Master of Arts in Religious Studies

Why study Religious Studies?

Religions have been and remain among the most powerful forces shaping human history. Their discourses and practices inform the way we perceive ourselves, those around us, and existence at large, even when we are not actively religious. They are central to understanding both what divides us and what unites us. The academic study of religion is a trans-disciplinary endeavor to understand from an objective perspective how religious traditions shape the lives of their adherents, without seeking to promote or disprove any specific belief system. Religious Studies acquaints students with the diversity of religious cultures and introduces them to key methods and theories employed in their examination as "religion."

Admission to Graduate Studies

An applicant seeking to pursue graduate study in the College may be admitted as either a degree-seeking or non-degree seeking student. Policies and procedures of Graduate Studies govern the process of Graduate admission. These may be found in the Graduate Studies (http://catalog.ku.edu/graduate-studies) section of the online catalog. Please consult the Departments & Programs (http://catalog.ku.edu/ liberal-arts-sciences) section of the online catalog for information regarding program-specific admissions criteria and requirements. Special admissions requirements pertain to Interdisciplinary Studies degrees, which may be found in the Graduate Studies section of the online catalog.

Graduate Admission

A B.A. in Religious Studies is not required for admission, but the department expects applicants to show on their transcripts significant exposure to the humanities and social sciences.

The department requires Graduate Record Examination scores for admission. Submit your graduate application online (http://graduate.ku.edu/prospective-students). Send all other requested application materials to

The University of Kansas
Department of Religious Studies
Smith Hall, Room 109A
1300 Oread Ave.
Lawrence, KS 66045-7603

M.A. Degree Requirements

The department offers thesis and non-thesis M.A. options. The requirements for these are:

1. 30 (thesis) or 33 (non-thesis) graduate credit hours, chosen in consultation with the student's advisor or the Graduate Director. Coursework must include the following:

   (a) REL 601 Approaches to the Study of Religion (3 hrs)

   (b) Three graduate seminars (courses numbered 700 or above, excluding REL 800 Readings and REL 899 Thesis), of which two must be chosen from the following set of theory and method-oriented seminars (9 hrs):

   REL 727 Seminar in Religion, Text and Textuality
   REL 737 Seminar in Religion, Media and Performance
   REL 747 Seminar in Religion, Society and Social Change
   REL 757 Seminar in Religious Subjectivity, Experience, and Narrative
   REL 767 Seminar in Theory, Method, and History in Religious Studies

   (c) One course focusing on Western Religious Traditions and one course focusing on Non-Western Religious Traditions (see Table below). (6 hrs)

   (d) At least 12 hours (4 courses) in an articulated concentration of the student's own design. These courses may overlap with those in (b) and (c) above.

   (e) For thesis students, 1-3 credit hours of REL 899 Thesis.

   (f) A total of at least 18 (thesis) or 21 (non-thesis) graduate credit hours in Religious Studies, including (a)–(e) above, plus electives if applicable. Remaining hours may be taken outside of the department.

2. A final examination:

   (a) For the thesis option, the student must write and orally defend a thesis that meets minimum department and University requirements.

   (b) For the non-thesis option, the student must produce and orally defend a research portfolio.

Graduate Handbook: Further information on fulfillment of degree requirements and other department and University policies and procedures can be found in the Department of Religious Studies Graduate Handbook, available on the department webpage (http://religiousstudies.ku.edu/overview-ma-religious-studies).

Approved Courses for Requirement 1(c):

A. Western Religious Traditions (0)

Select one of the following:

REL 515 Studies in Early Christian Literature and History
REL 525 Jews and Christians
REL 530 Christian Origins: from the Beginnings to Augustine
REL 531 Studies in Christianity
REL 532 Studies in Islam
REL 557 Modern Islamic Reform Movements
REL 560 Modern Jewish Thought
REL 570 Studies in Judaism
REL 732 Seminar in Western Religious Texts: _______
REL 761 Seminar in Western Religious Thought: _______
REL 775 Seminar in Religion and Society in the West: _______

B. Non-Western Religious Traditions (0)

Select one of the following:

REL 507 Religion in India
REL 508 Religion in China
REL 509 Religion in Japan
REL 510 Religion in Korea
REL 541 Gods and Goddesses of South Asia
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<th>Course Code</th>
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<tr>
<td>REL 543</td>
<td>Hindu Epics, Past and Present</td>
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<tr>
<td>REL 545</td>
<td>Yoga in Theory, Practice, and History</td>
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<tr>
<td>REL 555</td>
<td>Buddhists and Buddhism in China</td>
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<td>REL 733</td>
<td>Seminar in Eastern Religious Texts:</td>
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<td>REL 776</td>
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