

Program Mission

The Mission of the Department of Religious Studies is to:

1. Introduce the methodologies of religious studies as an academic discipline
2. Advance the profession of religious studies through a commitment to scholarly research, publication, interpretation, and discussion
3. Cultivate an understanding of religious pluralism, including non-religious perspectives, in order to create global citizens in a religiously diverse world, and
4. Promote informed public dialogue about religion and its influence on society and culture.

Program Learning Goals

1. Develop religious literacy in order for students to become responsible global citizens
2. Engage students in their own learning
3. Encourage students to analyze religion through the lenses of different world views
4. Connect theory and practice using examples from world religions
5. Challenge student presuppositions and ask students to reflect upon their inherited traditions
6. Analyze written, visual, or performed texts in religious studies with sensitivity to their diverse cultural contexts and historical moments
7. Argue from multiple perspectives about issues in religious studies that have both personal and global relevance
8. Demonstrate the ability to approach complex problems and ask complex questions drawing upon knowledge of religious studies

Degree Learning Outcomes/Student Learning Outcomes

1. Clarify the difference between religious studies and theology
2. Contextualize religious phenomena
3. Use logic and theoretical methods to analyze religious issues and solve problems
4. Argue from multiple perspectives about issues in religious studies that have personal and global relevance
5. Demonstrate the ability to approach complex problems and ask complex questions drawing upon knowledge of religions
6. Communicate answers to real world problems
7. Explore and recognize basic terms, concepts, and domains of religious studies

DLO/SLOs have been adapted from the Seven Essential Capacities for SDSU General Education.

Curriculum Map for Religious Studies

Course	Full Title	Course Description	GE Area	Pre-Major Requirement/Elective	Religious Studies Major	Religious Studies Minor	DLO/SLO 1	DLO/SLO 2	DLO/SLO 3	DLO/SLO 4	DLO/SLO 5	DLO/SLO 6	DLO/SLO7
RELS 100	Exploring the Bible	Basic content and themes of the Hebrew Bible and New Testament using methods of contemporary biblical studies. Attention to ancient Near Eastern and Greco-Roman cultural settings as well as the impact of the Bible on contemporary culture.	11.C.4	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Introduce	Introduce	Introduce				
RELS 101	World Religions	Major world and selected tribal traditions from primal times to present. Broad historical development and philosophical overview including founders, teachings, beliefs, practices, and interactions with culture, such as art, literature, politics.	11.C.4	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		Introduce			Introduce		Introduce
RELS 102	Exploring the Qur'an	Basic content and themes of the Qur'an from an historical perspective using academic methods of study. Consideration of relationships to other Abrahamic scriptures. Exegetical approaches from sectarian and modern political viewpoints.	11.C.4	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Introduce		Introduce				Introduce
RELS 103	American Religious Diversity	Religious identities and traditions of diverse peoples living in the US. Major world religions in context of contemporary multicultural America. Religions of indigenous peoples and religious movements which have arisen in US.	11.C.4	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		Introduce		Introduce		Introduce	
RELS 296	Experimental Topics	Selected topics. May be repeated with new content. See Class Schedule for specific content. Limit of nine units of any combination of 296, 496, 596 courses applicable to a bachelor's degree.		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		Expanded	Expanded	Introduce			
RELS 301	Hebrew Bible	Literature, history, major themes of Bible; methods and concerns of contemporary biblical studies. Situates folkloric, political, heroic, poetic, and religious meanings of texts among their original audiences.	IV.C	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Expanded	Expanded	Expanded				
RELS 305	The New Testament	Structure, composition, meaning of New Testament; methods for interpreting Biblical texts. Focus on letters of Paul, post-Pauline writings, Gospel accounts of Jesus's life.	IV.C	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Expanded	Expanded	Expanded				
RELS 310	The Qur'an	Major themes of Qur'an including cosmology, eschatology, good and evil, gender, God and monotheism, People of the Book (Jews and Christians), and role of religion in society. Attention to historical period in which the Qur'an was compiled.	IV.C	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Expanded	Expanded	Expanded				
RELS 315	Yoga: Theory and Practice	Cultural, historical, and philosophical aspects of yogic tradition since its earliest history to modern days. Texts, traditions, and prominent figures in yogic tradition providing a conceptual basis for yogic practice.	IV.C	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		Expanded	Expanded				
RELS 320	Judaism	Jewish history, culture, theory, and practice. Biblical roots of modern Jewish beliefs, basic movements within modern Judaism; Jewish calendar and Jewish life cycle as seen in Hebrew Bible, short stories, and films.	IV.C	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Expanded	Expanded					Expanded
RELS 325	Christianity	Historical development of Christian traditions and major issues confronting Christianity today. Beliefs and practices important to Christian self-understanding, debates over authority of Bible, accommodations to modern science, and relationship with non-Christian religions.	IV.C	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Expanded	Expanded					Expanded
RELS 328	Islam	Islamic religion and culture in Asia, Africa, and Near East. History, doctrines, practices, literatures, social and intellectual movements, role of Mohammed, and gender relations within Islam as understood in global context.	IV.C	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Expanded	Expanded					Expanded
RELS 330	Abrahamic Faiths	Theological, textual, and political relations among Judaism, Christianity, and Islam. Shared religious practices and stories such as creation, sacrifice, theories of evil and salvation, prophecy and Messianic expectations. Contemporary issues regarding gender, fundamentalism, and rise of nationalism.	IV.C	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>				Expanded	Introduce	Introduce	
RELS 335	Comparative Mysticism	Meaning, origin, and development of mysticism. Purgation, illumination, annihilation, separation, covenant, and union of soul with the Divine as found in world scriptures, writings of prominent mystics, and mystical movements such as Kabbalists, Sufis, and yogic traditions.		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>			Expanded				Expanded
RELS 337	Asian Religions in America	History, development, and study of Asian American religions. Issues and problems particular to predicaments and situations of Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders in the U.S.	IV.C	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		Expanded				Introduce	Expanded
RELS 338	Buddhism	Life and teachings of Buddha, foundational concepts of Theravada, Mahayana, and Vajrayana Buddhism. Buddhist psychology and soteriology, meditative techniques, ethical issues; contemporary Buddhism, particularly in America.	IV.C	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>				Expanded			Expanded
RELS 339	Religions of India	Religious pluralism of Indian sub-continent. Influences of Hinduism, Buddhism, Jainism, Islam, and Sikhism upon each other and social structures of gender, race, and caste. Karma and rebirth, liberation theories and practices, the interaction of mainstream religions with minority and indigenous tribal rituals and beliefs.	IV.C	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>				Expanded			Expanded
RELS 341	Zen and the Way of Japanese Religions	Historical analysis of major components of classical, medieval, early modern and modern religious systems of Japan through texts, images, rituals, and institutions.	IV.C	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>					Introduce		Expanded
RELS 342	Hinduism	Historical development of Hinduism from its Harappan and Vedic origins to contemporary times. Hindu myths and rituals, gods and goddesses, art, architecture and sacred geographies; Hindu philosophies and ascetic traditions, yogas and tantras; modern Hinduism, diaspora Hinduism and Indian nationalism.		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>				Expanded			Expanded
RELS 343	Sociology of Religion	Forms of religious belief, knowledge, practice, and experience tied to different social arrangements and historical periods. Consequences of religion for community and society. Secularization and conversion processes in modern industrial societies.	IV.B	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>							
RELS 345	Religions of East Asia	Confucianism, Taoism, and Buddhism in broad historical and cultural context. Focus on Chan (Zen) school of Buddhism, Confucius, neo-Confucianism of Ju Xi, and Taoist masters Lao Ze and Chuang Ze.	IV.C	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>				Expanded			Expanded

Course	Full Title	Course Description	GE Area	Pre-Major Requirement/ Elective	Religious Studies Major	Religious Studies Minor	DLO/SLO 1	DLO/SLO 2	DLO/SLO 3	DLO/SLO 4	DLO/SLO 5	DLO/SLO 6	DLO/SLO7
RELS 350	Experiencing the Sacred	Nature and scope of religious experience; transformations of consciousness and self through altered modes of human awareness and mind-body relationships. Yogic and ascetic experience, Shamanic trance and spirit possession, ecstatic experience and mysticism. Techniques of compassion.	IV.C	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>							
RELS 351	Black Religions and Spirituality	Major Black religious and spiritual responses and expressions in Africa and Black diaspora, including creation of institutions to support and advance religious and spiritual matters.		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		Expanded		Expanded		Expanded	
RELS 352	Jainism	Historical development of Jainism from its origins to modernity. Jainism in North America. Jain architecture, art, myths, philosophies, rituals, sacred geographies, and theology.	IV.C	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>							
RELS 353	Religion and Psychology	Religious dimensions of psyche using insights from academic and transpersonal psychology. Construction of religious identities through spiritual practice and transformation. May be repeated with new content. See Class Schedule for specific content. Maximum credit six units of which three units may be applicable to General Education.	IV.C	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>			Expanded		Expanded		
RELS 354	Religion, Myth, and Storytelling	Introduces, analyzes, and examines issues and themes in the narrative traditions of the world's religions.	IV.C	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>					Expanded		Expanded
RELS 355	Religious Ritual and Practice	Introduces, analyzes, and examines issues and themes in the ritual traditions of the world's religions.		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>			Expanded				Expanded
RELS 356	Hip Hop and Religion	Study of the intersection between the global hip hop movement and religious traditions from across the world.	IV.C	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		Expanded		Expanded			
RELS 358	Death, Dying, and Afterlife	Diverse ways religions deal with process of dying and rituals involved in transition of life to death. Grieving, end-of-life decisions, views on afterlife.	IV.C	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		Expanded			Expanded	Expanded	
RELS 363	Religion and the Sciences	Views of science and religion as separate, conflicting, complementary, and overlapping. Galileo and the Church, the Scopes Trial, and twentieth century physics provide historical examples for study of assumptions about science and religion.	IV.C	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Master	Master	Expanded		Expanded	Expanded	
RELS 364	Religion and Film	Representations of religion in modern cinema and analysis of how religious themes and imagery in film reflect societal values, beliefs, and morals.	IV.C	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		Master	Master			Expanded	
RELS 370	Goddess Studies	The divine feminine in mainstream and marginalized religions. Goddess/nature worship and its transformation across time and culture to include ancient religion, mythology, indigenous traditions, and world religions.	IV.C	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>			Master			Expanded	Master
RELS 373	Women and the Bible	Narrative, legal, and poetic material about women in Bible. How women are depicted by authors of Bible, lives of women in ancient world, how women and women's studies are transforming biblical studies.	IV.C	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Master	Master	Master	Master			
RELS 376	Nature, Spirituality, Ecology	Cross-cultural religious views of nature. Attention to sacred texts, writings of naturalists, deep ecologists, and ecofeminists on place of nature in spirituality and role of spirituality in ecology.	IV.C	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>			Master		Master	Master	
RELS 379	Rel. Violence and Nonviolence	Role of religion in terrorism, hate groups, scapegoating, domestic and ecological violence, versus role of religion in peacemaking and movements for social justice. Nonviolent philosophies of Gandhi, Martin Luther King, Jr., and pacifism in Jain, Buddhist, and Christian	IV.C	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>				Master	Master	Master	
RELS 380	Atheism, Humanism and Secularism	Atheism, humanism, and secularism in western culture to include the creation of institutions that support and advance these movements. Rise of unbelief in reaction to contemporary religious fundamentalism and attacks on science and reason.	IV.C	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>				Master	Master	Master	
RELS 390A	Rel. and American Institutions	Major religious movements, events, and issues affecting development of US government and institutions, from time of Spanish contact to 1900.	IV.C	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>					Master	Master	Master
RELS 390B	Rel. and American Institutions	Major religious movements, events, and issues affecting development of US government and institutions. Religion's impact in twentieth century.	IV.C	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>			Master		Master		
RELS 395	New Religions	America's alternative religions, popularly called "cults" and why they attract spiritual seekers. New religions and transplanted Asian and African religions. Theoretical structures of belief systems and concrete specifics on different groups.	IV.C	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>			Master			Master	
RELS 396W	Writing on Religion	Theoretical approaches in study of religion and religious phenomena. Writing in discipline of religious studies through analysis of key thinkers in history of religions.	IV.C	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		Master	Master		Master		
RELS 400	Senior Seminar	Senior capstone seminar in major. Discussion and research on topics in religious studies. Formal research paper and presentation.		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Master	Master	Master		Master		Master
REL S 405	Faith and Hope	Humanities as expressed in religion. Acquisition and/or loss of faith. Questioning of theological systems. Confrontation with death. Nature of hope. Use of signs, symbols, and narratives to generate social structures. Symbolic and mystical systems of meaning. Influence of religion upon culture.	IV.C	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>							
REL S 424	The Supernatural in Cross-Culture Perspective	Magic and religion. Conceptions of the supernatural in a cross section of world's cultures. Anthropological theories relating to supernatural beliefs and practices.	IV.C	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>							
REL S 458	Asian Traditions	Social, cultural, economic, and political traditions of South, Southeast, and East Asia; how they functioned in theory and practice prior to twentieth century.	IV.C	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>							
REL S 470	American Indian Spirituality and Epistemologies	Spirits, prophecies, and renewals of the Indian way compared through symbols and ceremony. Religions surveyed as they have been influenced by foreign elements and philosophies. Influences on values and tribalism as reflected through symbols and other measures.	IV.C	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>							
RELS 496	Experimental Topics			<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Master	Master	Master	Master	Master	Master	Master
RELS 499	Special Study			<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>							
RELS 507	The Reformation	Continental Europe, 1500-1648. Split of Christendom; political and intellectual dissent; social fabric of family life; relationship between gender, class, and power; cultural stratification of European society.		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Master	Master		Master			Master
RELS 581	Major Theme	Advanced systematic study of a theme or motif selected from major religious traditions. May be repeated with new content. See Class Schedule for specific content.		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Master	Master	Master	Master	Master	Master	Master
RELS 582	Major Text	Advanced systematic study of a selected scripture or classic text(s) selected from one of the major religious traditions. May be repeated with new content. See Class Schedule for specific content. Maximum credit six units.		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Master	Master	Master	Master	Master	Master	Master
RELS 583	Major Tradition	Advanced systematic study of the doctrines, practices, and development of a major religious tradition. May be repeated with new content. See Class Schedule for specific content.		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Master	Master	Master	Master	Master	Master	Master
RELS 596	Advanced Topics	Advanced selected topics in religious studies. May be repeated with new content. See Class Schedule for specific content.		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Master	Master	Master	Master	Master	Master	Master