

Department of Religious Studies

The Department of Religious Studies offers Honours, Majors and Minors with a critical approach to studying religious traditions in their multiple contexts—historical, cultural, political, artistic or literary, for example, both local and global. Given the range and depth of these contexts, this critical study requires approaches that are at the same time interdisciplinary and focused on the diversity of religions. The Department offers courses at the introductory (1000), intermediate and advanced (2000-3000) as well as seminar (4000) levels which are either tradition-specific or multi-religious in scope.

Minor in Religious Studies

Students who select a Minor in Religious Studies must complete 18 credit hours of courses, including:

RELG 1006 Introduction to Religious Studies

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RELG 2243 Texts and Contexts

RELG 2313 Introduction to the Hebrew Bible

RELG 2333 Introduction to the New Testament

RELG 2353 Introduction to the Qur'an

RELG 2413 Ritual Studies

Major in Religious Studies

Students who select a Major in Religious Studies must complete 36 credit hours of courses, including:

RELG 1006 Introduction to Religious Studies

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RELG 2243 Texts and Contexts

RELG 2313 Introduction to the Hebrew Bible

RELG 2333 Introduction to the New Testament

RELG 2353

Given the interdisciplinary nature of Religious Studies, students selecting the Major program are encouraged to consider the intellectual and practical value of obtaining a second major in another discipline.

Honours in Religious Studies

An Honours degree in Religious Studies requires a minimum of 54 credit hours in Religious Studies courses, at least 12 credit hours of which must be at the 4000-level, including:

RELG 1006 Introduction to Religious Studies

a d e f h e f l l i g f h e T l C e :

- RELG 2243 Texts and Contexts
- RELG 2313 Introduction to the Hebrew Bible
- RELG 2333 Introduction to the New Testament
- RELG 2353 Introduction to the Qur'an

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- RELG 2413 Ritual Studies

a h i b l i a T i h e R R a e f e l l a i g e e e a q u M e b C R E T R R R d C f R R e a R E R P a R C R H R R R C b T g T R e C

are common to all. Some of the themes and issues encountered are prejudice, sexuality,

RELG-3583. M E

A critical and foundational examination of the role and function of media in Western society, focussing on its formative influence on religion and culture. Issues may include the business of news, entertainment, the nature of advertising, and religion and media. This course requires students to have a background in ethics and/or critical theory.

RELG-3953. P J C : H , M F (HIST)

This course considers the diverse ways in which modern global audiences have come to

RELG-2353. I

The Qur'an is understood by Muslims to be the direct word of God as revealed to the Prophet Muhammad. This 7th-century Arabic text continues to serve as a guidance for all Muslims. This course will examine the role of the Qur'an in the Islamic world: its history, methods and differences of interpretation. It will further explore the significance and impact of the written word in art and architecture.

RELG-2513. F

An examination of the theoretical base and the significance of Christian ethics with an analysis of some of its central aspects such as the foundational role of love, critical thought and engagement, conscience and responsibility, and understanding contemporary dilemmas.

RELG-2553. H

This course provides a basic introduction to Islamic societies in their formative centuries. We will explore how the Muslim umma first emerged, developed and ultimately established itself as a unifying yet far from monolithic ideal, linking different peoples across the globe. Our focus will be on comprehension of historical experiences and relations between peoples rather than on detailed analysis of religious beliefs.

RELG-2613. B

An introduction to the basic precepts, methods, and resources of theology. An examination of challenges to theology will provide an understanding of the present state of theological concerns.

RELG-3073. I

This course will introduce students to the basic beliefs and practices of global Islam, beginning with the life of the Prophet Muhammad and the revelation of the Qur'an. The course will include overviews of Islamic history, knowledge, and spirituality. Special attention will be paid to the study of Islam in its cultural contexts: Middle Eastern, African, Asian, European, and North American, among others.

RELG-3113. I

Grounded in the politics of solidarity, liberation theologies represent a new paradigm of experiencing, building and analyzing community in the Americas and elsewhere. This course explores the development of liberation theologies, with possible reference to Latin American, feminist, indigenous, gay/lesbian and Canadian voices, among others.

RELG-3223. T

RELG-3833. H R C (HMRT)

This course will focus on the role of the People of God in the practice of human rights. The rights of all in the Church will be examined in the light of Ecclesiastical Law. The action of the Church in the protection and promotion of human rights will be explored in terms of the Church as community for witness, hope, and liberation. Selected human rights initiatives of Church organizations will be considered.

RELG-4173. I

A course of independent study under the supervision of the Religious Studies Department. Students will normally collaborate on a description of the study project with the staff member or members who will guide the independent study. This description must be approved by the Department Chair and submitted to the registrar for his records.

Specialized Course

The Department of Religious Studies offers special interest courses at the 2000, 3000, and 4000 level.

At the 2000 level, the purpose of the Tools courses is to build skills and resources for the critical study of religious traditions. These courses are required for a Minor, Major or Honours in Religious Studies.

At the 2000 and 3000 level, the purpose of the Research Methodology and Multidisciplinary courses is to expand the range of critical intellectual skills for the study of religious traditions. Students seeking an Honours degree in Religious Studies are required to obtain 3 credit hours from the Research Methodology courses and a further 3 credit hours from the Multidisciplinary courses. Students seeking a Major in Religious Studies are encouraged but not required to obtain 3 credit hours in either of these if not both.

At the 4000 level, the purpose of these seminars is to provide a measure of integration at the end of a Major or Honours program of study; and to provide students majoring or honoursing a platform for further studies in a broad range of academic or professional programs.

1. Tool Course

Students of religions engage in the analysis of three main sources of religious identity: action, rituals and texts. The intent of these courses is to provide critical resources for the analysis of religiously-based action, rituals and texts. Tools courses remain open to all students with a general interest in religious studies. There are no prerequisites, except the completion of the first year of university-level study or its equivalent.

RELG-2243. T C

This course will explore the interaction between text and context of several writings deemed to be sacred, whether traditional or not, from a variety of religious traditions. Attention will also be paid to the particular situations and conditions in which these texts are created and received.

RELG-2413. R S

An inquiry into some of the issues in the study of rituals by means of a close investigation of selected religious rites and more secular examples of ritualizing. Examples might include Hindu pilgrimage, Christian liturgy in its many forms, Shinto festivals, rites of passage from childhood to adulthood (Bar Mitzvah in Judaism, sacred thread ceremony in Hinduism, the Isanaklesh Gotal of Apache girls), Taoist death rites, and contemporary behaviour at sport-

ing events and music concerts.

2. Research Methodology Course

Religious Studies involves a variety of research methodologies as the basis for gathering, organizing, analyzing and interpreting data related to religious identities and traditions. The intent of these courses is to provide Honours students with critical formation in one or another of the research methodologies active in the discipline.

RELG-2003. E **H** **:C** **A** **H** **M** **T** **(HIST)**

This mandatory course for History Majors and Honours students provides an introduction to the discipline of History. The course examines a variety of historiographical and methodological approaches to History, as well as the history of History. It encourages students to re-examine their assumptions about History, but it will also help students develop their basic historical research and writing skills. Exploring History provides a foundation for upper-year History courses and students are strongly encouraged to take it before their third year. Prerequisite: At least 6 credit hours in History courses at St. Thomas University.

RELG-2013. S **R** **M** **(SOCl)**

An introduction to the main research techniques used in sociology. The course will include practical experience in research design, methods of data collection, sampling procedures, and analysis of data.

RELG-3053. Q **R** **M** **(GERO) (HMRT) (PSYC) (SOCl)**

This course is intended for third-year Honours students who are considering using qualitative analysis in the research for their Honours thesis. It will address theoretical foundations of qualitative analysis, research ethics for qualitative researchers, and provide hands-on experience in developing a research question and collecting and analyzing data using basic qualitative techniques including observation, in-depth interviewing, and unobtrusive measures.

3. Multidisciplinary Course

Religious Studies is a multidisciplinary endeavour of research, analysis and interpretation. The intent of these courses is to provide students with an intellectual experience of the multidisciplinary interests representative of Religious Studies in order that students might become skillful in negotiating multiple disciplinary perspectives.

RELG-2223. P **R** **(PSYC)**

The examination of religious experience drawing from the classic approaches to psychology such as William James, Sigmund Freud, and Carl Jung, and their contemporary interpreters.

RELG-2543. S **R** **(SOCl)**

This course focuses on the relations between the beliefs and institutionalized practices that people hold sacred, and contemporary community life. The students explore the contradictory trends of mass secularism and the rise of religious fundamentalism, and the practices through which people collectively mobilize to sustain, challenge, and change religious identities. The question raised by Durkheim is explored: If religion expresses and reinforces community solidarity, how can modern societies accommodate religious diversity? A further question is: How are religions implicated in political struggles, the women's movement, nationalism, and war?

RELG 3423. R R (PHIL)

A survey of issues and authors, both classical and contemporary, in the philosophy of religion. Consideration will be given to the following: defining religion, religious experience and faith, the problem of evil, the meaning of religious language, the question of life beyond death. Prerequisite: PHIL 1013 and 1023, or permission of the instructor.

RELG-3643. A R (ANTH)

This course emphasizes an understanding of religious phenomena by viewing religion in the context of the diversity of cultures. Prerequisite: None.

4. Major and Honors Required Seminars**RELG-4023. R S : S M**

An in-depth analysis of selected issues in Religious Studies, focusing on the distinctive concerns of the discipline and the furthering of research skills appropriate to it. The course fosters reflection on the variety of methods used in Religious Studies, mindful of the need of senior students to integrate their four years of learning in the discipline. Honours students are normally required to take this course in their third year, Majors students in their fourth year, of full-time study.

RELG-4033. H T P S

Designed for students who are considering advanced study, this course will consider a variety of research strategies in the field of Religious Studies. The final project will be an Honours thesis proposal. Normally taken in the second semester of a student's next to final year, this course is required for continuation into the Honours Program.

RELG-4066. H T