

**Mission Statement:**  
**Department of Philosophy/Religious Studies**

**Religious Studies**

General Mission

The mission of the undergraduate degree program in Liberal Studies--Religious Studies is to enable students to understand the role and importance of the study of religion. The program is designed to provide exposure to the perspectives of religious traditions, past and present, and to facilitate a student's ability to engage in the academic study of religion. It will prepare the student for careers in teaching, law, government service, business, medicine and cultural exchange.

Curricular Program

The core of the program includes courses in methodology, the history of religions, philosophy and phenomenology of religion, and religion and cultures. Because our department faces both west and east, the RELS Program offers a series of introductory and advanced courses entailing both Western and Eastern religions. Religious traditions studied include, but are not limited to, Christianity, Judaism, Islam, Confucianism, Taoism, and Buddhism.

Program Goals

- 1) Develop the ability to think critically about religious worldviews.
- 2) Develop the ability to employ the vocabulary of the academic study of religion.
- 3) Acquaint students with essential theoretical and practical knowledge of traditional as well as contemporary Western religious traditions.
- 4) Acquaint students with essential theoretical and practical knowledge of traditional as well as contemporary Eastern religious traditions.

Student Outcomes

By the time of graduation, Liberal Studies--Religious Studies Majors will be expected to:

- 1) Be able to think critically about religious world views and express religious ideas in an articulate and well— reasoned manner. Possible tests: Given a short paragraph taken from an unidentified “religious’ text (real or no), be able to construct an argument for the textual or traditional source of the paragraph and elaborate on the religious ideas found therein.

- 2) Be able to employ the vocabulary of the academic study of religion. Possible test: Given a text of one or two pages in length, provide an explanatory reduction of the text using the vocabulary of the academic study of religion.
- 3) Be familiar with the range of the major Western religious traditions. Possible test: Multiple choice instruments.
- 4) Be familiar with the range of major Eastern religious traditions. Possible test: Multiple choice instruments.