

# Religious Studies

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**College of Letters and Science** (<http://ls.berkeley.edu>)

**Group Major Office: Division of Undergraduate and Interdisciplinary Studies, 231 Evans Hall, (510) 642-0108**

**Group Director: Charles Hirschkind, PhD (Department of Anthropology)**

**Group Website: Religious Studies** (<http://ugis.ls.berkeley.edu/religiousstudies>)

## Group Major

The religious studies major provides opportunities for securing a broad background in the liberal arts while at the same time allowing for a focus on a thematic concern or a particular religious tradition. It views religion from a global perspective and combines aspects of the humanities and the social sciences.

The major is open to anyone interested in the symbolic and mythic dimensions of world cultures, the ethical aspects of human societies, and existential issues. It is *not* restricted to those who have a religious background or are pursuing a religious vocation. Members of the major will be challenged to view religion multiculturally and from critical as well as appreciative perspectives.

Graduates in the program have gone on to careers in law, journalism, medicine, international business, counseling, and religious vocations. Others have entered graduate schools in history, sociology, anthropology, international policy, and religious studies.

The program requires both a general understanding of the study of religion as well as a particular emphasis on one specific tradition or thematic concern. The general requirement involves courses that present the methodological approaches to the study of religion such as sociology of religion and psychology of religion and courses that examine thematic issues and cross-cultural phenomena such as myth, ritual, transformative experience, and comparative ethics. The religious traditions that may be included as major fields of emphasis or as supplementary courses include the Jewish, Islamic, Christian, Hindu, and Buddhist traditions, as well as the religious cultures of China, Japan, Africa, and Native American communities.

Most of the courses available for the program are religion-related courses taught within such departments as history, sociology, and near eastern studies. As a supplement to these courses, the program offers a small number of courses sponsored by religious studies, including thematic topics of religion and the introductory courses (one of which surveys the world's religious traditions, and the other of which introduces the study of religious phenomena thematically).

The group major in religious studies is administered through the Division of Undergraduate and Interdisciplinary Studies. Students are referred to that office for all administrative matters.

## Lower Division Requirements

Religious Studies 90A-90B, Introductory Topics in Religious Studies (4;4), to be taken before selecting a field of emphasis.

## Upper Division Requirements

1. Two methodological courses from the following: Anthropology 158 (Religion and Anthropology), Geography 107 (Geography of Religions), Sociology 112 (Sociology of Religion), Religious Studies 190 (Topics in the Study of Religion) when topic is methodological.
2. Two thematic courses from the following: Classics 178 (Mythology) or Comparative Literature 165 (Myth and Literature), Religious Studies 115 (Mysticism) or Comparative Literature 125 (The Mystical Tradition in Literature), Religious Studies 190 (Topics in the Study of Religion) when topic is thematic.
3. Three courses in one of the fields of emphasis (see below).
4. Additional religion courses to make a total of at least 30 upper division units. The selection of these courses must be approved in writing by a major adviser (see the religious studies student affairs officer at the beginning of each semester for a current list of courses on topics in religion).

## Fields of Emphasis

The field may be any cross-cultural theme (such as the study of ritual, myth, or ethics) in which three courses are available, a cultural period (such as the religious interaction of medieval Europe or modern Asia), or the study of a single religious tradition (such as Christianity or Buddhism). Courses available in religious traditions include the following:

- **Buddhism:** East Asian Languages (Chinese) 120, 122, 130. Additional courses: East Asian Languages (Chinese) 140. South Asian 127, 140. Recommended: Students intending to do graduate work in Buddhism should study Tibetan, Chinese, Sanskrit, Tamil, or Hindi.
- **Hinduism:** South Asian 121, 127, 140, 141, 155. Additional courses: History of Art 136A-136B-136C. Recommended: Students intending to do graduate work in Hinduism should study Sanskrit.
- **Judaism:** Near Eastern Studies 131, 132, 133, 134, 137. Additional courses: (Hebrew) 101A-101B, (Hebrew) 102A-102B, (Hebrew) 103A-103B, Near Eastern Studies 130A-130B, Religious Studies 120A. Recommended: Students intending to do graduate work in Judaism should study Hebrew.
- **Islam:** Near Eastern Studies 140, 141, 142, 143A-143B, 144. Additional courses: History 109A, Near Eastern Studies 121A-121B, (Arabic) 209A-209B. Recommended: Students intending to do graduate work in Islam should study Arabic.
- **Christianity:** Religious Studies 120A, or History 185A, Religious Studies 120B or History 156A, History 185B or 156A, Religious Studies 115. Additional courses: Classics (Greek) 105, English 107, English 110A-110B, History 108, Italian 109A-109B, Italian 130, Near Eastern Studies 131, 132, 134, Philosophy 182, 184, Religious Studies 190 (when topic is Christian). Recommended: Students intending to do graduate work in Christianity should study Latin, Greek, or German.

## Honors Program

Students may elect to attempt graduation with honors if they have done well in both general university work and the major courses at the beginning of their senior year. Required are upper division work in a language relevant to the student's academic program (with consent of adviser) and the submission of a bachelor's thesis as a culmination of one or two semesters of the sequence, Religious Studies H195A-H195B. The thesis must be approved by both the adviser and the student's thesis director, if these are different.

**Minor**

Students in the College of Letters and Science may complete one or more minors of their choice, normally in a field both academically and administratively distinct from their major. Students wishing to receive a minor in religious studies should register in the group major office and work out a plan of study with an adviser. Students must take Religious Studies 90A and 90B and five upper division courses chosen from an approved list on file in the group major office. All courses must be completed on a letter-grade basis. A minimum of three of the five upper division courses must be completed at Berkeley, and a minimum overall GPA of 2.0 is required.

**RELIGST 24 Freshman Seminar 1 Unit**

**Department:** Religious Studies

**Course level:** Undergraduate

**Terms course may be offered:** Fall and spring

**Grading:** The grading option will be decided by the instructor when the class is offered.

**Hours and format:** 1 hour of Seminar per week for 15 weeks.

The Freshman Seminar Program has been designed to provide new students with the opportunity to explore an intellectual topic with a faculty member in a small seminar setting. Freshman seminars are offered in all campus departments and topics vary from department to department and semester to semester. Enrollment limited to fifteen freshmen.

Course may be repeated for credit as topic varies. Course may be repeated for credit when topic changes.

**RELIGST 90A Introductory Topics in Religious Studies 4 Units**

**Department:** Religious Studies

**Course level:** Undergraduate

**Terms course may be offered:** Fall and spring

**Grading:** Letter grade.

**Hours and format:** 3 hours of Lecture per week for 15 weeks.

Selected introductory topics in the study of religion.

Course may be repeated for credit as topic varies. Course may be repeated for credit when topic changes.

**RELIGST 90B Introductory Topics in Religious Studies 4 Units**

**Department:** Religious Studies

**Course level:** Undergraduate

**Terms course may be offered:** Fall and spring

**Grading:** Letter grade.

**Hours and format:** 3 hours of Lecture per week for 15 weeks.

Selected introductory topics in the study of religion.

Course may be repeated for credit. Course may be repeated for credit when topic changes.

**RELIGST C90B/S, SEASN C51 Introductory Topics in Religious Studies 4 Units**

**Department:** Religious Studies; South and Southeast Asian Studies

**Course level:** Undergraduate

**Term course may be offered:** Spring

**Grading:** Letter grade.

**Hours and format:** 3 hours of Lecture per week for 15 weeks.

Selected introductory topics in the study of religion.

Course may be repeated for credit as topic varies. Course may be repeated for credit when topic changes. Instructor: Dalmia

**RELIGST C103/NE STUD C103 Religion of Ancient Egypt 3 Units**

**Department:** Religious Studies; Near Eastern Studies

**Course level:** Undergraduate

**Terms course may be offered:** Fall and spring

**Grading:** Letter grade.

**Hours and format:** 3 hours of Lecture per week for 15 weeks.

**Prerequisites:** 18 or consent of instructor.

A survey of the religious beliefs of the ancient Egyptians, based primarily upon the written sources.

**RELIGST C104/NE STUD C104 Babylonian Religion 3 Units**

**Department:** Religious Studies; Near Eastern Studies

**Course level:** Undergraduate

**Terms course may be offered:** Fall, spring and summer

**Grading:** Letter grade.

**Hours and format:** 3 hours of lecture per week.

A survey of Babylonian religious beliefs and practices based on indigenous texts and monuments.

**RELIGST C108/SCANDIN C160 Scandinavian Myth and Religion 4 Units**