

Proposal Process for a New **Major, Emphasis, Minor, Certificate or Prefix**

- A. Prepare your proposal according to the following outline, furnishing supplementary materials where appropriate.
- B. Have your proposal reviewed by the appropriate department and school/college committee.
- C. Submit your proposal to the University Curriculum Committee in care of the Office of Academic Affairs.

The proposal should include the following components:

- I. Identification of Department(s)/Program(s)
Department of Religious Studies
- II. Name of proposed major/emphasis/minor/certificate/prefix.
Religious Studies major
- III. A List of all courses and requirements. Indicate new courses and submit New Course Forms and guidelines or a syllabus for each.

Degree Requirements for Majors

42 required credit hours in Religious Studies
27 general education credit hours
59 elective credit hours

The requirements for a major consist of completion of 21 credit hours of required core courses and 21 credit hours of elective courses in Religious Studies.

Core Courses (21 credit hours)

- 1. RELG 1000 Roots of Religion (3 Hours)
- 2. 6 Credit Hours from:
 - a. RELG 2070 Introduction to Eastern Religions (3 Hours)
 - b. RELG 2080 Introduction to Western Religions (3 Hours)
 - c. RELG 2090 Introduction to Small-Scale Society Religions (3 Hours)
- 3. 6 Credit Hours from:
 - a. RELG 3100 Hinduism (3 Hours)
 - b. RELG 3120 Buddhism (3 Hours)
 - c. RELG 3130 Religions of China and Japan (3 Hours)
 - d. RELG 3180 Judaism (3 Hours)
 - e. RELG 3190 Christianity (3 Hours)
 - f. RELG 3200 Islam (3 Hours)
 - g. RELG 3210 African Religions (3 Hours)
 - h. RELG 3220 Ancient Religions (3 Hours)
- 4. 6 credit hours at the 4000 level.

Elective Courses (21 credit hours)

In addition to the 21 core credit hours, majors also complete 21 credit hours of electives. 12 of the 21 credit hours are taken in one of three emphases: *Emphasis in Comparative Religions*, *Emphasis in Religion in the Arts and Humanities*, or *Emphasis in Religion and the Social Sciences*.

Emphasis in Comparative Religions

A Religious Studies major with an emphasis in Comparative Religions is designed to encourage students to explore, by contrast and comparison, different religious traditions of the world. Requires 12 hours among the following (*NOTE: Other courses may apply, depending on their content):

- RELG 1060 World Religions (3 Hours)
- RELG 2070 Introduction to Eastern Religions (3 Hours)
- RELG 2075 Introduction to Buddhism (3 Hours)
- RELG 2080 Introduction to Western Religions (3 Hours)
- RELG 2090 Introduction to Religions of Small-Scale Societies (3 Hours)
- RELG 2350 Sacred Texts (3 Hours)
- RELG 2420 Religion and Culture (3 Hours)
- RELG 3100 Hinduism (3 Hours)
- RELG 3120 Buddhism (3 Hours)
- RELG 3130 Religions of China and Japan (3 Hours)
- RELG 3180 Judaism (3 Hours)
- RELG 3190 Christianity (3 Hours)
- RELG 3200 Islam (3 Hours)
- RELG 3210 African Religions (3 Hours)
- RELG 3220 Ancient Religions (3 Hours)

Emphasis in Religion and the Arts and Humanities

A Religious Studies major with an emphasis in Religion and the Arts and Humanities is designed to encourage students to explore religion as it relates to issues of meaning and values that are addressed by disciplines in the Arts and Humanities like Art, Literature, Music, Philosophy, and so forth. Requires 12 hours among (*NOTE: Other courses may apply, depending on their content):

- RELG 1080 Thinking Through Religions (3 Hours)
- RELG 2050 Religion and Human Values (3 Hours)
- RELG 2100 Religion and Literature (3 Hours)
- RELG 2150 Existence and Meaning (3 Hours)
- RELG 2350 Sacred Texts (3 Hours)
- RELG 2400 Religion and the Arts (3 Hours)
- RELG 2430 Environments and Religion (3 Hours)
- RELG 3050 Topics in Religion and Philosophy (3 Hours)
- RELG 4040 Belief Systems (3 Hours)
- RELG 4400 Spiritual Paths and Classics (3 Hours)

Emphasis in Religion and the Social Sciences

A Religious Studies major with an emphasis in Religion and the Social Sciences is designed to encourage students to explore religion as it relates to complex issues of human behavior, culture, and society that are addressed by disciplines in the Social Sciences like Anthropology, Psychology, Sociology, and so forth. Requires 12 hours among (*NOTE: Other courses may apply, depending on their content):

- RELG 2410 Religion and Science (3 Hours)
- RELG 2420 Religion and Culture (3 Hours)
- RELG 2430 Environments and Religion (3 Hours)
- RELG 2440 Religion and Social Action (3 Hours)
- RELG 2450 Death and Dying (3 Hours)
- RELG 2500 Gender, Culture, and Religion (3 Hours)

- RELG 3030 Topics in Religion and Society (3 Hours)
- RELG 3070 Topics in Religion and Psychology (3 Hours)
- RELG 3600 Field Experience in Religion (1-6 Hours)
- RELG 3605 International Field Experience in Religion (1-6 Hours)

Special Degree Requirements

- Of the required 42 credit hours to complete a B.A. in religious studies, a minimum of 18 credit hours must be taken at Webster University.
- At least 12 credit hours of courses for the major must be completed at the 3000 and 4000 levels.
- Up to 9 hours of coursework from cognate disciplines may count toward Religious Studies major requirements.
- In special cases, up to 9 hours of foreign language coursework beyond the elementary level may count toward the Religious Studies major requirements.
- Courses in Religious Studies completed with a grade lower than C- will not count toward fulfilling the major.
- No more than 6 credit hours of coursework outside the classroom structure, such as in a readings course, independent study, field experience, etc., will count toward the major requirements.

IV. Catalog copy for all affected changes.

In the Department of Religious Studies, students study the religious systems of the world (large and small, past and present) in their socio-historical contexts, and critically examine the phenomenon of religion as it relates to issues of personal meaning and international affairs.

Religious Studies courses are cross-cultural in scope and multi-disciplinary in nature. We study all forms of expression of the religious life—myth, art, meditation, ritual, ideas, festivals, mysticism, etc.—whether the expression be found in individual experience, in world religions like Buddhism and Judaism, or in small-scale societies like the Lakota of North America or the Semai of Malaysia. We do not consider religious beliefs or practices to be right or wrong, but instead seek to understand the ways that religion provides people with meaning in their lives and serves important social functions.

The Religious Studies major is designed to prepare students for a wide range of career paths by developing abilities that are highly sought after in all professions, such as critical thinking and problem-solving, effective oral and written communication, etc. In addition, by studying world religions, students learn information that is highly valuable to the contemporary world such as how to deal with differences in beliefs, cultural practices, and contrasting points of view.

Religious Studies majors develop these abilities through the completion of courses that teach (a) broad knowledge of the history, beliefs, practices, and contemporary dynamics of the world's religious systems, (b) in-depth knowledge of at least two specific religious systems in their socio-historical contexts, (c) comparative knowledge of classical and contemporary theories about the origins and functions of religious beliefs and practices in human life and society, and (d) practical knowledge of the impact religion has on international affairs and personal lives.

Degree Requirements for Majors

42 required credit hours in Religious Studies
27 general education credit hours
59 elective credit hours

The requirements for a major consist of completion of 21 credit hours of required core courses and 21 credit hours of elective courses in Religious Studies.

Core Courses (21 credit hours)

1. RELG 1000 Roots of Religion (3 Hours)
2. 6 Credit Hours from:
 - a. RELG 2070 Introduction to Eastern Religions (3 Hours)
 - b. RELG 2080 Introduction to Western Religions (3 Hours)
 - c. RELG 2090 Introduction to Small-Scale Society Religions (3 Hours)
3. 6 Credit Hours from:
 - a. RELG 3100 Hinduism (3 Hours)
 - b. RELG 3120 Buddhism (3 Hours)
 - c. RELG 3130 Religions of China and Japan (3 Hours)
 - d. RELG 3180 Judaism (3 Hours)
 - e. RELG 3190 Christianity (3 Hours)
 - f. RELG 3200 Islam (3 Hours)
 - g. RELG 3210 African Religions (3 Hours)
 - h. RELG 3220 Ancient Religions (3 Hours)
4. 6 credit hours at the 4000 level.

Elective Courses (21 credit hours)

In addition to the 21 core credit hours, majors also complete 21 credit hours of electives. 12 of the 21 credit hours are taken in one of three emphases: *Emphasis in Comparative Religions*, *Emphasis in Religion in the Arts and Humanities*, or *Emphasis in Religion and the Social Sciences*.

Emphasis in Comparative Religions

A Religious Studies major with an emphasis in Comparative Religions is designed to encourage students to explore, by contrast and comparison, different religious traditions of the world. Requires 12 hours among the following (*NOTE: Other courses may apply, depending on their content):

- RELG 1060 World Religions (3 Hours)
- RELG 2070 Introduction to Eastern Religions (3 Hours)
- RELG 2075 Introduction to Buddhism (3 Hours)
- RELG 2080 Introduction to Western Religions (3 Hours)
- RELG 2090 Introduction to Religions of Small-Scale Societies (3 Hours)
- RELG 2350 Sacred Texts (3 Hours)
- RELG 2420 Religion and Culture (3 Hours)
- RELG 3100 Hinduism (3 Hours)
- RELG 3120 Buddhism (3 Hours)
- RELG 3130 Religions of China and Japan (3 Hours)
- RELG 3180 Judaism (3 Hours)
- RELG 3190 Christianity (3 Hours)
- RELG 3200 Islam (3 Hours)
- RELG 3210 African Religions (3 Hours)
- RELG 3220 Ancient Religions (3 Hours)

Emphasis in Religion and the Arts and Humanities

A Religious Studies major with an emphasis in Religion and the Arts and Humanities is designed to encourage students to explore religion as it relates to issues of meaning and values that are addressed by disciplines in the Arts and Humanities like Art, Literature, Music, Philosophy, and so forth. Requires 12 hours among (*NOTE: Other courses may apply, depending on their content):

- RELG 1080 Thinking Through Religions (3 Hours)
- RELG 2050 Religion and Human Values (3 Hours)
- RELG 2100 Religion and Literature (3 Hours)
- RELG 2150 Existence and Meaning (3 Hours)
- RELG 2350 Sacred Texts (3 Hours)
- RELG 2400 Religion and the Arts (3 Hours)
- RELG 2430 Environments and Religion (3 Hours)
- RELG 3050 Topics in Religion and Philosophy (3 Hours)
- RELG 4040 Belief Systems (3 Hours)
- RELG 4400 Spiritual Paths and Classics (3 Hours)

Emphasis in Religion and the Social Sciences

A Religious Studies major with an emphasis in Religion and the Social Sciences is designed to encourage students to explore religion as it relates to complex issues of human behavior, culture, and society that are addressed by disciplines in the Social Sciences like Anthropology, Psychology, Sociology, and so forth. Requires 12 hours among (*NOTE: Other courses may apply, depending on their content):

- RELG 2410 Religion and Science (3 Hours)
- RELG 2420 Religion and Culture (3 Hours)
- RELG 2430 Environments and Religion (3 Hours)
- RELG 2440 Religion and Social Action (3 Hours)
- RELG 2450 Death and Dying (3 Hours)
- RELG 2500 Gender, Culture, and Religion (3 Hours)
- RELG 3030 Topics in Religion and Society (3 Hours)
- RELG 3070 Topics in Religion and Psychology (3 Hours)
- RELG 3600 Field Experience in Religion (1-6 Hours)
- RELG 3605 International Field Experience in Religion (1-6 Hours)

Special Degree Requirements

- Of the required 42 credit hours to complete a B.A. in religious studies, a minimum of 18 credit hours must be taken at Webster University.
- At least 12 credit hours of courses for the major must be completed at the 3000 and 4000 levels.
- Up to 9 hours of coursework from cognate disciplines may count toward Religious Studies major requirements.
- In special cases, up to 9 hours of foreign language coursework beyond the elementary level may count toward the Religious Studies major requirements.
- Courses in Religious Studies completed with a grade lower than C- will not count toward fulfilling the major.
- No more than 6 credit hours of coursework outside the classroom structure, such as in a readings course, independent study, field experience, etc., will count toward the major requirements.

Departmental Academic Honors

A Religious Studies major may earn departmental academic honors by completing the additional requirements below.

To earn departmental academic honors, a Religious Studies major must:

1. Maintain a G.P.A. of 3.5 in Religious Studies coursework.
2. Complete at least 18 credit hours in Religious Studies courses offered at the 3000 and 4000 levels.
3. Complete at least two semesters of a foreign language with a grade of B or higher in each semester, or test out of that requirement.
4. Participation of 3 hours or more in a domestic or international field experience.
5. Complete the Senior Honors Project courses, RELG 4600 and 4700.

V. Discussion of the rationale for your proposal (Be sure to answer each of the following questions.)

a. What are the outcomes for the major/emphasis/minor/certificate?

1. Students will demonstrate a broad knowledge of the history, beliefs, practices, and contemporary dynamics of the world's religious systems.
2. Students will demonstrate in-depth knowledge of at least two specific religious systems in their socio-historical contexts.
3. Students will demonstrate competence with the knowledge of classical and contemporary theories about the origins and functions of religious beliefs and practices in human life and society.
4. Students will demonstrate an understanding of the impact religion has on personal lives and international affairs.

b. How will these outcomes be assessed?

1. Successful completion of the core of courses.
2. Collection of a portfolio of student writing.
3. Interview of each student at two critical points while completing major requirements.
4. Exit interview with each student; interaction with faculty advisor.

c. Why is this being proposed? What problem will it address?

Periodic review of any departmental major is an absolutely necessary component of good program maintenance. The last revision of the undergraduate major took place more than a decade ago. Since then, there have been significant changes in the departmental full time faculty as well as in the University student body at large. Although the current major is certainly admirable in many ways, it does not take advantage of current strengths of the full time and adjunct faculty, nor fully meet the needs of today's University students. Finally, changes in the discipline of Religious Studies nationwide necessitate an updating of our curriculum.

d. What research has been done and what evidence do the departments/programs have of the need for and interest in it?

Exit interviews with Webster students. Research on Religious Studies Programs at other universities. Consultations with colleagues at other universities. Surveys of undergraduate students by various organizations and scholars. Consultations with adjunct faculty at Webster University. Besides more accurately reflecting the expertise and interest of our faculty, the revised major is more transparent and easier for students to understand and use for their course planning.

- e. How would it fit with departmental philosophy and existing curriculum?

It would replace the existing major and more fully reflect the breadth of scholarship and teaching in the area of Religious Studies.

- f. How would it fit with the philosophy and existing curriculum of the School/College and the University?

It would continue to meet the needs of a liberal arts education which the previous major fulfilled.

- g. Are there existing courses in other departments/programs which are appropriate for inclusion in this proposal?

As is appropriate. Discussions are on-going with BASS, HPIR, English and Philosophy about cross-disciplinary cooperation.

- h. Which sites will it be available on?

Currently only in Saint Louis and a few online courses.

- i. If the proposal is for a new prefix, what entity will be responsible for scheduling and evaluating the courses? N/A

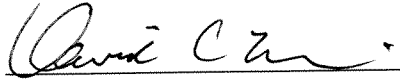
VI. Staffing Information:

- a. What additions or changes in staffing are necessary to implement this new major, emphasis, minor, certificate or prefix? No Changes
- b. How will this be coordinated? N/A
- c. Who will co-ordinate this program? N/A

VII. Feasibility information:

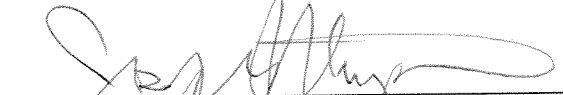
- a. What are the resources (space and equipment) necessary for this new major, emphasis, minor, certificate or prefix? This will replace an already existing major.
- b. What are the projections for enrollment and growth for this new major, emphasis, minor, certificate or prefix

VIII. What entities (department, college/school) have reviewed and approved this proposal?



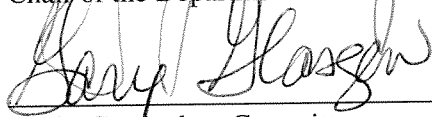
Dean of the Department

4-29-06
Date



Chair of the Department

11/29/06
Date



Chair, Curriculum Committee

12/15/06
Date

Current Undergraduate Catalogue Copy

Religious Studies

Major and Degree Offered

- Religious Studies (B.A.)

Minor Offered

- Religious Studies

Certificate Offered

- Buddhist Studies

Special Study Opportunities

Religious studies at Webster University encourages students to explore contemporary issues and personal meaning in an open atmosphere. We see the religions of the world as complex, living traditions, not simply history and text. We study all forms of expression of the religious life—myth, art, meditation, ritual, ideas, festivals, mysticism—whether the expression be found in individual experience or in historical traditions like Buddhism and Judaism. We do not consider religious experiences or ideas to be right or wrong; rather, we try to understand religious expressions within the cultures of the world; and we try to understand religious expressions as resources by which we can find meaning in our lives today. As an international University, Webster attracts students with roots in all of the major religious traditions of the world. Thus, a respect for the views of others that grows from spirited and personal dialogue is central to our department.

All majors are individually designed in that all requirements consist of demonstrated competencies and may be acquired in multiple ways. Religious studies majors have pursued a wide range of careers and graduate studies including law, social work, education, social action, and business. Many students who major in religious studies also major in another department. For further information, visit our Web site.

Special Requirements

Courses completed with a grade lower than C- do not count toward fulfilling the

major.

Religious Studies

Degree Requirements

- 33 required credit hours
- 27 general education credit hours
- 68 elective credit hours

Of the required 33 credit hours to complete a bachelor of arts (B.A.) in Religious Studies, a minimum of 18 credit hours must be taken at Webster University.

The requirements for a major consist of competencies that are demonstrated rather than courses to be taken. Students may elect to demonstrate the competencies in any way that is agreed upon by them, their advisors, and the department chair.

- 1 Detailed familiarity with the history, thought, sacred writings, practices, and social forms of one religious tradition as primary focus, and familiarity with at least one other religious tradition as secondary focus. It is recommended that majors take both RELG 2070 Introduction to Religions of the East and RELG 2080 Introduction to Western Religions early in their program. *This competence may be demonstrated by clusters of completed courses, exams, or papers.*
- 2 Detailed familiarity with the work of one major religious thinker. *This competence may be acquired within any of the departmental coursework but usually is acquired in independent study with a mentor chosen by agreement between the student and department chair.*
- 3 Detailed familiarity with the religious implications of a contemporary intellectual, artistic, or cultural movement, or with the application of concepts from religious studies to a central issue in the human condition. *May be demonstrated by coursework but is usually demonstrated by a paper.*
- 4 A senior project in which the student, under the direction of a mentor, prepares and presents a substantial work demonstrating the competencies acquired in the major and integrating the various components of the student's interests within the field. RELG 4600 Senior Project Preparation may be used to outline, research, and gather sources for the Senior Project. RELG 4700 Senior Project is used to complete and present the project.

Minor in Religious Studies

Students completing a major in other departments can fulfill the requirements for a minor in religious studies with a minimum of 18 credit hours of religious studies courses.

[Top of Page]

Certificate Program: Buddhist Studies

(18 required credit hours)

Despite its modest size, Thailand has the third-largest population of Buddhists in the world, behind only China and Japan. Buddhism has also enjoyed an unusually long period of continuity in Thailand. As dramatic changes have swept through Thailand and Southeast Asia in the last 50 years, Buddhism has been both highly conservative and radically innovative. Thai monk Buddhadasa Bhikkhu expressed both aspects when he called for a life of contemplative simplicity and social engagement to counteract the pressures of modern materialism. It was Vietnamese monk Thich Nhat Hanh who first gave the name "Engaged Buddhism" to this form of religious practice. Engaged Buddhism was his answer to fellow Buddhists who asked, as the Vietnam War raged, if they should continue their meditation practice or work to stop the war. The engaged Buddhist response unites these two paths—the path of meditation and the path of work to relieve social suffering.

The Buddhist studies certificate program of study draws on Webster University's strengths in religious and international studies to explore the complex social reality of Buddhism in Asia today. We offer students a firsthand opportunity to study the cultural and spiritual roots of their host country, and to investigate the many ways in which contemporary Buddhists engage their changing social world—through grassroots activism, as well as through art, ritual, philosophy, institutional reform, and political debate.

Completion of the certificate requires a minimum of eight weeks residence and 9 credit hours of coursework at the Hua Hin/Cha-am campus. The remainder of the 18 credit hours may be completed (in whole or part) at Hua Hin/Cha-am, St. Louis, or any other Webster campus that offers appropriate courses.

We encourage students to approach Buddhism holistically, by embracing three forms of learning:

- 1 scholarship on Buddhism as a major world religious tradition;
- 2 face-to-face encounters with Thais and others who practice Buddhism; and
- 3 personal reflection that grows from grappling with Buddhism as a philosophy, as a form of transformational practice, and as a cultural reality.

Classroom discussions, field excursions, guest lectures, and opportunities for meditation practice are designed to create a multi-dimensional learning experience.

Requirements

- RELG 2075 Introduction to Buddhism 3 hours
- ANSO 2000 Issues in Contemporary Society: Thai Ways—The Culture, Politics and Economy of Thailand 3 hours

At least one course (3 credit hours) from each of the following groups:

Group One—Socially Engaged Buddhism:

- RELG 2420 Religion and Culture: Buddhism East and West 3 hours
- RELG 2430 Environments and Religion: Buddhist Eco-Activism 3 hours
- RELG 2440 Religion and Social Action: Engaged Buddhism 3 hours
- RELG 2440 Religion and Social Action: Engaged Buddhism in Asia 3 hours
- RELG 2440 Religion and Social Action: Engaged Buddhism in Thailand 3 hours

Group Two—Buddhism and Society:

- RELG 2400 Religion and the Arts: Buddhist Arts 3 hours
- RELG 2430 Environments and Religion: Buddhism and Ecology 3 hours
- RELG 2500 Gender, Culture, and Religion: Women in Buddhism 3 hours
- RELG 3030 Topics in Religion and Society: The Thai Temple/Monastery 3 hours
- RELG 3030 Topics in Religion and Society (with Buddhist topic) 3 hours

An additional two elective courses (at least 6 credit hours) chosen from any course designated as part of the Buddhist studies certificate program, including courses listed above and the following:

- RELG 2030 Contemporary Topics (with Buddhist topic) 3 hours
- RELG 3070 Topics in Religion and Psychology: Meditation and Healing 3 hours
- RELG 3120 Buddhism 3 hours
- RELG 3600 Field Experience in Religion 1-6 hours
- RELG 3605 International Field Experience in Religion 1-6 hours
- RELG 4400 Spiritual Paths and Classics 3 hours
- RELG 4550 Advanced Study in Religion 3 hours
- RELG 4610 Reading Course: Directed Readings, Research Project, or Meditation Practicum 1-6 hours
- FILM 3160 Topics in Film Studies: Buddhism in Film 3 hours

Topics courses or general umbrella courses within the Department of Religious Studies must have a formally listed Buddhist focus in order to count towards the certificate.