

Religion

Department: Philosophy and Religion

Department Chair: J. Alexander

Department Members: J. Alexander, B. Kenofer

Major: Religious Studies (Optional Track: Religion and Nonprofits)

Minor: Religious Studies

The Franklin College religious studies program is designed to provide students with the opportunity to study religion as a response to the basic question of human life, to become familiar with the religious perceptions and practices in Western and Eastern cultures, and to develop their own theological understandings and responses.

The program acquaints students with the diverse traditions of the world religions, explores the various dimensions of the phenomenon of religion, and provides insights into the spiritual quest for the “Divine” or the “Holy.”

Students will gain a foundational knowledge of major religious traditions, a substantive and applied knowledge of the major religious questions, and be able to analyze religious expressions in this culture and in the global community.

Religious Studies Major

A major in religious studies is intended to prepare students for entrance into the field of church vocations (pastorate, Christian education, counseling), the nonprofit sector, or for graduate work in preparation for teaching religion on a college or university level. REL 340, 350, 470 and 490 require consent of the instructor or specified prerequisites. Courses numbered 400 are not available to first-year students. All other religious studies courses are available as electives to all students. All prerequisites require a C- or better. The major in religious studies consists of 26 semester hours in religious studies, plus 12 semester hours in supporting fields.

Core Requirements

- REL 114** Introduction to Religion
- REL 310** Historical Faith and Modern Culture
- REL 365** Philosophy of Religion
- REL 499** Senior Competency Practicum

Professional Development Requirements

- PDP 200** Preparing for Your Internship
- REL 498** Portfolio Development Practicum
- SNR/SNT 489 REL** Senior Year Experience/Project

One of the following courses

- REL 220** Old Testament Life and Literature
- REL 230** New Testament Life and Literature

One of the following courses

- REL 250** Living Religions East
- REL 260** Living Religions West

Plus additional Religion coursework to meet the minimum requirement of 26 credit hours

Related Field Requirement

Twelve semester hours to be approved by the department and submitted in writing to the Academic Records Office. All related field courses require a C- or better.

Religious Studies Major – Religion and Nonprofits Track

Core Requirements

- REL 114 Introduction to Religion
- REL 310 Historical Faith and Modern Culture
- REL 499 Senior Competency Practicum

Professional Development Requirements

- PDP 200 Preparing for Your Internship
- REL 498 Portfolio Development Practicum
- SNR/SNT 489 REL Senior Year Experience/Project

One of the following courses

- REL 220 Old Testament Life and Literature
- REL 230 New Testament Life and Literature

One of the following courses

- REL 250 Living Religions East
- REL 260 Living Religions West

One of the following courses

- REL 215 Religion in America I: History of Religion in America
- REL 225 Religion in American II: Contemporary Religious Experience

All of the following courses

- NPL 222 Social Problems and Nonprofit Responses
- NPL 230 Introduction to Nonprofits
- NPL 315 Leadership Capstone
- REL 240 Giving in Religion
- REL 490 Independent Study – research topic concerning Religion and Philanthropy (1 credit)

Religious Studies Minor

Core Requirements

- REL 114 Introduction to Religion
- REL 490 Independent Study (two hours - relating religious studies to some aspect of the student's major)

One of the following courses

- REL 220 Old Testament Life & Literature
- REL 230 New Testament Life & Literature

One of the following courses

- REL 310 Historical Faith & Mod. Culture
- REL 360 Contemporary Christian Thought
- REL 365 Philosophy of Religion

Plus additional Religion coursework to meet the minimum requirement of 20 credit hours

Religious Studies Course Descriptions

REL 114 Introduction to Religion		4 credit hours
Fall and Spring	Reasoning & Values exploratory	

An exploration of introductory topics in religious studies: the origins of religion, God, the problem of evil, revelation and scripture, morality, and religious experience.

REL 210 Religion and the Environment		3 credit hours
Fall and Spring	Reasoning & Values exploratory	

This course is a study of the relationship between religion and the environment. It will explore the connection between religious faith tradition(s) and the environmental problems that challenge sustainability in God's creation. Course is open to first-year students.

REL 215 Religion in America I: History of Religion in America		4 credit hours
Fall, even academic years	Reasoning & Values exploratory	

Why is the United States the most religiously active and religiously diverse nation in the world? How has religion shaped the nation's democratic society? This course examines the role of religion in the United States from its founding, through the beginnings of the 20th century. Students will explore the nation's major religious movements, the relationship of politics and religion, as well as important national debates that have highlighted the tension between religious ideology and scientific theory. Open to all students.

REL 220 Old Testament Life and Literature		3 credit hours
Fall	Reasoning & Values exploratory	

A study of the literature of the Old Testament as this literature arose in the historical experience of the people Israel.

REL 225 Religion in America II: Contemporary Religious Experience		4 credit hours
Fall, odd academic years	Reasoning & Values and Comparative Perspectives exploratories	

Religion has always been a dynamic influence on American culture, but the 20th century has seen American religion respond to national financial desperation, multiple international conflicts, and a host of civil rights issues. As a result, religion has undergone significant change in America, and has likewise changed American culture. This course examines the role of religion in the United States throughout the most turbulent and inspiring eras of the 20th century and emphasizes the writings of religious figures at the center of those cultural shifts. Open to all students.

REL 230 New Testament Life and Literature		3 credit hours
Spring	Reasoning & Values exploratory	

A study of the literature of the New Testament, particularly as this literature reveals the early church's understanding of Jesus and the Christian faith.

REL 240 Giving in Religion		3 credit hours
Fall, even academic years	Reasoning & Values exploratory	

This course explores how different religious traditions understand the importance of giving and the relationships that the offering of "time, talent, and treasure" promote between the divine and humanity. The course will focus on religious understandings of volunteerism through a variety of service projects with members of different religious traditions as well as on religion in faith-based organizations. Open to all students.

REL 250 Living Religions East		4 credit hours
Spring, even academic years	Reasoning & Values exploratory	

Historical development, cultural influences, and contemporary expression of Hinduism, Buddhism, Confucianism, Taoism and Shinto. Same as PHL 250.

REL 260 Living Religions West		4 credit hours
Spring, odd academic years	Reasoning & Values exploratory	

Historical development, cultural influences, and contemporary expression of Judaism, Christianity, and Islam studied through primary as well as secondary sources.

REL 300 Topics in Religion		3 credit hours

A topic of current interest in religion will be taught. Topics will vary depending on faculty and student interest. Course will be offered upon the request of a faculty member and with approval of the Vice President of Academic Affairs.

REL 310 Historical Faith and Modern Culture		4 credit hours
Spring, even academic years		

Emergence and expressions of Christian faith in the history of Western and world cultures. Attention given to major personalities; interaction between religion and science, church and state in the modern era.

REL 325 Theories of Religion		2 credit hours
Spring, odd academic years		Prereq: PHL 116 or REL 114

This course explores the various anthropological, psychological, and sociological theories for the presence of organized religion throughout the world; moreover, this course serves to educate students regarding the rise of religious studies as a unique discipline apart from theology and philosophy. Special attention will be given to the work of Sigmund Freud, Carl Jung, William James, Emile Durkheim, Max Weber, and Clifford Geertz, among other scholars.

REL 350 Life of Jesus and Gospel Formation		2 credit hours
Fall, odd academic years		Prereq: REL 230

A study of what the critical tools of literary criticism, form criticism, and redaction criticism can tell us about the historical Jesus; the formation of the Synoptic gospels and John, and Christological formulation in the New Testament.

REL 360 Contemporary Christian Thought		4 credit hours
Spring, even academic years		

An exploration of themes and issues in the thought of significant 20th and 21st century Protestant, Roman Catholic, and Orthodox theologians.

REL 365 Philosophy of Religion		4 credit hours
Fall, even academic years		

Persistent philosophical problems of historical religion, such as the nature of religion, religious knowledge, and the nature and existence of God and human freedom. Same as PHL 365.

REL 470 Seminar: Themes in Religious Inquiry		3 credit hours
		Prereq: consent of instructor

Topics in the biblical, historical, or theological area of religious inquiry, depending upon interests of students.

REL 482 Religion Practicum	1-2 credit hours
	Prereq: consent of instructor

A supervised, pre-approved experience which allows a student to pursue specific learning goals and/or be involved in a field experience during the regular academic semester.

REL 490 Independent Study	1-2 credit hours
	Prereq: Departmental consent

An academic project designed to encourage student initiative and to provide a degree of flexibility in the departmental program. Normally the subject is not sufficiently or appropriately covered in departmental course offerings.

REL 498 Portfolio Development Practicum	No credit
	Coreq: REL 499 and SNR/SNT 489

Each student must develop a portfolio containing an appropriate body of work that, by the time of graduation, demonstrates the student is ready to make the transition to the professional workplace or graduate school. The specific format and content of the portfolio is determined through consultation of the student with the department and by attending appropriate sessions of PDP 200. REL 498 is one component of the SNR/SNT 489 requirement. Portfolios will receive either a passing or failing grade.

REL 499 Senior Competency Practicum	No credit
	Coreq: REL 498 and SNR/SNT 489

Taken concurrently with SNR/SNT 489 (REL), but may include at the department's discretion a multiple-hour comprehensive essay examination covering topics in religious studies (biblical studies, historical theology, systematic theology, comparative religions, and philosophic theology) depending on the student's transcript. A grade of C or better is required for graduation.

SNR/SNT 489 REL Senior Year Experience/Project	2 credit hours
	Coreq: REL 498 and REL 499

Franklin College requires a senior year experience (SNT 489) of all graduating seniors. A portfolio, some participation in PDP 200 and a practical professional development experience related to the field of religion and the student's future plans are normal components. Options for completing this requirement will be as determined for each student in consultation with the department.