

UNDERGRADUATE CATALOG 2008-10

The Department of Religious Studies (REL)

The Department of Religious Studies, which engages in the descriptive, comparative, interpretive, and explanatory study of religion as a cross-cultural human phenomenon, offers an undergraduate major in religious studies and minors in both religious studies and Judaic studies.

Religious Studies Major (BA)

Department of Religious Studies, 212 Manly Hall
www.as.ua.edu/rel/
religiousstudies@as.ua.edu

Degree requirements. Students earning the bachelor of arts (BA) degree with a major in religious studies must complete all University, college, and departmental degree requirements. This includes the general education requirements, the following major requirements, all requirements for an approved minor, and sufficient other credits to total 120 credit hours.

Admission into the major. Students are expected to formally declare a major no later than the fourth semester of full-time enrollment (or at 61 semester hours for transfer students). With the assistance of an advisor in the major department, students should complete the "Declaration of Major" form.

Grade point average. A 2.0 grade point average in the major is required for completion of the degree. The major GPA is calculated based on all courses applicable to the major that the student has attempted at UA and all work attempted applicable to the major throughout the entire higher education career.

Major courses. The major in religious studies requires the successful completion of the following 33 semester hours:

Courses	Hours
REL 100 or REL 105	3
REL 490 ¹	3
REL area requirement ²	12
REL electives	15
Total	33

¹REL 490 is offered only in the spring semester. Students are expected to enroll during the senior year, but can enroll as early as the junior year.

²Student must earn 3 hours in **each** of the following four areas for a total of 12 hours:

1. Religion in Culture: REL 213, REL 231, REL 234, REL 237, REL 335, REL 340, REL 341, REL 370, REL 410, REL 419, REL 440, or REL 480.*
 2. American Religions: REL 124, REL 226, REL 235, REL 240, REL 241, REL 371, or REL 481.*
 3. Middle Eastern and European Religions: REL 110, REL 112, REL 223, REL 224, REL 228, REL 236, REL 238, REL 311, REL 332, REL 347, REL 372, REL 420, or REL 482.*
 4. Asian Religions: REL 208, REL 210, REL 220, REL 321, REL 373, or REL 483.*
- *Depending on the topic, the following courses may fulfill the requirement for any area: REL 360, REL 361, REL 460, or REL 461.

Upper-level residency. A minimum of 12 hours of 300- and 400-level courses in the major must be earned on this campus.

Ancillary courses. This major does not require ancillary courses; however, students interested in graduate level work in the study of religion are recommended to take either French or German as part of the undergraduate program of study.

Required minor. This major requires the completion of a minor.

Additional major requirements. Including REL 490, a minimum of 15 hours must be earned in 300- or 400-level courses. Students can count a maximum of 6 hours of online REL courses toward the major or minor. Students can earn a maximum of 9 hours (i.e., three separate courses) of any variable topics courses that have different titles (i.e., REL 360, REL 361, REL 370, REL 371, REL 372, REL 373, REL 460, REL 461, REL 480, REL 481, REL 482, REL 483, and REL 490). For more information on degree requirements, visit the Degrees page of the department's Web site (www.as.ua.edu/rel). Students are responsible for ensuring that they have met all University, college, major, and minor requirements. However, each student must meet with an advisor in the major department for academic planning and to be cleared for registration each semester.

Special opportunities. The department annually awards both Silverstein Fellowships (providing the opportunity to work in the department for one or more semesters, assisting in the main office, and assisting professors with their work) and Silverstein Scholarships (awarded by the Faculty each Honors Day based on a student's GPA). To learn more about such funding opportunities, visit www.as.ua.edu/rel/stdeskscholarships.html. The department also has three ongoing lecture and/or lunchtime discussion series, an active religious studies student association, and a local chapter of the national honors society in the study of religion, Theta Alpha Kappa.

Religious Studies Minor

Department of Religious Studies, 212 Manly Hall
www.as.ua.edu/rel/
religiousstudies@as.ua.edu

Admission into the minor. Students are expected to formally declare a minor. With the assistance of an advisor in the minor department, students should complete the "Declaration of Minor" form before or during the third year of full-time enrollment.

Grade point average. A 2.0 grade point average in the minor is required for completion of the degree. The minor GPA is calculated based on all courses applicable to the minor that the student has attempted at UA and all work attempted applicable to the minor throughout the entire higher education career.

Minor courses. The minor in religious studies requires the successful completion of the following 21 semester hours:

Courses	Hours
REL 100 or REL 105	3
REL 490 ¹	3
REL area requirement ²	9
REL electives.....	6
Total	21

¹REL 490 is offered only in the spring semester. Students are expected to enroll during the senior year, but can enroll as early as the junior year.

²Students must earn 3 hours in **three** of the following areas for a total of 9 hours:

1. Religion in Culture: REL 213, REL 231, REL 234, REL 237, REL 335, REL 340, REL 341, REL 370, REL 410, REL 419, REL 440, or REL 480.*
2. American Religions: REL 124, REL 226, REL 235, REL 240, REL 241, REL 371, or

REL 481.*

3. Middle Eastern and European Religions: REL 110, REL 112, REL 223, REL 224, REL 228, REL 236, REL 238, REL 311, REL 332, REL 347, REL 372, REL 420, or REL 482.*

4. Asian Religions: REL 208, REL 210, REL 220, REL 321, REL 373, or REL 483.*

*Depending on the topic, the following courses may fulfill the requirement for any area: REL 360, REL 361, REL 460, or REL 461.

Residency A minimum of 6 hours of 300- and 400-level courses in the minor must be earned on this campus.

Ancillary courses. This minor does not require ancillary courses.

Additional minor requirements. A minimum of 9 hours must be earned in 300- or 400-level courses. Students can count a maximum of 6 hours of online REL courses toward the major or minor. Students can earn a maximum of 9 hours (i.e., three separate courses) of any variable topics courses that have different titles (i.e., REL 360, REL 361, REL 370, REL 371, REL 372, REL 373, REL 460, REL 461, REL 480, REL 481, REL 482, REL 483, and REL 490). For more information on degree requirements, visit the Degrees page of the department's Web site (www.as.ua.edu/rel). Students are responsible for ensuring that they have met all University, college, major, and minor requirements. However, each student must meet with an advisor in the major department for academic planning and to be cleared for registration each semester. If necessary, students may consult with the minor department academic advisor for questions concerning minor requirements.

Judaic Studies Minor

Department of Religious Studies
212 Manly Hall
www.as.ua.edu/rel/
religiousstudies@as.ua.edu

Admission into the minor. Students are expected to formally declare a minor. With the assistance of an advisor in the minor department, students should complete the "Declaration of Minor" form before or during the third year of full-time enrollment.

Grade point average. A 2.0 grade point average in the minor is required for completion of the degree. The minor GPA is calculated based on all courses applicable to the minor that the student has attempted at UA and all work attempted applicable to the minor throughout the entire higher education career.

Minor courses. The minor in Judaic studies requires the successful completion of the following 21 semester hours:

Courses	Hours
REL 100 or REL 105	3
REL 110	3
REL 224	3
REL 238	3
REL 223, REL 332, REL 346, REL 347, or REL 410.....	6
REL 490*	3
Total	21

*REL 490 is offered only in the spring semester. Students are expected to enroll during the senior year, but can enroll as early as the junior year.

Upper-level residency. A minimum of 6 hours of 300- and 400-level courses in the minor must be earned on this campus.

Ancillary. This minor does not require ancillary courses.

Additional minor requirements. Students majoring in religious studies may not apply the same religious studies courses toward both the religious studies major and the Judaic studies minor. They must earn 21 hours of REL courses for the minor and 33 hours of REL courses for the major. Students are responsible for ensuring that they have met all University, college, major, and minor requirements. However, each student must meet with an advisor in the major department for academic planning and to be cleared for registration each semester. If necessary, students may consult with the minor department academic advisor for questions concerning minor requirements.

REL COURSES

Office: 212-A Manly Hall

REL 100 Introduction to the Study of Religion. Three hours. Various methodological approaches to the academic study of religion, with examples of religious life and thought drawn from a variety of cultures. This course is required of all majors and minors.

REL 105 Honors Introduction to the Study of Religion. Three hours.

Prerequisite: Admission to the University Honors Program or a 3.3 GPA.

Honors version of REL 100.

REL 110 Introduction to the Hebrew Bible. Three hours. Introduction to the books of the Hebrew Bible in their historical setting, with emphasis on textual analysis and on literary forms and their function and use in the past and present.

REL 112 Introduction to the New Testament. Three hours. Introduction to the Hellenistic world of early Christianity, examining the early traditions about Jesus that were organized into the Gospels and the letters of Paul.

REL 124 Religion & Film in America. Three hours. Uses film as the way into understanding the religious scene in America—a broad set of ideas, symbols, social movements, and institutions that affect and are affected by the wider American culture.

REL 208 Hinduism. Three hours. An historical survey of a major religious tradition of Asia.

REL 210 Buddhism. Three hours. A historical survey of the Buddhist traditions of South Asia and East Asia.

REL 213 Sociology of Religion. Three hours. Sociological analysis of religion as a cross-cultural institution and its relationship to personality and other social institutions.

REL 220 Survey of Asian Religions. Three hours. Introductory survey of the major religious traditions of Asia, including Hinduism, Buddhism, Confucianism, Taoism, and Shinto.

REL 223 Holocaust in Historical Perspective. Three hours. Examination of this event, and scholarship on it, from various historical and critical perspectives.

REL 224 Judaism. Three hours. A study of some of the leading schools and interpreters of Judaism and a review of modern developments including the Holocaust and the state of Israel.

REL 226 African Diaspora Religions. Three hours. Examination of African influence throughout the Americas (e.g., Candomblé in Brazil, Vodou in the Caribbean, African American religions in North America), focusing on the interplay between religion, culture, and politics.

REL 228 History of Christian Thought. Three hours. The major theological orientations that have shaped Christianity in various social and historical contexts.

REL 231 Religious Existentialism. Three hours. Examines answers offered by such writers as Kierkegaard, Dostoevsky, Buber, Weisel, and Tillich, to such questions as: What is

the meaning of existence? What is the meaning of my existence? What does it mean to exist authentically in religious terms?

REL 234 Women and Religion (same as WS 234). Three hours.

The role and place of women in several religious traditions, ancient and modern.

REL 235 Native American Religions. Three hours.

Surveys the histories, beliefs, and practices of Native American religions as found in various geographical regions throughout the Americas (e.g., the Aztecs, Lakota, Muskogee, Cree, and Hopi).

REL 236 Islam. Three hours.

An introduction to the traditions of Islam, including their history, texts, intellectual debates, and contemporary practices.

REL 237 Self, Society, and Religions. Three hours.

A survey of psychological and social theories used to study religion, drawing on different cultural and historical data of relevance to the approaches surveyed.

REL 238 Philosophies of Judaism. Three hours.

Survey of major philosophical formulations of the nature and role of Jews and Judaism, written by select Jewish thinkers.

REL 240 Portraits of the Apocalypse in Contemporary Films. Three hours.

Examines contemporary portrayals of the end times in popular films.

REL 241 Historical Overview of Religions in America. Three hours.

A survey of religions in America from before European colonization to the present.

All REL upper-level classes require junior standing or permission of instructor; to guarantee their spot in the class, REL majors and minors are advised to obtain a permit from the department to enroll in an upper-level course.

REL 311 English Bible as Literature (same as WL 363). Three hours.

Analytical and critical study of a number of books of the Bible; each book is examined and evaluated as an example of a particular literary genre.

REL 321 Religion and Identity in South Asia. Three hours.

Investigates the intersections of various social divisions and identities with religious labels and practices by analyzing case studies from South Asia.

REL 332 Contemporary Jewish Thought. Three hours.

Examination and analysis of modern Jewish reformulations of divinity, revelation, redemption, election, etc., in critical contrast to classical Jewish and Greek traditions.

REL 335 Psychology of Religion (same as PY 334). Three hours.

Examination of religious beliefs, behaviors, and institutions by the application of psychological theories.

REL 340 Nietzsche and Religion. Three hours.

Examines the major writings on religion of Friedrich Nietzsche (1844-1900), with special attention to the relationship between religion, rhetoric, language, culture, and power.

REL 341 Theories of Myth. Three hours.

Examination of the history of differing theories of myth, conceived as a sub-type of narrative.

REL 347 Jewish-Christian Relations. Three hours.

Critical examination of the 2,000-year-old relationship focusing on areas of commonality and difference.

REL 360:361 Individual Directed Research: Student Topics. Three hours.

Supervised research of the student's choice. May be repeated for a maximum of nine hours for differing topics. Speak with the professor before registering.

REL 370 Advanced Studies in Religion in Culture. Three hours.

Specific context will be determined by faculty responsible for the course that semester. May be repeated for a maximum of nine hours for differing topics.

REL 371 Advanced Studies in American Religions. Three hours.

Specific context will be determined by faculty responsible for the

course that semester. May be repeated for a maximum of nine hours for differing topics.

REL 372 Advanced Studies in Middle Eastern and European Religions. Three hours.

Specific context will be determined by faculty responsible for the course that semester. May be repeated for a maximum of nine hours for differing topics.

REL 373 Advanced Studies in Asian Religions. Three hours.

Specific context will be determined by faculty responsible for the course that semester. May be repeated for a maximum of nine hours for differing topics.

REL 410 Religion and Genocide. Three hours.

Explores the phenomenon known as genocide by examining its relationship to the religion in both its institutional and theological frameworks.

REL 419 Myth, Ritual, and Magic (same as ANT 419). Three hours.

Examination of the theories and methods used to study the relations between religious narrative and behavioral systems.

REL 420 Gospel of Mark. Three hours.

Investigates the Gospel of Mark through the lens of contemporary biblical, literary, and cultural criticism.

REL 440 Theories of Religion. Three hours.

Examines classic and contemporary theories of religion such as functionalism, structuralism, Marxism, and psychoanalysis. Emphasis may vary with each offering.

REL 460:461 Individual Directed Research: Student Topics. Three hours.

Supervised research of the student's choice. May be repeated for a maximum of nine hours for differing topics. Speak with the professor before registering.

REL 480 Seminar in Religion in Culture. Three hours.

Specific context will be determined by faculty responsible for the course that semester. May be repeated for a maximum of nine hours for differing topics.

REL 481 Seminar in American Religions. Three hours.

Specific context will be determined by faculty responsible for the course that semester. May be repeated for a maximum of nine hours for differing topics.

REL 482 Seminar in Middle Eastern and European Religions. Three hours.

Specific context will be determined by faculty responsible for the course that semester. May be repeated for a maximum of nine hours for differing topics.

REL 483 Seminar in Asian Religions. Three hours.

Specific context will be determined by faculty responsible for the course that semester. May be repeated for a maximum of nine hours for differing topics.

REL 490 Capstone Senior Seminar. Three hours.

A seminar offered spring semester of each year for seniors pursuing a major or minor in religious studies or minor in Judaic studies. The professor and subject of the seminar rotate through the four areas of the curriculum. Required of all majors and minors in the Department. May be repeated for a maximum of nine hours for differing topics.