

Religious Studies

Chair

Paul C. Dilley

Undergraduate major: religious studies (BA)

Undergraduate minor: religious studies

Graduate degrees: MA in religious studies; PhD in religious studies

Faculty: <https://religiousstudies.uiowa.edu/people/faculty>

Website: <https://religiousstudies.uiowa.edu/>

Religious studies is an invaluable aspect of a liberal arts education, whether students take select courses or aim for a degree. The Department of Religious Studies helps students gain competency in global religious diversity, which is essential for successful interactions with others in daily life and in the modern workplace, at home or abroad.

Students in religious studies courses develop a critical understanding of the important role of religious diversity and change in the world we inhabit. Students learn to analyze religion's profound influences on people and societies around the world. Religious studies courses also investigate religions' complex relationships with social justice, especially related to matters of race, class, and gender.

The broad geographical range of religious studies courses enables students to better understand global events, as they unlock religious wisdom and understanding of the past and present from the United States, Asia, Europe, and Africa. The faculty encourages a multidisciplinary inquiry into religious ideas, experiences, philosophies, cultural expressions, and social movements.

Religious studies courses further 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 (prefix RELS) are approved for the GE CLAS Core.

Employers in private industry, government, education, law, public policy, social work, the nonprofit sector, entertainment, and journalism value the ability of religious studies students to research and analyze pressing problems and social and political behavior, and to express significant ideas with clarity and sensitivity.

Faculty and students in the department participate in many of the university's interdisciplinary departments and programs, including the departments of American Studies; Classics; Communication Studies; Gender, Women's, and Sexuality Studies; and History; and the African American Studies and Latina/o/x Studies programs.

The Department of Religious Studies has a commitment to diversity including race, gender identity, sexual orientation, class, religion, national origin, disability, and veteran status.

Community Engagement

In addition to the many courses the department offers, faculty and students often participate in a variety of programming activities each semester. The department regularly organizes lectures on important themes such as race and religion, indigenous religion, and human rights.