The mission of the Religious Studies Program at VCU is to advance understanding of the nature, history and diversity of religious traditions. Religious studies is guided by the idea that studying humanity’s diverse and developing religious traditions is vital to understanding what it means to be human and how to live wisely as members of the world community. Students explore the artistic, ethical, literary, psychological and social dimensions of religions, as well as the relationship between religious ideas, institutions, and practices and matters of gender, sexuality, race, nationality, health, social justice, human rights and nature. Religious studies emphasizes excellence in written, oral and visual interpretation and communication, critical thinking, informed dialogue, and global citizenship. Combining classroom- and community-based learning through study-abroad programs, internships and community service, religious studies empowers students to engage intellectually and practically with diverse communities and work to build a peaceful, generous and affirming society.

Student learning outcomes
Upon completing this program, students will know how to do the following:

- Demonstrate knowledge of diverse religious traditions
- Utilize the vocabulary, concepts and research methods of the academic study of religion
- Analyze the influence of religions on ethics, society and culture
- Make clear, well-organized and substantive written and oral presentations

Experiential learning and study abroad
Each student completing a degree program within the School of World Studies is required to complete a World ePass as part of their experiential learning requirement; students are also encouraged to participate in a study abroad program. For more information on the ePass portfolio and study abroad opportunities, students may visit the overview page for the School of World Studies (http://bulletin.vcu.edu/undergraduate/college-humanities-sciences/school-worldstudies/).

Special requirements
The Bachelor of Arts in Religious Studies requires a minimum of 120 credits, with at least 30 credits in religious studies courses or in courses listed as acceptable for religious studies credit. Up to six of the 30 credits may be taken in language studies relevant to one’s area of research interest and with the appropriate approval through the School of World Studies Advising Office. Other courses occasionally may be substituted should the needs and background of an individual student warrant substitutions. Religious studies majors are encouraged to consider a second major or minor that complements their study of religions (e.g. English, international studies), as well as study-abroad opportunities to enrich their studies.

Degree requirements

**Religious Studies, Bachelor of Arts (B.A.)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Course</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Hours</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>General education</strong> (<a href="http://bulletin.vcu.edu/undergraduate/undergraduate-study/general-education-curriculum/">link</a>)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Select 30 credits of general education courses in consultation with an adviser.</td>
<td>30</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Major requirements</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Major core requirements</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RELS 338</td>
<td>Eastern Religions</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RELS 339</td>
<td>Western Religions</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RELS 340/INTL 341</td>
<td>Global Ethics and the World's Religions</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RELS 490</td>
<td>Senior Capstone Seminar</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Major electives</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RELS electives: Select an additional four courses from the list below, with at least six credits at the 400 level.</td>
<td>12</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Select two religion, society and culture electives from the list below.</td>
<td>6</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Ancillary requirements</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HUMS 202</td>
<td>Choices in a Consumer Society</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RELS 108</td>
<td>Human Spirituality (satisfies general education BOK for humanities/fine arts and AOI for diversities in the human experience)</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WRLD 495</td>
<td>Global Ethics and the World's Religions</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Experiential fine arts ¹</td>
<td>1-3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Experiential learning</td>
<td>0-3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Select one of the following:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Major-specific service-learning course</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Study abroad program</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Internship (FRLG 493, INTL 493, RELS 493, WRLD 493 or other preapproved internship opportunities)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Foreign language through the 102 level (by course or placement)</td>
<td>0-6</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Open electives</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Select any course.</td>
<td>47-58</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Hours</strong></td>
<td><strong>120</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Course offered by the School of the Arts

The minimum number of credit hours required for this degree is 120.

**Electives**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Course</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Hours</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>RELS 250</td>
<td>Death: Myth and Reality</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RELS 310</td>
<td>Mediterranean Religions</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RELS/PSYC 333</td>
<td>Psychology and Religious Experience</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RELS 334</td>
<td>Religion in Contemporary America</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RELS 336</td>
<td>Religions in Latin America</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RELS 337</td>
<td>Contemporary Cults and New Religious Movements</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RELS/SOCY 360</td>
<td>Sociology of Religion</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

¹
What follows is a sample plan that meets the prescribed requirements within a four-year course of study at VCU. Please contact your adviser before beginning course work toward a degree.

### Freshman year

#### Fall semester

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Course Code</th>
<th>Course Title</th>
<th>Hours</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>RELS 108</td>
<td>Human Spirituality (satisfies general education BOK for humanities/fine arts and AOI for diversities in the human experience)</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UNIV 101</td>
<td>Introduction to the University</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RELS 338</td>
<td>Eastern Religions</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RELS 339</td>
<td>Western Religions</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Term Hours:** 14-17

#### Spring semester

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Course Code</th>
<th>Course Title</th>
<th>Hours</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>RELS 340</td>
<td>Global Ethics and the World’s Religions</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RELS 339</td>
<td>Western Religions</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RELS 338</td>
<td>Eastern Religions</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RELS 200</td>
<td>Advanced Focused Inquiry: Literacies, Research and Communication (satisfies general education UNIV foundations)</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Term Hours:** 15

### Sophomore year

#### Fall semester

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Course Code</th>
<th>Course Title</th>
<th>Hours</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>RELS 398</td>
<td>Directed Study Abroad</td>
<td>1-3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RELS 407</td>
<td>Modern Hebrew Language</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RELS 409</td>
<td>Modern Jewish Thought</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RELS/LFSC 401</td>
<td>Faith and Life Sciences</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RELS/LFSC 425</td>
<td>Religion, Magic and Witchcraft</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RELS 430</td>
<td>Philosophy of Religion</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RELS 440</td>
<td>Mysticism</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RELS 441</td>
<td>Islamic Mysticism: the Sufis</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RELS 458</td>
<td>Religion and Ecojustice</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RELS 491</td>
<td>Topics in Religious Studies</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Term Hours:** 15

#### Spring semester

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Course Code</th>
<th>Course Title</th>
<th>Hours</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>RELS 493</td>
<td>Religious Studies Internship</td>
<td>1-3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HIST 311</td>
<td>High and Later Middle Ages</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HIST 335/RELS 327</td>
<td>History of Christianity I</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HIST 336</td>
<td>History of Christianity II</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Senior year

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Course Code</th>
<th>Course Title</th>
<th>Hours</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>RELS 493</td>
<td>Religious Studies Internship</td>
<td>1-3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HIST 311</td>
<td>High and Later Middle Ages</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HIST 335/RELS 327</td>
<td>History of Christianity I</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HIST 336</td>
<td>History of Christianity II</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Term Hours:**

---

**Term Hours:** 14-17

---

**Term Hours:** 15

---

**Term Hours:**

---
Religion, society and culture elective 3

**Term Hours:** 15

**Junior year**

**Fall semester**

RELS elective 3

Open electives 9

Religion, society and culture elective 3

**Term Hours:** 15

**Spring semester**

On-campus or study abroad semester

RELS elective 3

Open electives 12

**Term Hours:** 15

**Summer semester**

Study abroad (recommended); credits completed during study abroad will decrease open electives needed in subsequent semesters 0-6

**Term Hours:** 0-6

**Senior year**

**Fall semester**

RELS 493 Religious Studies Internship (or other experiential learning opportunity if not already met) 1-3 or Senior Capstone Seminar

RELS elective (400-level) 3

Open electives 11-12

World ePass completion

**Term Hours:** 15

**Spring semester**

RELS 490 Senior Capstone Seminar (if not taken in the fall) 3 or Religious Studies Internship

WRLD 495 World ePass Portfolio 0

RELS elective (400-level) 3

Open electives 9

**Term Hours:** 15

**Total Hours:** 120-132

The minimum number of credit hours required for this degree is 120.

**RELS 108. Human Spirituality. 3 Hours.**
Semester course; 3 lecture hours. 3 credits. A study of the manifestations of one or more of the themes of religious studies in a diverse group of religious communities. The themes may include such wide-ranging topics as the sacred and profane, the epistemology of faith and knowledge, creation stories, human identity, the nature of the divine, the possibility of liberation or salvation, mythology, ritual, ethics, religion and art, religion and law, and religion and politics.

**RELS 250. Death: Myth and Reality. 3 Hours.**
Semester course; 3 lecture hours. 3 credits. A study of intellectual and emotional responses to death and dying with emphasis upon their role in the development of religious thought and practice. Special attention will be paid to the death theme in literature, funeral practices and beliefs concerning the afterlife in selected world religions. Crosslisted as: ANTH 250.

**RELS 280. Introduction to Catholic Studies. 3 Hours.**
Semester course; 3 lecture hours. 3 credits. This course provides an introduction to Catholicism's major doctrines, figures, historical events, philosophy and ethics from its beginnings in the first centuries of the Common Era through contemporary debates over such issues as abortion, sexuality and war. Students will learn about scripture, doctrine, theology, the sacraments, art and architectures, saints, social justice and gender, and the history and role of the Church.

**RELS 291. Topics in Religious Studies. 1-3 Hours.**
Semester course; variable hours. 1-3 credits. May be repeated with different topics for a maximum of six credits. Focused study of selected ideas, institutions, movements, time periods and/or thinkers. See Schedule of Classes for specific topic to be offered each semester.

**RELS 300. What is Religion?. 3 Hours.**
Semester course; 3 lecture hours. 3 credits. Explores the origins, nature and function of religion and religious phenomena through a critical engagement with a diversity of theories of religion that have shaped the field of religious studies. Examines how academic scholars collect, assemble and interpret religions/cultures, including oral and written stories, art, architecture, symbolism, rituals, ethics and morals, and basic ideas about the nature of existence. Also considers the practical consequences, including the politics and ethics, of different theories employed by scholars in the study of religion and religious phenomena.

**RELS 301. Introduction to the Hebrew Bible. 3 Hours.**
Semester course; 3 lecture hours. 3 credits. A survey of the Hebrew Bible from its beginning through the post-Exile period. Emphasis given to the literary and historical development of the text. Crosslisted as: HIST 305.

**RELS 302. Introduction to the New Testament. 3 Hours.**
Semester course; 3 lecture hours. 3 credits. A survey of the New Testament with particular emphasis given to the historical development of the Canon. Crosslisted as: HIST 306.

**RELS 305. Hebrew Prophets. 3 Hours.**
Semester course; 3 lecture hours. 3 credits. A survey of the literature and history of Israel as seen through the work of the writing prophets. Emphasis will be placed on the second part of the Hebrew Canon and the Book of Daniel.

**RELS 306. Judaism. 3 Hours.**
Semester course; 3 lecture hours. 3 credits. A general survey of the dynamics and characteristic patterns of Jewish civilization encompassing history, practices and beliefs. Crosslisted as: INTL 306.

**RELS 307. Black Religion. 3 Hours.**
Semester course; 3 lecture hours. 3 credits. An analysis of the role of religion in the lives of blacks with an emphasis on African religions and philosophies, the black church in America, and the roles of the various faiths, sects and cults. Crosslisted as: AFAM 307/INTL 307.

**RELS 308. High and Later Middle Ages. 3 Hours.**
Semester course; 3 lecture hours. 3 credits. A detailed historical overview of developments in Western Europe from the end of the first millennium through the end of the 15th century. Crosslisted as: HIST 311.

**RELS 310. Mediterranean Religions. 3 Hours.**
Semester course; 3 lecture hours. 3 credits. Explores the earliest evidence of religious practice and belief in the Mediterranean region and probes the ways that the ancient traditions shaped the religions that still endure today. Also investigates the effect of religion in the Mediterranean region on related issues of intercultural relations, peace and conflict, and migration.
RELS 315. The Ancient Near East. 3 Hours.
Semester course; 3 lecture hours. 3 credits. A study of the ancient Near Eastern civilizations from the preliterary period to the end of Kassite rule in Babylonia (c. 1160 B.C.). Crosslisted as: HIST 301.

RELS 317. Islam. 3 Hours.
Semester course; 3 lecture hours. 3 credits. A study of the emergence of Islam in Arabia in the seventh century and its subsequent developments, including a look at the Qur'an (the holy book), the Prophetic traditions, the concept of God, and mysticism (sufism) and law (shari'ah) and an overview of ritual practices, fundamental beliefs, theological principles and current issues in Islam and international relationship. Crosslisted as: INTL 317.

RELS 318. History of the Jewish People I. 3 Hours.
Semester course; 3 lecture hours. 3 credits. A study of the Jewish people from the biblical period to the early modern period, including the Israelite conquest of Canaan, Judea in Hellenistic and Roman times, the Diaspora in Islam and in Europe, social and cultural trends, and Jewish settlement in the Ottoman Empire. Crosslisted as: HIST 333.

RELS 319. History of the Jewish People II. 3 Hours.
Semester course; 3 lecture hours. 3 credits. A study of the Jewish people from the early modern to the present, including the impact of the Emancipation, the rise of the American Jewish community, the impact of modernism and growth of Reform, the beginnings and growth of Zionism, restoration in Palestine, the Holocaust, the creation of Israel, and the relations of Israel and world Jewry. Crosslisted as: INTL 334.

RELS 320. Taoism. 3 Hours.
Semester course; 3 lecture hours. 3 credits. A study of one of the most fundamental and influential philosophies of life in Chinese culture, focusing on the theory and practice of the basic principles of Taoism as formulated by the legendary Lao Tzu and further developed by Chuang Tzu.

RELS 321. Buddhism. 3 Hours.
Semester course; 3 lecture hours. 3 credits. A critical survey of the origins, basic beliefs, sacred text, themes, practices, history, key figures, subject matters, schools of thought and current issues in Buddhism. Crosslisted as: INTL 321.

RELS 322. Tibetan Buddhism. 3 Hours.
Semester course; 3 lecture hours. 3 credits. A basic introduction to the history, development and mythology of the Buddhism of Tibet focusing on the Indian heritage and shared basis of all Buddhist practices, a clear identification of the three vehicles found in Buddhism, and a careful consideration of the path of the Bodhisattva, the hero of Great Vehicle Buddhism. Crosslisted as: PHIL 322.

RELS 324. Indian Religious Traditions. 3 Hours.
Semester course; 3 lecture hours. 3 credits. A systematic analysis of the major theories of Indian religious and philosophical thought: Vedas, Upanishads, Gita, Charvaka, Jainism, Buddhism, the six systems of Hinduism and contemporary developments. Crosslisted as: INTL 324/PHIL 324.

RELS 326. Existentialism. 3 Hours.
Semester course; 3 lecture hours. 3 credits. Prerequisite: PHIL 101, PHIL 103, PHIL 104, PHIL 201, PHIL 211, PHIL 212, PHIL 213, PHIL 214, PHIL 221 or PHIL 222. An examination of the nature of truth, freedom, responsibility, individuality and interpersonal relations as found in some principal writings of Kierkegaard, Nietzsche, Jaspers, Sartre, Heidegger, Camus, Buber and Marcel. Crosslisted as: PHIL 326.

RELS 327. History of Christianity I. 3 Hours.
Semester course; 3 lecture hours. 3 credits. A historical and theological examination of Christianity from its origin to the early modern period, or the age of the Reformations. Emphasis is placed upon an understanding of leading events, ideas, movements and persons in their historical settings. Crosslisted as: HIST 335.

RELS 333. Psychology and Religious Experience. 3 Hours.
Semester course; 3 lecture hours. 3 credits. Prerequisite: PSYC 101. Religious belief and experience as viewed by major psychological theorists. How psychological methodology has been used to study religious experience. Topics include personality factors and development, conversion experiences, religious experiences and mental health and human values. Crosslisted as: PSYC 333.

RELS 334. Religion in Contemporary America. 3 Hours.
Semester course; 3 lecture hours. 3 credits. This course studies the history, literature, belief patterns and unique traits of religion in the United States. The evolution of religion and religious sentiment in a modern pluralistic, democratic society, including the varieties of religious experiences in contemporary America will be reviewed.

RELS 335. The American Jewish Experience. 3 Hours.
Semester course; 3 lecture hours. 3 credits. The religious, social and cultural structure of American Jewry from the Colonial era to the present.

RELS 336. Religions in Latin America. 3 Hours.
Semester course; 3 lecture hours. 3 credits. An interdisciplinary survey of the major religious groups of Latin America, with a focus on the development of Catholicism, Protestantism and the traditions of the African diaspora, such as Santeria and Vodou, during the 20th century.

RELS 337. Contemporary Cults and New Religious Movements. 3 Hours.
Semester course; 3 lecture hours. 3 credits. An overview of contemporary religious movements. Focuses on new groups that have emerged in the context of globalization. Involves understanding of what gives rise to these movements, how they are distinctive and how they develop.

RELS 338. Eastern Religions. 3 Hours.
Semester course; 3 lecture hours. 3 credits. An introductory survey of Eastern religions, such as Hinduism, Buddhism, Confucianism, Taoism and Shinto, including their historical formation and foundational ideas, symbols, stories, and rituals and influence on personal and social life. Crosslisted as: INTL 338.

RELS 339. Western Religions. 3 Hours.
Semester course; 3 lecture hours. 3 credits. An introductory survey of Western religions, such as Zoroastrianism, Judaism, Christianity and Islam, including their historical formation and foundational ideas, symbols, stories, and rituals and influence on personal and social life. Crosslisted as: INTL 339.

RELS 340. Global Ethics and the World's Religions. 3 Hours.
Semester course; 3 lecture hours. 3 credits. A critical survey of ethical concepts and issues in the thought and practice of major religious traditions. Comparison of ethical perspectives on selected themes and attention to cooperative efforts toward a global ethic. Crosslisted as: INTL 341.

RELS 350. World Religions' Classics. 3 Hours.
Semester course; 3 lecture hours. 3 credits. A critical reading of selected works from among the spiritual classics of Judaism, Christianity, Islam, Hinduism, Taoism and other religious traditions. Crosslisted as: INTL 360.
RELS 354. Religion and Film: ____. 3 Hours.
Semester course; 3 lecture hours. 3 credits. May be repeated with different themes for a total of six credits. Explores central themes present in all global religious traditions, such as ritual, faith, myth, suffering, redemption, the religious quest/pilgrimage, the nature of good and evil and perceptions of the sacred. Using readings from sacred texts and contemporary film critiques, the course juxtaposes ancient story and wisdom with contemporary narratives in film. Possible themes would include women and religion in world cinema, Christology in world cinema, and violence and redemption in film. See the Schedule of Classes for specific topics to be offered each semester. Crosslisted as: CINE 354/ WRLD 354.

RELS 360. Sociology of Religion. 3 Hours.
Semester course; 3 lecture hours. 3 credits. Prerequisite: SOCY 101. A systematic review and assessment of major sociological theories of and empirical research on religious behavior and groups. Topics include the structure of religious organizations; social correlates and functions of religion; denominationalism; religion and social class, social change and population. Crosslisted as: SOCY 360.

RELS 361. The Bible as Literature. 3 Hours.
Semester course; 3 lecture hours. 3 credits. Literary aspects of the Bible will be considered. Also, attention will be given to the history of the English Bible. Crosslisted as: ENGL 361.

RELS 362. Shakespeare and Religion. 3 Hours.
Semester course; 3 lecture hours. 3 credits. An examination of the religious ideas in selected plays by William Shakespeare and their relevance to contemporary religious thought and experience. Topics include the nature of God, the meaning of life, the problem of evil, moral authority and the question of mortality as found in Shakespeare's plays.

RELS 365. Archaeology and Religion: ____. 3 Hours.
Semester course; 3 lecture hours. 3 credits. May be repeated with different topics for a maximum of six credits. Explores the archaeological record as evidence for the religious life of past and present societies with emphasis on the study of religion anthropologically. Topics may include thematic and/or geographical and/or literary approaches. See the Schedule of Classes for specific topics to be offered each semester. Crosslisted as: ANTH 365.

RELS 371. Women in Islam. 3 Hours.
Semester course; 3 lecture hours. 3 credits. Prerequisite: UNIV 200 or HONR 200, RELS 108, GWS 201 or ENGL 215. Critical study of the roles and rights of women in Islam. Crosslisted as: GWS 371.

RELS 380. Global Catholic Thought. 3 Hours.
Semester course; 3 lecture hours. 3 credits. Prerequisite: UNIV 200 or HONR 200. A study of the contemporary Catholic Christian response to the questions, "Who is God?" and "Where/how do we experience the Sacred?" Methods of Catholic theology will be explicated and applied to the teachings of the Second Vatican Council and current responses to those teachings in such areas as sacramental worship and liturgy and moral/ethical teachings of the Church.

RELS 391. Topics in Religious Studies. 3 Hours.
Semester course; 3 lecture hours. 3 credits. May be repeated with different topics for a maximum of 6 credits. A study of a selected ideas or concepts, religious thinkers or significant movements in the field of religion. See the Schedule of Classes for specific topics to be offered each semester and prerequisites.

RELS 398. Directed Study Abroad. 1-8 Hours.
Semester course; 1-8 field experience hours. 1-8 credits. May be repeated for a maximum of eight credits. A course involving travel and/or study in a foreign country. Intended primarily for students participating in pre-arranged projects, directed study abroad and/or exchange programs. The course meets the experiential learning requirement for the religious studies major.

RELS 401. Faith and Life Sciences. 3 Hours.
Semester course; 3 lecture hours. 3 credits. Prerequisite: UNIV 200 or HONR 200. Open to students of any school or program. Explores the complex relationships between faith traditions and the life sciences. Topics include epistemology, impact of life sciences on ideas of fate and responsibility, limits of science and technology, and scientific and religious perspectives on human origins, consciousness, aggression, forgiveness, health, illness and death. Crosslisted as: LFSC 401.

RELS 407. Modern Jewish Thought. 3 Hours.
Semester course; 3 lecture hours. 3 credits. Prerequisite: UNIV 200 or HONR 200. A study of the writings of the leading Jewish thinkers of the 19th and 20th centuries. Special reference will be made to the issues arising from the encounter of Judaism with the modern world: the nature of revelation and the authority of the Torah, the nature of God, the impact of the Holocaust, the meaning of redemption and the significance of the state of Israel.

RELS 409. Modern Islamic Thought and Global Trends. 3 Hours.
Semester course; 3 lecture hours. 3 credits. Prerequisite: UNIV 200 or HONR 200. Introduces students to the integral relationship of Islam to major events of global concern and contextualizes these events into the wider modern and postmodern developments of Islamic thought and its intellectual and ideological self-interrogation. This course will provide students with the opportunity to study both the background of modern Islamic thought and selected contemporary events. Crosslisted as: INTL 409.

RELS 412. Zen Buddhism. 3 Hours.
Semester course; 3 lecture hours. 3 credits. Prerequisite: UNIV 200 or HONR 200. A study of Zen Buddhism, including backgrounds in Indian philosophy and practice, development in China and Korea, and present-day Zen theory and practice in Japan and in Western countries. Crosslisted as: PHIL 412/INTL 412.

RELS 414. Incarceration and Spirituality: ____. 3 Hours.
Semester course; 3 lecture hours. 3 credits. Prerequisite: UNIV 200 or HONR 200. Enrollment requires permission of the instructor. Experiential seminar held at a local correctional institution that connects students to residents as learning partners. Examines themes, topics and problems in the world religions and social justice supplementing theoretical studies with the lived experiences of inmates and university students. See the Schedule of Classes for specific topics to be offered.

RELS 422. Religion and Film. 3 Hours.
Semester course; 3 lecture hours. 3 credits. May be repeated with different themes for a total of six credits. Prerequisite: UNIV 200 or HONR 200. Explores central themes present in all global religious traditions, such as ritual, faith, myth, suffering, redemption, the religious quest/pilgrimage, the nature of good and evil and perceptions of the sacred. Using readings from sacred texts and contemporary film critiques, the course juxtaposes ancient story and wisdom with contemporary narratives in film. Possible themes would include women and religion in world cinema, Christology in world cinema, and violence and redemption in film.
RELS 425. Religion, Magic and Witchcraft. 3 Hours.
Semester course; 3 lecture hours. 3 credits. Prerequisites: ANTH/INTL
103 and UNIV 200 or HONR 200 with a minimum grade of C. A survey of
the nature and variety of beliefs outside of the major streams of religious
thought. Among topics considered are myth, totemism, taboo and
sorcery. Emphasis on understanding supernatural beliefs and practices in
relation to culture and society. Crosslisted as: ANTH 425/INTL 425.

RELS 430. Philosophy of Religion. 3 Hours.
Semester course; 3 lecture hours. 3 credits. Prerequisite: PHIL 101,
PHIL 103, PHIL 104, PHIL 201, PHIL 211, PHIL 212, PHIL 213, PHIL 214,
PHIL 221 or PHIL 222. An introduction to the major problems and
questions of religion and reason. Special reference will be made to the
nature of God, the nature of man, the problem of evil, the source of good,
immortality and the basis of authority. Crosslisted as: PHIL 430.

RELS 440. Mysticism. 3 Hours.
Semester course; 3 lecture hours. 3 credits. Prerequisite: UNIV 200 or
HONR 200. A critical analysis of the varieties of mysticism in world
religions. Arguments for and against mysticism will be emphasized.
Mysticism will be related to art, psychology, science, philosophy, theology
and magic. Crosslisted as: PHIL 440.

RELS 441. Islamic Mysticism: the Sufis. 3 Hours.
Semester course; 3 lecture hours. 3 credits. Prerequisite: UNIV 200 or
HONR 200. Introduces students to the major Sufi masters and their
works. It covers ideological and practical development of Islamic
mysticism as compared to the developments within Islam itself.
Crosslisted as: INTL 441.

RELS 450. Religion, Globalization and Social Justice. 3 Hours.
Semester course; 3 lecture hours. 3 credits. Prerequisites: RELS 340/
INTL 341, WRLD 210 or WRLD 220; UNIV 200 or HONR 200. Explores
the role religions are playing in the work of building a socially just and
environmentally sustainable world community. Crosslisted as: INTL 449.

RELS 451. Religion, Racism and Social Justice. 3 Hours.
Semester course; 3 lecture hours. 3 credits. Prerequisites: RELS 340/
INTL 341, WRLD 210 or WRLD 220; UNIV 200 or HONR 200. Explores
the complex history and contemporary relationships between religion, racism

RELS 453. Western Religions, Women and Social Justice. 3 Hours.
Semester course; 3 lecture hours. 3 credits. Prerequisites: UNIV 200
or HONR 200; RELS 108, GSWS 201 or WRLD 210. Explores the
experience and portrayal of women in the three Abrahamic traditions:
Judaism, Islam and Christianity. Study focuses on how these religions
and their texts bear upon the social, economic, political and spiritual
lives of women. Special attention is given to the impact of globalization
and religious fundamentalism on women. Crosslisted as: GSWS 453/
INTL 453.

RELS 458. Religion and Ecojustice. 3 Hours.
Semester course; 3 lecture hours. 3 credits. Prerequisite: RELS 108 or
INTL/SOCY 250. Explores Eastern, Western and indigenous religious
traditions’ understanding of the meaning of nature, including human
nature; our ethical obligations to nature, including other species; and how
different traditions imagine, value and interact with nature. Considers
how diverse religious communities are involved in efforts to address
socio-environmental issues like the climate crisis, consumerism,
environmental racism, indigenous sovereignty, protection of forests and
oceans, access to healthy air, water, land and food, and the establishment
of an ecological society. Crosslisted as: INTL 458.

RELS 490. Senior Capstone Seminar. 3 Hours.
Semester course; 3 lecture hours. 3 credits. Prerequisites: RELS 340/
INTL 341; senior standing in religious studies major with a minimum of 85
credits earned toward the degree. Senior research project; written thesis
and oral presentations using established concepts, theories and research
methods in religious studies. Students will select the religious groups/
traditions as the focus of their research, writing and oral presentations in
consultation with the course instructor.

RELS 491. Topics in Religious Studies. 3 Hours.
Semester course; 3 lecture hours. 3 credits. May be repeated with
different topics for maximum of 6 credits. Prerequisite: written
permission of instructor. An in-depth study of selected ideas or concepts,
religious thinkers or significant movements in the field of religion. See the
Schedule of Classes for specific topics to be offered each semester.

RELS 492. Independent Study. 1-4 Hours.
Semester course; variable hours. Variable credit. Maximum of 4 credits
per semester; maximum total of 6 credits for all independent study
courses. Open generally to students of only junior or senior standing
who have acquired at least 12 credits in the departmental discipline.
Determination of the amount of credit and permission of instructor and
department chair must be procured prior to registration of the course.
An independent study course to allow interested students in religious
studies to do research in an area of major interest under the direction of a
professor qualified in that field.

RELS 493. Religious Studies Internship. 1-3 Hours.
Semester course; variable hours. 1-3 credits (40 clock hours per credit).
May be repeated for a maximum of 6 credits, however only 3 credits can
count toward the major. Prerequisites: completion of 9 credits of upper-
level (300- or above) course work in religious studies, and permission
of the internship coordinator. Student must be in good academic
standing with a minimum major GPA of 2.25. Designed for the advanced
student to gain workplace experience in a local, national or international
organization offering opportunities in religious studies.

RELS 499. Senior Seminar. 1 Hour.
Semester course; 1 lecture hour. 1 credit. Prerequisites: RELS 340/
INTL 341; senior standing in religious studies major with a minimum of 85
credits earned toward the degree. Pre- or corequisite: RELS 490. Focuses
on self-assessment, compilation of a portfolio and curriculum vitae,
career and graduate school preparation, and on the lifelong application
of skills and knowledge acquired in the program. Students will critically
assess their experience in the religious studies program.