

RELIGIOUS STUDIES (BA)

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Introduction

Religion plays an important role in human life and history. A strong liberal education requires introduction to the intellectual analysis of this important dimension of human existence. A major in religious studies and theology provides a broad intellectual context for those who wish to study religion in greater depth. The major program offers study and appreciation of Roman Catholicism, other sects of Christianity including Eastern Orthodoxy, Jewish religious thought, the Islamic tradition, and surveys of other religions. This approach involves the comparative study of religions and a positive approach to the varieties of non-religion, such as atheism. The department provides the opportunity for a critical appraisal of religious faith through the study of primary source materials — scriptural, historical, and theological — and the use of interdisciplinary methodologies, such as anthropology, sociology, and psychology. The department also expresses the religious dimension of the college's founding in the Jesuit and Catholic tradition. Its orientation is to serve the community that shares the values of that tradition. For a more detailed description of the program, faculty, facilities, academic and co-curricular opportunities please go to the Religious Studies and Theology website (<https://www.canisius.edu/academics/programs/religious-studies-and-theology>).

Qualifications

Students must maintain a 2.0 GPA in their major and a 2.0 overall average to graduate with a degree in Religious Studies and Theology.

Advisement

All students should have an advisor in the major and should contact the department directly to have an advisor assigned if they do not already have one. Meetings with academic advisors are required prior to students receiving their PIN for course registration each semester. All majors should work closely with their advisor in discussing career expectations, choosing their major electives, developing their entire academic program and planning their co-curricular or supplemental academic experiences.

Double Majors

Students who wish to expand their educational opportunities may decide to declare a double major. The decision may be based on career goals or planned graduate studies. Before a student declares a double major, it is important to meet with the appropriate academic departments for advisement. Some double major combinations can be completed within the minimum 120 credit hour degree requirement, but in some cases additional course work may be required. In order to declare a double major, the student must complete the appropriate double major request form and get the signature of each department chairperson and the appropriate associate dean. Please note that students will receive only one degree, regardless of the number of majors they complete.

Religious Studies and Theology majors have often majored in Classics, Communications, Education, History, Philosophy, or Psychology.

Minors in Other Disciplines

Minors provide students the opportunity to pursue additional interests but generally do not require as many courses as a major. Minors generally range from five to eight required courses. The minors page (<http://catalog.canisius.edu/undergraduate/minors>) provides a complete list of

minors and provides links to each minor. Some majors and minors can be completed within the minimum 120 credit hour degree requirement, but in some cases additional coursework may be required. Students must complete the appropriate minor request form.

Curriculum

An Ignatian Foundation

All undergraduate students must complete either the Canisius Core Curriculum (<http://catalog.canisius.edu/undergraduate/academics/curricular-information/core-curriculum>) or the All-College Honors Curriculum (<http://catalog.canisius.edu/undergraduate/academics/curricular-information/all-college-honors-program>). Many schools refer to their college-wide undergraduate requirements as "general education" requirements. We believe that the core curriculum and the honors curriculum are more than a series of required classes; they provide the basis for a Jesuit education both with content and with required knowledge and skills attributes that are central to our mission.

Free Electives

Students may graduate with more but not less than 120 credit hours. Free electives are courses in addition to the Core Curriculum or Honors Curriculum and major requirements sufficient to reach the minimum of 120 credit hours required for graduation.

Major Requirements

(10 Courses)

| Code | Title | Credits |
|---|--|-----------|
| Required Courses | | |
| RST 200 | Introduction to the Hebrew Bible | 3 |
| RST 201 | Introduction to the New Testament | 3 |
| Choose one of the following RST courses in a non-Christian contemporary religion: | | |
| RST 220 | Introduction to Eastern Religions | |
| RST 221 | Native American Religions | |
| RST 224 | Islam: Tradition and Revival | |
| RST 240 | Development of Jewish Religious Thought and Practice | |
| RST 400 | Religious Studies and Theology Seminar | 3 |
| RST 489 | Projects for Majors | 3 |
| Electives | | |
| Select 5 RST electives at the 200-level or higher | | 15 |
| Total Credits | | 30 |

We invite you to meet with the chair or relevant professor to choose electives for the major that align with your interests.

Additional Course Considerations

The Department has no required foreign language course(s) for its majors, but it strongly encourages all majors, if they are considering seminary or graduate study in theology or religion, to take a foreign language that is especially relevant to a student's interest in the discipline, such as Biblical Hebrew, Greek, Latin, or a modern foreign language. Greek and Latin are offered through the Classics Department and modern foreign languages through the Department of Modern Languages, Literatures and Cultures. Biblical Hebrew is offered on demand when there is sufficient student interest through the Religious Studies and Theology Department

The Department also offers courses for credit through the Institute for the Global Study of Religion. (<https://www.canisius.edu/academics/office-academic-affairs/academic-institutes-and-centers/institute-global-study-religion>) These are immersion experiences, often abroad, and are offered on a rotating basis. Please contact Dr. Timothy Wadkins (wadkins@canisius.edu) for further information.

Roadmap

Recommended Semester Schedule for Major Course Requirements

| | |
|------------------|---|
| Freshman | |
| Fall | Spring |
| RST 101 | RST 200 |
| Sophomore | |
| Fall | Spring |
| RST 201 | RST Course in a non-Christian contemporary religion |
| RST Elective | |
| Junior | |
| Fall | Spring |
| RST 400 | RST Elective |
| RST Elective | RST Elective |
| Senior | |
| Fall | Spring |
| RST 489 | RST Elective |

Learning Goals & Objectives

Student Learning Goal 1

Religious Studies and Theology majors will know the scriptures which form the foundation of Judaism and Christianity, as well as the basic insights of at least one other world religion.

Students will:

- **Objective A:** Students will demonstrate understanding of the scriptural traditions of the Hebrew Bible;
- **Objective B:** Students will demonstrate understanding of the scriptural traditions of the New Testament;
- **Objective C:** Students will demonstrate understanding of the religious teachings of a religion other than Christianity.

Student Learning Goal 2

Religious Studies and Theology majors will be critical thinkers about religion.

Students will:

- **Objective A:** Describe the context of a particular religious or theological question and develop a thesis in response to the question;
- **Objective B:** Analyze alternative viewpoints of the issues raised by the question and construct a logical defense of the argument;
- **Objective C:** Draw warranted conclusions from the evidence gathered.

Student Learning Goal 3

Religious Studies and Theology majors will do scholarly research and writing in Religious Studies or Theology.

Students will:

- **Objective A:** Use a major theory or a theoretically-based method from the academic study of religion as part of an analysis of a religious or theological question;
- **Objective B:** Demonstrate understanding of intellectual property and present evidence in a fair and ethical manner;
- **Objective C:** Cite sources in an appropriate documentation style.

Minors

The Religious Studies and Theology Department offers a minor for non-majors in Religious Studies and Theology. The department is also the administrative center for an Interdisciplinary Minor in Catholic Studies that is open to students in any major.

- Religious Studies and Theology Minor (<http://catalog.canisius.edu/undergraduate/college-arts-sciences/religious-studies-theology/religious-studies-theology-minor>)
- Interdisciplinary Minor in Catholic Studies (<http://catalog.canisius.edu/undergraduate/college-arts-sciences/religious-studies-theology/interdisciplinary-minor-catholic-studies>)

Courses

RST 101 Introduction to Religious Studies and Theology 3 Credits

An academic introduction to the nature and role of religion in human life and society, including the Jesuit and Catholic traditions as well as other world religions.

Offered: fall & spring.

RST 200 Introduction to the Hebrew Bible 3 Credits

Introduction to the literature of the Hebrew Bible within its ancient Near Eastern setting. Particular attention paid to historical, literary, cultural, and theological questions.

Prerequisite: RST 101.

Fulfills College Core: (part of the Canisius Camino Core Pathway), (part of the Global Citizenship Core Pathway), Field 1 (Religious Studies and Theology), Global Awareness

RST 201 Introduction to the New Testament 3 Credits

Introduction to the literature of the New Testament, the socio-historical context that produced it, and its use as a historical source for the study of the early Christian movement.

Prerequisite: RST 101.

Fulfills College Core: (part of the Canisius Camino Core Pathway), Field 1 (Religious Studies and Theology)

RST 219 History of Eastern Orthodox Christianity 3 Credits

Historical study of Eastern Christian Churches.

Prerequisite: RST 101.

Fulfills College Core: (part of the Canisius Camino Core Pathway), (part of the Global Citizenship Core Pathway), Field 1 (Religious Studies and Theology), Global Awareness

- RST 220 Introduction to Eastern Religions** 3 Credits
This survey course will introduce students to the range and complexity of some of the religious traditions associated with South, Southeast and East Asia. Students will encounter a wide variety of primary and secondary sources describing these religious traditions and experiences, including sacred texts, mythology, medieval devotional poetry, and more.
Prerequisite: RST 101.
Fulfills College Core: (part of the Global Citizenship Core Pathway), Field 1 (Religious Studies and Theology), Global Awareness
- RST 221 Native American Religions** 3 Credits
The nature of indigenous religions in Native American societies and the effect of cultural change through contact with other cultures.
Prerequisite: RST 101.
Fulfills College Core: Field 1 (Religious Studies and Theology)
- RST 224 Islam: Tradition and Revival** 3 Credits
In this course, after an introduction to the foundations of Islam, we will investigate this diversity through the study of Islamic scriptures, Muslim cultures, social institutions, religious practices, and Muslim and Western writings about them in order to better understand Islam and Muslims in the U.S. and throughout the world. Also accepted for Anthropology major and minor credit.
Prerequisite: RST 101.
Fulfills College Core: (part of the Global Citizenship Core Pathway), Field 1 (Religious Studies and Theology), Global Awareness
- RST 229 Religious Perspectives on Animals** 3 Credits
This course will focus on the historical and cultural relationship between the world's religions and the animal realm.
Prerequisite: RST 101.
Fulfills College Core: Field 1 (Religious Studies and Theology)
- RST 230 Catholic Belief Today** 3 Credits
Based on the Creed, this course examines the fundamental articles of faith. They include faith itself, the Bible, church tradition; the one God as Trinity, revealed in Jesus, and present through the Holy Spirit; the church as a structured and prayerful community, with seven sacraments.
Prerequisite: RST 101.
Fulfills College Core: Advanced Writing-Intensive, Field 1 (Religious Studies and Theology)
- RST 231 Introduction to Catholic Studies** 3 Credits
Major movements and personalities in Catholic theology, history, culture, and spirituality. How the Catholic church came to be what it is today. The Catholic world-view and its relation to modern society.
Prerequisite: RST 101.
Fulfills College Core: Advanced Writing-Intensive, Field 1 (Religious Studies and Theology)
- RST 234 Christians (En) Countering Injustice** 3 Credits
An examination of Christian concepts of justice and a consideration of how to build or restore justice when injustices occur. Service learning required.
Prerequisite: RST 101.
Fulfills College Core: Field 1 (Religious Studies and Theology), Justice
- RST 237 Images of Jesus in Film and Art** 3 Credits
Development of artistic representations of Jesus and other Biblical persons along with Christian concepts and themes. Selection of European and American films as well as pertinent art from Western Christianity.
Prerequisite: RST 101.
Fulfills College Core: Field 1 (Religious Studies and Theology)
- RST 240 Development of Jewish Religious Thought and Practice** 3 Credits
Jewish religious thought and practice from biblical times to the present, including modern trends in Judaism.
Prerequisite: RST 101.
Fulfills College Core: (part of the Global Citizenship Core Pathway), Field 1 (Religious Studies and Theology)
- RST 242 Introduction to the Spirituality of Business** 3 Credits
Offers some suggestions about how Christianity and its spirituality, based on a vision of ultimate reality, provides practical wisdom to make wise decisions and develop the virtues necessary for happiness in a world where business contextualizes many of our decisions--as employers, employees, investors, and customers.
Prerequisite: RST 101.
Fulfills College Core: Ethics, Field 1 (Religious Studies and Theology)
- RST 312 Race and Ethnicity in the New Testament** 3 Credits
This course will examine parts of the New Testament that engage issues of race and ethnicity, both to understand their ancient roots and their role in American history of slavery and civil rights. Attention will also be paid to the construction of anti-Semitism in Christianity from these passages.
Prerequisite: RST 101.
Fulfills College Core: Field 1 (Religious Studies and Theology)
Offered: occasionally.
- RST 314 New Testament in Literature and Art** 3 Credits
New Testament themes and personalities analyzed from a scriptural perspective and compared with expressions in the arts. Relationship of religion and art, scriptural roots of Christian art.
Prerequisite: RST 101.
Fulfills College Core: (part of the Canisius Camino Core Pathway), Field 1 (Religious Studies and Theology)
- RST 324 Biblical Archaeology** 3 Credits
An investigation of cultures and artifacts related to the texts of the Bible. We will discuss archaeological procedures and principles and examine how archaeological evidence from the Ancient Near East helps us understand the Bible and in some cases how it supports or challenges the biblical narratives.
Prerequisite: RST 101.
Fulfills College Core: (part of the Canisius Camino Core Pathway), Field 1 (Religious Studies and Theology)
- RST 325 Early Christianity** 3 Credits
Historical study of the development of Christianity from its first century roots to its rise as the dominant religion of the Roman Empire.
Prerequisite: RST 101.
Fulfills College Core: (part of the Canisius Camino Core Pathway), Field 1 (Religious Studies and Theology)
- RST 327 Modern Global Christianity** 3 Credits
Historical study of the life, thought, and worship of Christians, both Protestant and Catholic, from the Reformation to the present.
Prerequisite: RST 101.
Fulfills College Core: (part of the Global Citizenship Core Pathway), Field 1 (Religious Studies and Theology)
- RST 340 Moral Issues Today** 3 Credits
Inquiry into Catholic theological moral theories and exploration of several moral problems.
Prerequisite: RST 101.
Fulfills College Core: Ethics, Field 1 (Religious Studies and Theology)

- RST 341 Catholic Social Ethics: Theological Perspectives** 3 Credits
Study of the principles of Catholic Social Teachings articulated in papal and episcopal documents with contemporary applications.
Prerequisite: RST 101.
Fulfills College Core: Advanced Writing-Intensive, Field 1 (Religious Studies and Theology), Justice
- RST 343 Franciscan Reply to Science** 3 Credits
Retrieving the mystical worldview of St. Francis of Assisi via a history of science, philosophies of science, and theology of creation.
Prerequisite: RST 101.
Fulfills College Core: (part of the Canisius Camino Core Pathway), Ethics, Field 1 (Religious Studies and Theology)
- RST 345 Bio-Moral Problems** 3 Credits
Inquiry into Catholic theological moral theories and application of theories to problems raised by bioethics and by health care.
Prerequisite: RST 101.
Fulfills College Core: Ethics, Field 1 (Religious Studies and Theology)
- RST 347 Ecotheology** 3 Credits
Critical investigation of Christian theologies' messages about and methods of engaging environments.
Prerequisite: RST 101.
Fulfills College Core: Field 1 (Religious Studies and Theology), Oral Communication
Offered: occasionally.
- RST 353 Seven Signs of Love** 3 Credits
The presence of God in the midst of the human community, as symbolized by the sacraments. Their history, interpretation, and anthropology.
Prerequisite: RST 101.
Fulfills College Core: Field 1 (Religious Studies and Theology), Justice
- RST 355 The Problem of Suffering** 3 Credits
Suffering confronts each individual in illness, broken relationships, failures, drug abuse and death. The course addresses how God is active even in suffering.
Prerequisite: RST 101.
Fulfills College Core: Field 1 (Religious Studies and Theology)
- RST 360 Magic, Science and Religion** 3 Credits
This course will introduce students to some of the diverse ways that cultures of the world create meaning from the chaos of the apprehended world, as well as some of the approaches that scholars of religion utilize to understand those processes. We will focus not only on 'exotic' societies and peoples, but also explore the meanings of magic, science and religion in more familiar contemporary North America.
Prerequisite: RST 101.
Fulfills College Core: Field 1 (Religious Studies and Theology), Global Awareness
- RST 390 Christian Marriage** 3 Credits
Concentrated investigation of Christian and Catholic marriage. Examination of the history, ideas, ideals, and practices about marriage. Relevant questions from perspectives of justice, ethics, diversity, and global awareness.
Fulfills College Core: Core Capstone
- RST 391 Religious Diversity in Buffalo** 3 Credits
Exploration of religious diversity in Buffalo, the United States, and the world. May include visits to congregations to observe worship and interviews to learn about religious beliefs, practices, and experiences of interactions with other religious communities.
Fulfills College Core: Core Capstone
- RST 392 Liberation Theologies** 3 Credits
Study of the origins and development of Liberation Theology in Latin America and the ways in which it evolved among other racial, ethnic, and gender groups in the United States and elsewhere. Special attention to issues of ethics and social justice.
Fulfills College Core: Core Capstone, (part of the Global Citizenship Core Pathway)
- RST 400 Religious Studies and Theology Seminar** 3 Credits
A seminar for RST majors and minors. This class is an advanced level seminar that will focus on some of the most influential theoretical and methodological approaches in the field.
Prerequisite: RST 101. **Restriction:** must be a religious studies and theology major or minor or obtain permission of the instructor.
- RST 489 Projects for Majors** 3 Credits
Concentrated investigation of a topic of particular interest to the student, under supervision of faculty advisor.
Prerequisite: RST 101 & departmental approval. **Restriction:** must be a religious studies and theology major or minor or obtain permission of the instructor.
Offered: fall & spring.
- RST 496 Internship** 3 Credits
Combination of teaching or religious work with special readings and theological reflection, under the guidance of department faculty. Internships require an application and approval by the associate dean.
Prerequisite: RST 101 & permission of both the department chair & associate dean. **Restriction:** must be a religious studies and theology major or minor or obtain permission of the instructor.
Offered: fall & spring.
- RST 499 Independent Study** 1-3 Credits
Independent studies allow in-depth study of a specific topic and are most often reserved for seniors who cannot otherwise fulfill a graduation requirement. Independent studies require an application and approval by the associate dean.
Prerequisite: permission of the instructor, department chair, & associate dean.