [RELS 3001W](#) - Theory and Method in Religion: Critical Approaches to the Study of Religion [WI] (3.0 cr)

Senior Project

The senior project must be taken for 4 credits. Choose to enroll in RELS 4952 for 4 credits, or enroll in RELS 4952 concurrent with an adviser-approved upper-division course for a combined 4 credits. The program strongly recommends that students complete RELS 3001W at least one semester prior to enrolling in RELS 4952.

[RELS 4952](#) *{Inactive}* (1.0 - 4.0 cr)

or [RELS 4952](#) *{Inactive}* (1.0 - 4.0 cr)

with adviser-approved upper-division course (3 cr)

Upper Division Writing Intensive within the major

Students are required to take one upper division writing intensive course within the major. If that requirement has not been satisfied within the core major requirements, students must choose one course from the following list. Some of these courses may also fulfill other major requirements.

Take 0 - 1 course(s) from the following:

- [RELS 3001W](#) - Theory and Method in Religion: Critical Approaches to the Study of Religion [WI] (3.0 cr)

Program Sub-plans

Students are required to complete one of the following sub-plans.

Track I: Religion, Culture, and Society

This track is designed to meet the needs of students who wish to study religion broadly and pursue a highly contextualized investigation of religion as a social and cultural force. It serves students who are drawn to the methodologies of the humanities, social sciences, and the arts. It serves students who are motivated by questions of expression, psychology, religious thought and practice, as well as public and social policy, and the political contexts and ramifications of religion. It prepares students for many careers serving diverse communities in public arenas, as well as for graduate study in the arts or social sciences, or in theological or seminary programs.

Take a minimum of 24 credits at 3xxx or above. Final clearance by the major adviser is required.

Major Courses

Take a minimum of 4 courses and 12 credits. Courses must be approved by the major adviser, and may be taken in any relevant academic department.

- Take a course in a religious tradition (e.g., Buddhism, Christianity, Hinduism, Islam, Judaism, a Native American tradition, Zoroastrianism) for at least 3 credits.
- Take a course in a different religious tradition (e.g., Buddhism, Christianity, Hinduism, Islam, Judaism, a Native American tradition, Zoroastrianism) for at least 3 credits.
- Take two courses in sociocultural contexts of religion (e.g., in history, sociology, or anthropology of religion) for at least 3 credits each.

Area Concentration

Take a minimum of 4 courses and 12 credits in a chosen area concentration. These courses should share geographic, chronological, thematic, methodological, or traditional links. Courses used to fulfill the "Major Courses" sub-requirement cannot also be used to fulfill this requirement. Courses must be approved by the major advisor, and may be taken in any relevant department.

- Take four 3xxx-5xxx electives

Track II: Texts and Traditions

This track is designed for students interested in gaining in-depth knowledge of a particular religious tradition by studying the untranslated foundational texts of the chosen tradition. This track prepares students for many careers serving diverse communities in public arenas, as well as for graduate study in a variety of fields or seminary programs. It is particularly recommended for students interested in topics, such as the study of Judaism, Islam, or Christianity; or the study of the traditions and texts of the religions of South



or East Asia, whether in their countries of origin or in diaspora.

Take a minimum of 21 credits of which at least 18 credits must be 3xxx or above. This track requires that students gain proficiency in a language directly tied to their specified religion. Students must complete preparatory work through the fourth semester (or equivalent) of a language appropriate to the specific religious tradition and its sources. Language selection must be approved by the major adviser. Sample pairings include, but are not limited to, the following:

American Indian religions: Ojibwe or Dakota

Buddhism: Chinese or Japanese

Christianity: Greek or Latin (for scriptural or medieval concentration), German or Spanish (for relevant geographical/cultural themes)

Hinduism: Sanskrit or Hindi

Islam: Arabic

Judaism: Hebrew (for scriptural or historical area of concentration), German or Yiddish (e.g., for Jewish literature or 20th-century)

Interdisciplinary concentration areas and courses must be approved by the major advisor.

Track II Language Proficiency Requirement

Take a minimum of 3 credits.

Students must gain proficiency (up through 4th semester or equiv) in a language directly tied to their specified religion. See above for further specification.

Major Courses

Take a minimum of 2 courses and 6 credits. Courses must be approved by major adviser, and may be taken in any relevant department.

- Take a course in a religious tradition different from the specified religion (e.g., Buddhism, Christianity, Hinduism, Islam, Judaism, a Native American tradition, Zoroastrianism) for at least 3 credits.

- Take a course in another religious tradition also different from the specified religion (e.g., Buddhism, Christianity, Hinduism, Islam, Judaism, a Native American tradition, Zoroastrianism) for at least 3 credits.

Area Concentration

Take a minimum of 4 courses and 12 credits. These courses should share a focus on the selected tradition. Courses used to fulfill the "Major Courses" sub-requirement cannot also be used to fulfill this requirement. Courses must be approved by the major adviser, and may be taken in any relevant department.

- Take four 3xxx-5xxx electives