

RELIGION, MA

Chair

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The Department of Religion no longer offers a stand-alone MA program. We do admit post-baccalaureate students directly into our PhD program and would award an MA to a student only if personal or academic circumstances are such that continuing in the doctoral program is no longer possible.

Graduate students in the Department of Religion at Syracuse University forge unique, creative, and rigorous programs of study that emphasize both research and teaching. The study of religion at Syracuse focuses on the category "religion" as an intellectually provocative and problematic concept rather than simply as a descriptive, institutional, or phenomenological label. The Department takes two premises as fundamental to its educational program:

1. study of religion must be interdisciplinary, and
2. study of religion must investigate the material, textual, historical, and cultural dimensions of religions as well as the theories used to produce and analyze them.

The Department offers three concentrations in the following interrelated areas of the study of religion that align with the distinctive research profile of its faculty. Each concentration gives sustained attention to religion, theory, bodies, gender and materiality.

Communities and Identities explores religion and spirituality in modern societies, both local and global, through the lenses of anthropology of religion and history of religions.

Critique, Image, and Politics explores how religions shape and are shaped in aesthetics, ethics, psychology, sociology, philosophy, and political and culture theory.

Texts and Contexts explores literary and performative expressions of religion, including scriptures, through the lenses of history, philosophy, literary theory, and rhetoric.

Students are admitted to graduate study in the Department of Religion to conduct innovative and interdisciplinary research in one concentration and one traditional or regional religious culture.

Currently the department can support study of the following traditional or regional religious cultures:

- African American
- American
- Buddhist
- Christian
- East Asian
- Hindu
- Indigenous (the Americas)
- Jewish
- Middle Eastern
- Muslim
- South Asian

Student Learning Outcomes

1. Articulate the history, development, and current state of the academic study of religion
2. Situate, explicate, and successfully execute interdisciplinary research within the current field of the academic study of religion
3. Demonstrate expertise in a particular traditional or regional religious culture
4. Achieve proficiency in one language other than English that is relevant to their scholarly projects

MA in Religion

The student seeking the MA in religion must complete a minimum of 30 credits of graduate study; 27 of which will be taken in regularly-scheduled religion graduate courses or seminars, and including no more than nine credits in advisor-approved courses offered outside the department. Students must take the departmental seminar in their concentration in each of their first three semesters. Students must also enroll in REL 601 Theories and Methods in the Study of Religion and REL 603 Theories and Methods in the Study of Religion II during their first two semesters and then pass a proficiency exam in theories of religion at the end of the second semester in the MA program. Additionally, students must earn three thesis credits by producing and orally defending a thesis. Competence in one language other than English must be demonstrated before the beginning of the third semester of study.