Religious Studies

Chair
• Morten Schlütter

Undergraduate major: religious studies (B.A.)
Undergraduate minors: religion and media; religious studies
Graduate degrees: M.A. in religious studies; Ph.D. in religious studies
Faculty: https://clas.uiowa.edu/religion/people/faculty
Website: https://clas.uiowa.edu/religion/

The Department of Religious Studies encourages a multidisciplinary inquiry into religious ideas, experiences, philosophies, cultural expressions, and social movements. It offers courses on a rich array of cultures and traditions, including Buddhism and other religions of East Asia, ancient Judaism and early Christianity, Islamic civilizations, African American religions, Latina/o/x religions, and even new forms of religious practice that many people may not yet recognize as religious.

Taking courses in the Department of Religious Studies enhances students’ education and helps distinguish them in their career path. These courses help students hone their essential analytical writing and reading skills while gaining cross-cultural communication strategies and new ways to critically analyze historical and current events. Many of the departmental courses are approved for the GE CLAS Core; look for courses with prefix RELS.

Religious studies faculty examine religion and its cultural impact, both past and present, to enable students to gain a critical understanding of other people and cultures, particularly the influence of religion on personal experiences, power struggles, societal events, and values.

Faculty and students in the department participate in many of the University’s interdisciplinary departments and programs, including classics, American studies, African American studies, Latina/o/x studies, history, communication studies, and gender, women’s, and sexuality studies.

Given the powerful roles many different religions maintain in the world, it is the mission of the department to study it and prepare students to engage the diversity and complexity of the global environment in meaningful ways.

Community Engagement

In addition to the many courses the department offers, faculty and students participate in a variety of programming activities each semester. Most recently, the department has held a number of public lectures on race and religion.