

RELIGION, PHD

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 University 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. the study of religion must be interdisciplinary, and
2. the 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 cultural 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
- Jewish
- Middle Eastern
- Muslim
- South Asian

Student Learning Outcomes

1. Articulate the history, development, and current state of the field 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 tradition or regional religious culture
4. Achieve proficiency in two languages other than English that are relevant to their scholarly projects
5. Teach effectively as undergraduate religion instructors
6. Communicate effectively, orally and in writing, to specialist audiences

Program Requirements

The student completing the Ph.D. in religion must complete at least 78 credits (up to 30 of which may be transferred from an external program), 12 of which must be dissertation credits. Students are required to take REL 601 Theories and Methods in the Study of Religion and REL 603 Theories and Methods in the Study of Religion II in their first year of study and then pass a proficiency exam in theories and methods of religion at the end of the second semester in the program. The student must demonstrate competence in at least two languages other than English before the beginning of the third year of the study. The student must pass three doctoral exams (concentration, religious tradition or region, and pre-prospectus exams) and successfully defend a dissertation prospectus before writing the dissertation.

The completion of a dissertation and its oral defense are required to complete the Ph.D.