

Religious Studies, B.A.

The major in religious studies enables students to develop the critical skills and strengths to thrive in an increasingly diverse and interconnected world. Religions and religious ideas are connected to every aspect of modern life and culture, so the major is designed to allow students to tailor it to fit their personal goals or interests. Many students choose to earn a second major or minor in related disciplines such as anthropology, biology, classics, English, history, journalism and mass communication, philosophy, political science, or psychology.

Learning Outcomes

Students will:

- possess a general understanding of several religious traditions or movements,
- understand and evaluate the critical role that religion plays within culture,
- develop critical thinking skills by analyzing and evaluating concepts and arguments,
- develop the ability to communicate effectively in writing and speech, and
- access and interpret religious information in a digital world.

Requirements

The Bachelor of Arts with a major in religious studies requires at least 30 s.h. of coursework. Students must maintain a 2.00 g.p.a. in all courses for the major. With the approval of the department's undergraduate committee, up to 15 s.h. of transfer credit may be counted toward the major. Students also must complete the college's graduation requirements, which include at least 120 s.h. of coursework and the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences GE CLAS Core.

The program of study for the major includes two core courses and 24 s.h. of elective coursework. Students are encouraged to work with a faculty member to choose the elective courses that best fit their particular academic goals. Courses for the major may not be taken pass/nonpass.

The B.A. with a major in religious studies requires the following coursework.

Code	Title	Hours
Core Courses		6
Electives from Religious Traditions and/or Critical Issues		24
Total Hours		30

Core Courses

Code	Title	Hours
Both of these:		
RELS:1015	Global Religious Conflict and Diversity	3
RELS:4950	Senior Majors Seminar	3

The course RELS:1015 Global Religious Conflict and Diversity introduces students to the study of the world's religious traditions and analyzes how religious ideologies contribute

to some of the most important events and issues around the world. This course is offered every spring semester. Students are encouraged to take this course as early as possible.

The course RELS:4950 Senior Majors Seminar is a capstone course that typically focuses on a general theme or issue that serves as a common connection for the diverse interests of the majors. It allows them to reflect on what they have learned and challenges them to further assess the role that religion plays within culture. This course is offered every spring semester. Students are encouraged to take this course during their senior year, but it may be taken during their junior year.

Electives

Students must complete at least 24 s.h. of elective religious studies coursework (approximately eight courses) for the major. The department encourages students to choose electives that examine a variety of religious traditions and issues.

Code	Title	Hours
At least two foundation courses numbered RELS:1000-RELS:1999		6
At least three advanced courses numbered RELS:2000-RELS:4999		9
At least three courses (prefix RELS) at any level		9

Honors

Honors in the Major

To graduate with honors in the religious studies major, students must have a UI cumulative g.p.a. of at least 3.33, a minimum requirement set by the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences. Students also must maintain a UI religious studies g.p.a. of at least 3.50. In addition to the major requirements, students also take an additional 3 s.h. of advanced coursework. Students often choose to take RELS:4960 Individual Study: Undergraduates or RELS:4970 Honors Tutorial for their extra course. Students also must take RELS:4975 Honors Essay under the supervision of a faculty advisor to complete their honors thesis. Copies of the approved and completed thesis are submitted to the Department of Religious Studies and to University Archives.

University of Iowa Honors Program

Students also have the opportunity to pursue advanced studies and activities through the University of Iowa Honors Program. Visit Honors at Iowa to learn about the University's honors program.

Students do not have to be members of the University of Iowa Honors Program to graduate with honors in the religious studies major.

Career Advancement

Because religion and religious traditions impact every aspect of culture and society, a major in religious studies prepares students for many different career choices. As the world becomes more and more interconnected, employers look for people who have experience with different cultures and religious backgrounds. Religious studies majors also develop critical thinking, speaking, and writing skills that prepare

them for employment and for pursuing an advanced academic degree.

Religious studies majors have gone on to careers in media and communication, social work, nursing, public health, government, and nonprofit organizations. They also have pursued advanced degrees in the humanities, social sciences, law, and medical professions.

Students should contact the Department of Religious Studies to learn how the B.A. with a major in religious studies can benefit them.

The Pomerantz Career Center offers many resources to help students find internships and jobs.

Academic Plans

Four-Year Graduation Plan

The following checkpoints list the minimum requirements students must complete by certain semesters in order to stay on the University's Four-Year Graduation Plan.

Before the fifth semester begins: one or two courses in the major.

Before the seventh semester begins: three to six courses in the major and at least 90 s.h. earned toward the degree.

Before the eighth semester begins: five to seven courses in the major.

During the eighth semester: enrollment in all remaining coursework in the major, all remaining GE CLAS Core courses, and a sufficient number of semester hours to graduate.

Sample Plan of Study

Sample plans represent one way to complete a program of study. Actual course selection and sequence will vary and should be discussed with an academic advisor. For additional sample plans, see MyUI.

Religious Studies, B.A.

Course	Title	Hours
First Year		
Fall		
RHET:1030 or ENGL:1200	Rhetoric or The Interpretation of Literature	3 - 4
Major: religious studies 1000-level course ^a		3
GE CLAS Core: Values and Culture ^b		3
Elective course ^c		3
CSI:1600	Success at Iowa	2
Hours		14-15
Spring		
RELS:1015	Global Religious Conflict and Diversity ^{d,e}	3
RHET:1030 or ENGL:1200	Rhetoric or The Interpretation of Literature	3 - 4
GE CLAS Core: Natural Sciences with Lab ^b		4
GE CLAS Core: Social Sciences ^b		3
Elective course ^c		2
Hours		15-16

Second Year

Fall

Major: religious studies 1000-level course ^a	3
GE CLAS Core: Quantitative or Formal Reasoning ^b	3
GE CLAS Core: World Languages First Level Proficiency or elective course ^f	4 - 5
Elective course ^c	3
Elective course ^c	3
Hours	16-17

Spring

Major: religious studies 2000-4999 level course	3
GE CLAS Core: International and Global Issues ^b	3
GE CLAS Core: World Languages Second Level Proficiency or elective course ^f	4 - 5
Elective course ^c	3
Elective course ^c	3
Hours	16-17

Third Year

Fall

Major: religious studies 2000-4999 level course	3
Major: religious studies course	3
GE CLAS Core: Historical Perspectives ^b	3
GE CLAS Core: Natural Sciences without Lab ^b	3
GE CLAS Core: World Languages Second Level Proficiency or elective course ^f	4 - 5
Hours	16-17

Spring

Major: religious studies 2000-4999 level course	3
Major: religious studies course	3
GE CLAS Core: World Languages Fourth Level Proficiency or elective course ^f	4 - 5
Elective course ^c	3
Elective course ^c	3
Hours	16-17

Fourth Year

Fall

Major: religious studies course	3
GE CLAS Core: Literary, Visual, and Performing Arts ^b	3
Elective course ^c	3
Elective course ^c	3
Elective course ^c	3
Hours	15

Spring

RELS:4950	Senior Majors Seminar ^{e, g}	3
Elective course ^c		3
Elective course ^c		3
Elective course ^c		3
Elective course ^c		3
Degree Application: apply on MyUI before deadline (typically in February for spring, September for fall) ^h		

Hours	15
Total Hours	123-129

a Fulfills a major requirement and may fulfill a GE requirement.

b GE CLAS Core courses may be completed in any order unless used as a prerequisite for another course. Students should consult with an advisor about the best sequencing of courses.

- c Students may use elective courses to earn credit towards the total s.h. required for graduation or to complete a double major, minors, or certificates.
- d RELS:1015 provides an introduction to the study of the world's religions; students should take it as early as possible.
- e Typically this course is offered in spring semesters only. Check MyUI for course availability since offerings are subject to change.
- f Students who have completed four years of a single language in high school have satisfied the GE CLAS Core World Languages requirement. Enrollment in world languages courses requires a placement exam, unless enrolling in a first-semester-level course.
- g RELS:4950 is a capstone course. Ideally, students take it during their senior year, but they may take it during their junior year.
- h Please see Academic Calendar, Office of the Registrar website for current degree application deadlines. Students should apply for a degree for the session in which all requirements will be met. For any questions on appropriate timing, contact your academic advisor or Graduation Services.