

# Religious Studies

College of Humanities

**Chair: Rick Talbott**

**Santa Susana Hall (SN) 224**

**(818) 677-3392**

**www.csun.edu/religious.studies**

## Staff

Linda Jones (Administrative Support Coordinator), Jennifer Elliott (Administrative Support Assistant)

## Faculty

Phyllis Herman, Linda Lam-Easton, Kenneth Lee, Jody Myers, Mutombo Nkulu-N'Sengha, Mustafa Ruzgar, Rick Talbott

## Emeritus Faculty

Crerar Douglas, James Goss, Howard Happ, John Hartzog, William Kramer, Mokusen Miyuki, Thomas T. Love, Patrick Nichelson, Robert D. Shofner

## Programs

Undergraduate:

**B.A. Religious Studies**

**Minor in Religious Studies**

## The Major

The Religious Studies Major is designed to provide a liberal arts education with an emphasis upon the study of religious phenomena. The Religious Studies Major provides an excellent basis from which to pursue careers requiring imagination, problem-solving, communication skills, and awareness of human diversity.

## Scholarships and Awards

The John Cummings Memorial Scholarship and the Stephen J. Svec Memorial Scholarship.

## Careers

A degree in Religious Studies builds skills in critical thinking and writing, critical historical analysis, socio-cultural analysis and comparative analysis of the "other," and equips students for many areas in the academic, business, social services, law, medicine, and professional spheres. Religious Studies majors have pursued careers in government, business, education, communications, human services, and law.

## Academic Advisement

Advisement is required of all religious studies majors each semester prior to registration. Majors may contact Dr. Linda Lam-Easton during scheduled office hours and by appointment.

## Student Learning Outcomes of the Undergraduate Program

A religious studies major will be able to:

1. Interpret religious texts.
2. Think both empathetically and critically about conflicting religious claims.
3. Acquire knowledge of the history of more than one major religious tradition.
4. Apply intercultural methods to religious inquiry and analysis, and
5. Articulate a perception of one's role in society, in both career and public service options.

## Requirements for the B.A. Degree in Religious Studies

### 1. Lower Division Required Courses (6 Units)

**Select two courses from the following:**

- |    |     |                                       |
|----|-----|---------------------------------------|
| RS | 100 | Introduction to Religious Studies (3) |
| RS | 101 | The Bible (3)                         |

- |    |     |  |
|----|-----|--|
| RS | 150 | World Religions (3)                        |
| RS | 160 | Religion in Western Civilization (3)       |
| RS | 240 | Approaches to the History of Religions (3) |

### 2. Upper Division (36 Units)

**Required Junior-level Course(3 Units)**

- |    |     |  |
|----|-----|--|
| RS | 395 | Theory and Method in Religious Studies (3) |
|----|-----|--|

**Religion in the United States (6 Units)**

**Select two courses from the following:**

- |    |     |                                  |
|----|-----|----------------------------------|
| RS | 305 | American Sects and Cults (3)     |
| RS | 306 | American Religious Diversity (3) |
| RS | 307 | Religion in America (3)          |
| RS | 308 | Native American Religions (3)    |
| RS | 378 | American Jewish Experience (3)   |

**Religious Traditions (9 Units)**

**Select three courses from the following:**

- |    |     |                                  |
|----|-----|----------------------------------|
| JS | 300 | Humanities in Jewish Society (3) |
| RS | 345 | Christianity (3)                 |
| RS | 365 | Islam (3)                        |
| RS | 380 | Asian Religions (3)              |
| RS | 385 | Hinduism (3)                     |
| RS | 390 | Buddhism (3)                     |
| RS | 426 | Taoism (3)                       |

**Sacred Texts of the World (3 Units)**

**Select one course from the following:**

- |    |     |                                  |
|----|-----|----------------------------------|
| RS | 320 | Hebrew Bible (Old Testament) (3) |
| RS | 325 | New Testament (3)                |
| RS | 327 | Teaching of Jesus (3)            |
| RS | 375 | Classical Judaic Texts (3)       |
| RS | 383 | Asian Religious Texts (3)        |

### 3. Upper Division Electives (12 Units)

Choose from any upper division Religious Studies courses upon consultation with an advisor. Two years of the study of a foreign language at the university level (or its equivalent) may be used for one 3 unit elective in the major. Students may apply a Topics in Religion course (RS 396A-Z) to the appropriate category listed above. Independent Study (499A-C) may be substituted. Consult with the department academic advisor for approval.

### 4. Proseminar RS 497B (3 Units)

## Requirements for the B.A. Degree with Religious Studies as the Second Major

### 1. Lower Division Required Courses (3 Units)

**Select one course from the following:**

- |    |     |  |
|----|-----|--|
| RS | 100 | Introduction to Religious Studies (3)      |
| RS | 101 | The Bible (3)                              |
| RS | 150 | World Religions (3)                        |
| RS | 160 | Religion in Western Civilization (3)       |
| RS | 240 | Approaches to the History of Religions (3) |

### 2. Upper Division ( 33 Units)

**Required Junior-level Course (3 Units)**

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|----|-----|--|
| RS | 395 | Theory and Method in Religious Studies (3) |
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**Religion in the United States (6 Units)**

**Select two courses from the following:**

- |    |     |                                  |
|----|-----|----------------------------------|
| RS | 305 | American Sects and Cults (3)     |
| RS | 306 | American Religious Diversity (3) |
| RS | 307 | Religion in America (3)          |
| RS | 308 | Native American Religions (3)    |
| RS | 378 | American Jewish Experience (3)   |

**Religious Traditions (9 Units)**

**Select three courses from the following:**

- |    |     |                                  |
|----|-----|----------------------------------|
| JS | 300 | Humanities in Jewish Society (3) |
|----|-----|----------------------------------|

RS	345	Christianity (3)
RS	365	Islam (3)
RS	380	Asian Religions (3)
RS	385	Hinduism (3)
RS	390	Buddhism (3)
RS	426	Taoism (3)

**Sacred Texts of the World (3 Units)****Select one course from the following:**

RS	320	Hebrew Bible (Old Testament) (3)
RS	325	New Testament (3)
RS	327	Teaching of Jesus (3)
RS	375	Classical Judaic Texts (3)
RS	383	Asian Religious Texts (3)

**3. Upper Division Electives (9 Units)**

Choose from any upper division Religious Studies courses upon consultation with an advisor. Two years of the study of a foreign language at the university level (or its equivalent) may be used for one 3 unit elective in the major. Students may apply a Topics in Religion course (RS 396A-Z) to the appropriate category listed above. Independent Study (499A-C) may be substituted. Consult with the department academic advisor for approval.

**4. Proseminar RS 497B (3 Units)**

Total Units in the Major	42
Total Units with Religious Studies as the Second Major	36
General Education Units	48
Additional Units	30-36
Total Units Required for the Degree	120

**Minor in Religious Studies****1. Lower Division Required Course**

Choose one course from the following (3 Units)

RS	100, 101, 150, 160, 240
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**2. Upper Division Required Courses****Religion in the United States (select one course) (3)**

RS	305, 306, 307, 308, 378
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**Current Issues in Religion (select one course) (3)**

RS	300, 302, 303, 304, 310, 311, 313, 356, 361
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**Sacred Texts of the World (select one course) (3)**

RS	320, 325, 327, 375, 383
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**Religious Traditions (select two courses) (6)**

JS	300
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RS	345, 365, 380, 385, 390, 426
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With approval of the department advisor, students may apply an Experimental Topics in Religion course (RS 396A-Z) to the appropriate category listed above.

Total Units Required for the Minor	18
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**Course List****RS 100. Introduction to Religious Studies (3)**

Study of the elements of religion and selected contemporary religious issues. Examines such subjects as myth and ritual, the sacred and profane, dreams and theophanies, priests and prophets, science and religion, history and religion, and the possibility of religious faith today. (Available for General Education, Arts and Humanities)

**RS 101. The Bible (3)**

Survey of the basic content and major themes of the Hebrew Bible (Old Testament), New Testament, and Apocryphal writings. (Available for General Education, Arts and Humanities)

**RS 150. World Religions (3)**

Study of selected major world religions with emphasis on tribal religions as well as the historic international faiths of Asia and the Near East. Investigates rituals, ethics, institutional structures and the cultural ethos of religions as well as their myths, doctrines and sacred texts. (Available for General Education, Comparative Cultural Studies)

**RS 160. Religion in Western Civilization (3)**

Study of the role of religion in Western Civilization from the Stone Age to the Renaissance. (Available for General Education, Comparative Cultural Studies)

**RS 204. Religion, Logic and the Media (3)**

This course introduces and guides students in the practical use of the basic concepts of deductive logic as a dimension of critical reasoning. Using these concepts, students will discuss, analyze and critique statements that appear in the media (in the United States and elsewhere) that have been expressed by religious people and by the media itself. (Available for General Education Basic Skills, Critical Thinking)

**RS 240. Approaches to the History of Religions (3)**

An investigation of major and selected religions around the world using social-scientific methods from history, sociology, political science, and anthropology. Students learn why various religions change over time and how they interact with their particular social and cultural environments. Examples are taken from ancient and modern religions, major and tribal religions, including new religious cults. (Available for General Education, Social Sciences)

**RS 250. Values in World Religions (2)**

Designed for students in the Integrated Teacher Education Program. Examines the variety of human values embedded in the world's religions by investigating areas such as beliefs in god(s), holidays and festivals, and rites of passage. Special emphasis on the place of teaching about religion in the public schools.

**RS 255. American Political Institutions and Religion (3)**

Examination of the development of U.S. and California political ideals, institutions, and processes. The course focuses on the religious elements within political ideals, religious freedom, the relation between religion and state, and the role of religion in the public forum, including both politics and public education. (Meets GE Title 5 U.S. Constitution and State and Local Governments.)

**RS 296A-Z. Experimental Topics Courses in Religious Studies (3)**

Selected topics in Religious Studies with course content to be determined.

**Upper Division**

General prerequisite: Students in upper division courses are expected to have competence in Religious Studies or in related areas, satisfaction of this prerequisite to be determined in consultation with an advisor. Regular written assignments are required.

**RS 301. Religious Ethics: History and Interpretation (3)**

Examination of religious ethics in the West to the 19th century.

**RS 303. Religion and Personality (3)**

Study of religion in relation to modern psychological, psychoanalytic, and psychotherapeutic views of man.

**RS 304. Women and Religion (3)**

Examination of religious views of women in oral and literary cultures, focusing on the roles, symbols, and concepts of women within an international, historical framework. Also addresses women's own perspectives on religion, as reflected in historical sources and in contemporary theology and religious life. (An Information Competence course. Available for General Education, Arts and Humanities) (IC)

- RS 305. American Sects and Cults (3)**  
Survey of some marginal religious groups in America. Presentation, analysis and critique of the classic church/sect/cult typology, including how these theories apply to actual groups and how groups maintain beliefs when rejected by dominant cultures.
- RS 306. American Religious Diversity (3)**  
Survey of the religion of groups in America who are marginal to or outside of the historically dominant mainstream Protestant and Civil Religion Ethos. (An Information Competence course. Available for General Education, Comparative Cultural Studies) (IC)
- RS 307. Religion in America (3)**  
The study of the influence of religious traditions on the formation of American (U.S.A.) culture and the modification of religious traditions by the American context. Also addresses major American religious thinkers and movements, religion's role in shaping American thought, literature and ethos. (Available for General Education, Arts and Humanities)
- RS 308. Native American Religions (3)**  
Seeks to understand the religions of Native Americans in their respective tribal contexts. Inquires to what extent a common religious outlook existed among the cultures occupying what is presently the U.S.
- RS 310. Religion and Literature (3)**  
Study of literature to discover to what extent a religious tradition, or the lack of one, influences an author's understanding of human existence. Writers who reflect religious traditions, as well as those who are informed by humanism or atheism, are read and interpreted. (Available for General Education, Arts and Humanities)
- RS 311. Religion and Film (3)**  
Examines how film artists address the major religious issues of our time: the nature of reality, sources of transcendence, the nature of good and evil in the self and society, the possibilities of renewal and hope.
- RS 313. Religion and Art (3)**  
Study of religion as portrayed in the fine and folk arts, emphasizing the role of the artist as interpreter of the great events and personalities of religious traditions.
- RS 320. Hebrew Bible (Old Testament) (3)**  
Study of the literature and religion of ancient Israel through the Hellenistic period.
- RS 325. New Testament (3)**  
Study of the New Testament and its religious thought in context.
- RS 327. Teaching of Jesus (3)**  
Literary and social analysis of the teaching of Jesus.
- RS 345. Christianity (3)**  
Eastern Orthodox, Roman Catholic, Protestant, and non-traditional forms of Christianity compared and contrasted with one another in their historical and social contexts.
- RS 355. Mysticism (3)**  
Study of mysticism as a distinct religious phenomenon, a major category of religious experience. To understand its character it may be studied either within the great Western religious traditions (Judaism, Islam, Christianity) or cross-culturally.
- RS 356. Contemporary Religious Thought (3)**  
Study of selected major writings in religious thought, with the aim of analyzing representative modern approaches to questions such as God and the world, faith and self-understanding, and belief and social consciousness. (Available for General Education, Arts and Humanities)
- RS 361. Contemporary Ethical Issues (3)**  
Emphasizes the development of skills in critical thinking through analysis of such contemporary ethical issues as abortion, euthanasia, genetic engineering, sexual behavior, racism, gender bias, punishment, animal rights, the environment, and the relationships between religion and morality. (Available for General Education, Arts and Humanities)
- RS 363. Islam in the Modern World (3)**  
Introduction to the contemporary Islamic religious tradition. Focus on contemporary Muslim religiosity and activity both within the United States and in an international setting.
- RS 365. Islam (3)**  
Study of the varieties of Islamic civilization in their social contexts. (Available for General Education, Comparative Cultural Studies)
- RS 373. Korean Christianity (3)**  
A study of the history of Christianity in Korea, its rapid growth and development within a multi-religious context, and the cultural, racial, gender, and generational factors that exist among first and second generation Korean Christians in America.
- RS 375. Classical Judaic Texts (3)**  
Examination of the great ideas and issues of ancient and medieval Judaism as reflected in its cultural tradition.
- RS 377. The Holocaust: Religious Responses (3)**  
Examines several classic religious explanations for the tragic destruction of the Jews. Also studies contemporary responses to the Holocaust on the part of Jewish and Christian theologians, the Churches, and individual artists.
- RS 378. American Jewish Experience (3)**  
Seeks to describe the experience of the Jewish religion-ethnic community in America with reference to its own historic background and development, and the relationship of the community to the general American culture and to other particular subcultures or ethnic groups. Emphasizes distinctive Jewish values and customs and evaluates their contribution to American culture. Studies contrasts between religious and secular understandings of Jewishness, between different strands of Jewish immigration, and between Jewish experience in different regions of the U.S. (An Information Competence course. Available for General Education, Comparative Cultural Studies) (IC)
- RS 379. Zionism: Religious and Secular (3)**  
Analyzes the religious, intellectual, and historical forces that have shaped Zionist thought, and includes an examination of the continuing debate over the meaning of Zionism and its practical implementation.
- RS 380. Asian Religions: Communal Traditions and Transitions (3)**  
Explores Asian religions by comparing human and divine religious figures cross-culturally. Comparison of the figures from the various cultures provides a method to understand the nature of humanity and divinity in Asia. (Available for General Education, Comparative Cultural Studies)
- RS 383. Asian Religious Texts (3)**  
Explores Asian Religions by comparing the primary sacred texts of Asian cultures. Sacred texts upon which Asian religious expressions are based are examined first in the specific cultural contexts of Japan, China and India by a reading of primary texts. Comparison of the texts from the various cultures allow the generation of a model of Asian religious order and answer problems concerning the nature of sacrality in Asia.
- RS 384. Approaching the Qur'an (3)**  
A historical, thematic, and analytical study of the Qur'an both in its content and form with substantial focus on the Qur'an as a source of

information in various disciplines in the light of traditional and contemporary methods of interpretation.

**RS 385. Hinduism (3)**

Study of the religious life of India from the Indus Valley civilization to the modern period. (Available for General Education, Comparative Cultural Studies)

**RS 390. Buddhism (3)**

Study of the fundamental concepts in Theravada and Mahayana Buddhism, e.g., nirvana, enlightenment, karma, and dharma. Examines the historic development of these concepts in their various Asian cultural and geographic settings. (An Information Competence course. Available for General Education, Comparative Cultural Studies) (IC)

**RS 395. Theory and Method in Religious Studies (3)**

Examines modern attempts to study religion objectively from the Western Enlightenment to the present, exploring and criticizing theories and methods from anthropology, sociology, feminist hermeneutics, evolutionary psychology and the history of religions.

**RS 396A-Z. Experimental Topics Courses in Religious Studies (3)**

Selected topics in Religious Studies with course content to be determined.

**RS 426. Religions of China: Taoism (3)**

Study of Taoist experience and thought.

**RS 450. Death and Dying in the World's Religions (3)**

Cross-cultural look at death and dying in several different religious traditions. The first half of the course specifically examines issues of death and dying (as well as issues of life and living) in these traditions. Studies both beliefs and practices. The second half examines where these different traditions interact, and how they affect the lives and deaths of women, children and men.

**RS 476. Modern Jewish Thought (3)**

Examination of the great ideas and issues of modern Judaism as reflected in its cultural tradition, represented in mystical literature, autobiographies, poetry, and essays from Zionist and modern religious movements.

**RS 497. Proseminar in Religious Studies (3-3)**

Reading and discussion in a specific field or on a specific topic in a small group. May be repeated for credit.

**RS 498. Tutorial in Religious Studies (3-3)**

Reading and discussion in a specific field or on a specific topic in a small group. May be repeated for credit.

**RS 499. Independent Study (1-3)**

## Graduate

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**RS 699. Independent study (1or 3)**

Investigation of a significant problem in Religious Studies. Project selected in conference with faculty sponsor and with approval of the department chair.