

Undergraduate Handbook

**Religious Studies Program
University of Oklahoma**

<http://rels.ou.edu>

2013-2014

**UNDERGRADUATE PROGRAM IN RELIGIOUS STUDIES
UNIVERSITY OF OKLAHOMA**

General Information:

Religious Studies is an interdisciplinary discipline devoted to the academic study of religion. The Religious Studies Program at the University of Oklahoma, which offers a wide range of courses, is broadly interdisciplinary, comparative, and global in scope. The needs and interests of students have been taken into account to create programs that are flexible, but our curriculum is also rigorous and centered. Students learn both about major religious traditions and the different approaches to understanding religion.

The mission of OU's Religious Studies Program is educational, to equip students with the knowledge they need to function in the global environment of the 21st Century. The Program teaches about religion in its diverse manifestations; its purpose is not to promote any particular religious faith. The centerpiece of the program is a curriculum that enables undergraduate students to major or minor in Religious Studies. That curriculum involves a two-pronged academic exploration of 1) different religious traditions (e.g., Native religious traditions, Christianity, Islam, Judaism, Buddhism, Hinduism, Indigenous faiths, Baha'i, etc.); and 2) different approaches to the study of religion (historical, social, political, intellectual, philosophical, scientific, literary, and artistic). The curriculum helps prepare students for a variety of careers in religious vocations and academia, but it will also help future journalists, teachers, lawyers, doctors, and business leaders operate in the complex religious milieus of the coming decades. More broadly, by providing a greater understanding of religion in its pluralistic expressions the Program will promote a more informed citizenry.

The curriculum required of undergraduate majors has been determined according to two general assumptions: 1) a religious studies major ought to have a general reservoir of knowledge about the academic study of religion, to be obtained by lower-division introductory surveys; and 2) a religious studies major should also be introduced to more specialized knowledge, a requirement met by upper-division courses in specific fields or courses in methodology and research methods. Those minoring in religious studies have greater flexibility to tailor their curriculum but are expected to gain a solid exposure to the field.

For more information about the Program not included in this handbook, please see our website at <http://rels.ou.edu>

Career Opportunities:

The career opportunities for undergraduate religious studies students are many and varied, especially when students blend their major curriculum with coursework in other fields. There are, of course, a wide array of careers in religious vocations, which include employment in the growing number of faith-based social service agencies. Opportunities also abound in the broader non-profit sector of domestic and international humanitarian organizations. Religious studies graduates can pursue careers in secondary or elementary education, either in teaching or administration. Religious studies majors or minors also go on graduate programs in preparation

for positions as university professors, not only in religious studies programs but in related social science and humanities fields. Many Religious Studies graduates have achieved teaching certification and teach in secondary education. Religious Studies is also a preparatory degree for the Master's in Library Science. A number of religious studies majors or minors find their training ideally suited for careers in law and journalism. Students have gone on to careers in counseling and social work. Finally, in the past several decades businesses have found graduates with broad liberal arts backgrounds to be prime candidates for executive training programs and as a result, religious studies students can plan for rewarding business careers by combining the RELS degree or minor with a business degree. Knowledge of different religions is now a plus for businesses operating around the globe. Aside from the many career benefits, religious studies majors will discover that their studies will give them the perspective to participate more fully in the world around them.

Scholarships and Financial Aid:

For a number of years, the Religious Studies Program has offered several undergraduate scholarships to outstanding students, or for those who demonstrate financial need.

Religious Studies majors and minors will be contacted via e-mail when the applications for these scholarships are available. For more information about the types of scholarships available, see the link for current students on our website, <http://rels.ou.edu>

Undergraduate Study:

Majors must complete 36 hours of major work in religious studies including courses chosen from five groups. A student must earn a C or better in all courses used for the major. Students must have and maintain a 2.25 GPA in the major, the OU GPA, the transfer GPA, and the cumulative GPA. A student must complete 21 upper division hours within the major. A student must also meet all General Education requirements, including College requirements, to be eligible for graduation. A total of 120 hours are required for the degree, with 48 of those hours at the upper division level (3000-4000 level). When a student completes 90 hours, a degree check appointment should be scheduled in the College of Arts & Sciences to determine remaining requirements, either by phone (325-4411) or through iadvise.ou.edu.

Requirements for the major are found on the checksheet, which may also be downloaded from <http://checksheets.ou.edu/religstud.pdf>.

I. Introductory courses

The first group, Introductory courses, requires students to take two introductory courses (six hours) from the following:

IA. RELS 1113 Introduction to Religious Studies. This course is required for all majors in the RELS program.

IB. One course chosen from:

ANTH 1823 Religion in Everyday Life

PHIL 1203	Philosophy & Human Destiny
PHIL 2403	Introduction to the Philosophy of Religion
RELS 2003	Special Topics in Religious Studies
RELS 2403	Comparative Religion
RELS 2413	Religion, Culture, and the Meaning of Life

The second group is the Variety of Religious Traditions. Students must complete courses in three distinct and separate traditions, totaling 9 hours. Of the five categories in this group (A-E) students choose one course from a minimum of *three* of these categories. Additional courses chosen from the same category qualify in the elective category (Group IV) to be discussed below. Descriptions of these courses are available on our webpage and in the Course Description Handbook. The Variety of Religious Traditions section is designed to familiarize students with various religious traditions and provide a comparative perspective. The required content of a course in a religious tradition includes the historical context of the tradition, important controversies, and dissent to doctrine. Because these courses are academic rather than catechetical, they are reflective and analytical, present more than one interpretation, and give a sense of the processes of religious change.

II. Variety of Religious Traditions

A. Judaism

HIST 3973	A Religious History of Judaism
RELS 2903	Introduction to Judaic Religious Tradition
RELS 3903	Judaic Religious Tradition

B. Christianity

RELS 2913	Introduction to Christian Religious Tradition
RELS 3133	Introduction to Christianity
RELS 3913	Christian Religious Tradition

C. Islam

HIST 2683	History of Islam
IAS 2413	Islam
RELS 2923	Intro to Islamic Religious Tradition
RELS 3923	Islamic Religious Tradition

D. Asian Traditions

PHIL 1223	Introduction to Asian Philosophy
PHIL 3303	East Asian Philosophy
RELS 2703	Introduction to Buddhism
RELS 2803	Introduction to Hinduism
RELS 2933	Introduction to Eastern Religious Traditions
RELS 3933	Eastern Religious Traditions

E. Indigenous Traditions

NAS 3113	Native American Philosophy
RELS 2943	Introduction to Indigenous Religious Traditions
RELS 3943	Indigenous Religious Traditions

F. Other Traditions

RELS 2013	Introduction to Religious Traditions
RELS 3023	Special Topics in Religious Traditions

RELS 3663 Greek & Roman Religion

The third group, Approaches to Religious Studies, contains four categories or conceptual groupings. Students choose three of the four categories and complete one course in each, for a total of 9 hours. The four groups are: 1) Religion, Literature, and the Arts; 2) Religion, Social Organization and Politics; 3) Religion and History; and 4) Religion and Philosophy. Courses in these four categories are listed on the checksheet, a copy of which is available in this handbook, but as new courses are identified, they are added to the Religious Studies website, which lists a semester-by-semester course listing (<http://rels.ou.edu/courses>) and appropriate placement on the checksheet.

The fourth group is the elective category. Courses approved for that category include any courses in Group I, II, or III in excess of the requirement for that group, and a list of courses specific to the elective group. Those courses are:

RELS 2900 Special Topics in Religious Studies
RELS 3403 Studies in Comparative Religion
RELS 3643 Study Abroad
RELS 3900 Special Topics
RELS 4640 Summer Field Study/Israel Dig

Group V is the Capstone requirement. Every Religious Studies major must complete the Capstone requirement, RELS 4323.

Requirements for the Religious Studies Minor:

A minor in Religious Studies may be obtained by completing eighteen hours of Religious Studies courses, nine hours of which must be upper-division. The only requirement for the minor is the completion of one introductory course; the remaining 15 hours may be chosen by the student as electives. In order to have the minor recorded on his/her transcripts, a student must declare the minor through the College of Arts and Sciences office.

Advisors and Advisement:

A student in the College of Arts and Sciences should be advised prior to enrollment each semester. In the Religious Studies Program, students meet with Lee Green-Hall, the Program's professional advisor. E-mails are sent to all RELS students when the advising season begins, announcements are made in the electronic blackboard feature at OU called D2L in the Religious Studies advising "course," and students use an electronic calendar called iadvice.ou.edu to schedule advising appointments. Faculty members participate in the advising process by mentoring students on career and graduate school issues. Students may contact faculty member(s) directly for career and graduate school advice. Career and graduate school information is provided here and on the home page and advising page of our website at <http://rels.ou.edu/advising>.

Once a student declares the Religious Studies major or minor from another degree program or college, he or she is encouraged to contact the RELS office for follow-up advising and a review of course scheduling to ensure the student is making appropriate progress towards the degree. The Religious Studies office maintains e-mail addresses of students to notify students of upcoming events and curriculum/course offering changes.

Opportunities for Involvement in the Religious Studies Program:

The Religious Studies Program has an active student association. More information can be obtained at the Religious Studies Association through its officers, who are elected annually and introduced in the RELS D2L advising “course.”

Interdisciplinary Faculty:

The program draws courses from approximately thirty faculty members in a dozen departments, and is expanding its course offerings through additional faculty hires. Through grants, publications, research projects, and teaching honors, the faculty represents the finest combination of excellence in teaching and research. A full list and information about the faculty can be found on our website at <http://rels.ou.edu/faculty>. In addition, Religious Studies has the following program personnel:

Administrators and Program Faculty:

Charles Kimball, Director
Presidential Professor
<http://faculty-staff.ou.edu/K/Charles.A.Kimball-1/>

David Vishanoff
Associate Professor
Islamic Studies
<http://faculty-staff.ou.edu/V/David.R.Vishanoff-1/>

Erik Braun
Assistant Professor
Asian Studies (specializing in Buddhism)
<http://rels.ou.edu/erik-braun-webpage>

Rangar Cline
Assistant Professor
Greek & Roman Religion, Christianity & Judaism in the Roman period
http://faculty-staff.ou.edu/C/Rangar.H.Cline-1/Rangar_Cline_Website/MAIN.html

Lee Green-Hall, M. A.
Administrator/Academic Advisor/Instructor

Doctoral Candidate, Department of History, Religious Studies Concentration
<http://rels.ou.edu/Lee-Green-Hall>
(405) 325-4594

Important Websites for students in Religious Studies:

<http://rels.ou.edu/courses>

For course offerings approved for the major, and there is a link for course descriptions

<http://www.ou.edu/cas>

A link for students on the College of Arts & Sciences page

http://rels.ou.edu/degrees/relstud_degree_requirements.pdf

the current checksheet

<http://www.ou.edu/enrollment/home.html>

(Approved courses for use in satisfying General Education requirements); there is also a link for this site on the online enrollment page

<http://www.ou.edu/career>

To find out how to post your resume online or check the schedule of interviews

<http://iadvise.ou.edu>

To schedule an appointment with Lee Green-Hall or a counselor in the College of Arts & Sciences for a degree check

To declare the major or minor, declare an additional major or minor, schedule appointments for degree checks, etc., contact the College of Arts & Sciences Hobson Academic Services Center, Ellison Hall 124, 325-4411