

# RELIGION, BA

## Chair

Gareth Fisher  
501 Hall of Languages  
315-443-3863

## Director of Undergraduate Studies

Philip Arnold  
508 Hall of Languages  
315-443-3863

## Faculty

Philip Arnold, Arun Brahmabhatt, Zachary Braiterman, Gareth Fisher, Ken Frieden, Mariaelena Huambachano, Jeanette Jouili, Tazim Kassam, William Robert, Marcia Robinson, Joanne Punzo Waghorne, James Watts

## Program Description

Knowledge of religion is critical in today's world. The academic study of religion at Syracuse University offers students opportunities to explore religion in cross-cultural and interdisciplinary contexts.

Students who take our courses learn to interpret the dynamics of religious thought, convictions, actions, and expressions. Some of the questions that they engage include: What kind of life is most worth living? How do we understand the nature of the world? How do we relate to ourselves and to others?

Students study religious life and thought from the perspectives of arts, ethics, ethnography, gender, history, literature, mythology, philosophy, political theory, psychology, scriptural studies, social sciences, and theology.

The academic study of religion is not simply a critical undertaking. It is also often a transforming experience, introducing students to unfamiliar aspects of their own world, and to the religious realities of our global situation.

The Department of Religion has articulated three goals that shape its teaching and its expectations of what students in its courses and programs may expect to gain from this study:

1. to understand better the nature and diversity of religious expressions in the contemporary world and in history, and their power in peoples' personal and collective lives;
2. to think more deeply and critically about religious experience and its modes of expression and forms of interpretation;
3. to recognize and appreciate the difficulties and possibilities in a disciplined study of religion; and to become aware of a diversity of approaches and methods within that study.

The Department's student learning outcomes are elaborations of these goals.

## Student Learning Outcomes

1. Examine the degree of religious diversity in the world historically and today
2. Appreciate the crucial role religion has played in the course of human history

3. Critically and imaginatively analyze the role of religion in human expression, thought, and social institutions both historically and in the present day
4. Explain a particular religious tradition and/or problem within the study of religion
5. Recognize the difficulties inherent in undertaking a coherent, disciplined study of religion, and be aware of the diversity of perspectives within that study
6. Communicate effectively both orally and in writing

## Major Requirements

Students wishing to obtain a BA in Religion **must complete (REL) 30 credits** (10 courses) in the Department of Religion. Of the 30 credits, **18 credits** (6 courses) **must be at the 300-level or above. Up to 12 credits** (4 courses) **may be at the 100- or 200-level.**

## Options Regarding the Distribution of Credits

Students **may earn up to 6 credits** (2 courses) in **individualized work within the Department of Religion**. This includes Honors thesis, independent study, etc.

At the discretion of the Director of Undergraduate Studies, students **may also apply up to 6 credits** (2 courses) in courses taken **outside of the Department of Religion** toward their major.

## Additional Information

Students are strongly recommended to take courses in multiple religious traditions in consultation with their major advisor.

Students who qualify may earn a BA degree in Religion "with distinction." Qualifications and requirements for this special honor include:

- completion of the Religion major with a 3.5 GPA in program courses and a cumulative 3.4 GPA by the end of the senior year;
- study of at least one foreign language through the 201 (intermediate level); and
- REL 498 Thesis Preparation , (3 credits), preparing for, writing, and defense of a senior thesis.

## College of Arts and Sciences Requirements

For all Arts and Sciences|Maxwell students, successful completion of a bachelor's degree in this major requires a minimum of 120 credits, 96 of which must be Arts and Sciences|Maxwell credits, completion of the Liberal Arts Core (<https://coursecatalog.syracuse.edu/undergraduate/arts-sciences/#text>) requirements, and the requirements for this major (30 credits) that are listed above.

## Dual Enrollments:

Students dually enrolled in **Newhouse\*** and Arts and Sciences|Maxwell will complete a minimum of 122 credits, with at least 90 credits in Arts and Sciences|Maxwell coursework and an Arts and Sciences|Maxwell major.

\*Students dually enrolled in the College of Arts and Sciences|Maxwell as first year students must complete the Liberal Arts Core (<https://coursecatalog.syracuse.edu/undergraduate/arts-sciences/#text>). Students who transfer to the dual program after their first year as singly enrolled students in the Newhouse School will satisfy general requirements for the dual degree program by completing the Newhouse Core Requirements.

**Undergraduate University Requirements**

The following requirements and experiences apply to all Syracuse University Undergraduate matriculated degree programs.

- IDEA Course Requirement (<https://coursecatalog.syracuse.edu/undergraduate/idea-course-requirement/>)
- First Year Seminar (<https://coursecatalog.syracuse.edu/undergraduate/courses/fys/>)