RELIGIOUS STUDIES (BA)

This major is being discontinued and will not accept new students after September 30, 2020. Students who have declared this major prior to September 30, 2020 will use these standards to complete the program requirements.

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 diversity of religious understandings. The department provides the opportunity for a critical appraisal of religious faith through the study of primary source materials and the use of interdisciplinary methodologies, such as theology and history. 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. This decision may be based on career goals, planned graduate studies, and/or other student interests. Before a student declares a double major, it is important to meet with the appropriate academic departments for advisement. 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.

Per college policy, each additional major requires a minimum of 15 credits that do not apply to the student’s first or subsequent major. Some double major combinations can be completed within the minimum 120 credit hour degree requirement, but in other cases additional course work may be required. Please note that students will receive only one degree, regardless of the number of majors they complete. Both (all) majors appear on a student’s transcript.

Religious Studies and Theology majors have often majored in 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. To receive a minor, the student must complete at least 9 credit hours of coursework distinct from their other credentials (i.e., majors, other minors). 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/core-curriculum/) or the All-College Honors Curriculum (http://catalog.canisius.edu/undergraduate/academics/core-curriculum/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 a bachelor’s degree with more but not less than 120 credit hours. Free electives are courses in addition to the Canisius Core Curriculum or All-College Honors Curriculum and major requirements sufficient to reach the minimum number of credits required for graduation. The number of credits required to complete a bachelor’s degree may vary depending on the student’s major(s) and minor(s).

Major Requirements

(10 Courses)

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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.

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

The Department also offers courses for credit through the Institute for the Global Study of 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

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<td>Sophomore</td>
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<tr>
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<tr>
<td>Fall</td>
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<td>RST Elective</td>
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<tr>
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<td></td>
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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.

Selected 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 150 Exploring Your Spirituality: Discovering Your Personal Relationship with God  1 Credit
The course is intended to help students establish and/or re-kindle a sense of spirituality in their lives. Through the course, students will develop an understanding of their personal spirituality and unique relationship with God.
Corequisite: none.
Offered: occasionally.

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 or HON equivalent.
Fulfills College Core: Field 1 (Religious Studies and Theology), Global Awareness
Offered: occasionally.

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 or HON equivalent.
Fulfills College Core: Field 1 (Religious Studies and Theology)
Offered: occasionally.
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<tr>
<td>RST 219</td>
<td>History of Eastern Orthodox Christianity</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Historical study of Eastern Christian Churches. <strong>Prerequisite:</strong> RST 101 or HON equivalent. <strong>Fulfills College Core:</strong> Field 1 (Religious Studies and Theology), Global Awareness <strong>Offered:</strong> occasionally.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RST 220</td>
<td>Religions of Asia</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>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. <strong>Prerequisite:</strong> RST 101 or HON equivalent. <strong>Fulfills College Core:</strong> Field 1 (Religious Studies and Theology), Global Awareness <strong>Offered:</strong> occasionally.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RST 221</td>
<td>Native American Religions</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>The nature of indigenous religions in Native American societies and the effect of cultural change through contact with other cultures. <strong>Prerequisite:</strong> RST 101 or HON equivalent. <strong>Fulfills College Core:</strong> Diversity, Field 1 (Religious Studies and Theology) <strong>Offered:</strong> occasionally.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RST 222</td>
<td>Islam: Tradition and Revival</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>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. <strong>Prerequisite:</strong> RST 101 or HON 111. <strong>Fulfills College Core:</strong> Field 1 (Religious Studies and Theology), Global Awareness <strong>Offered:</strong> occasionally.</td>
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<tr>
<td>RST 229</td>
<td>Religious Perspectives on Animals</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>This course will focus on the historical and cultural relationship between the world’s religions and the animal realm. <strong>Prerequisite:</strong> RST 101 or HON 111. <strong>Fulfills College Core:</strong> Field 1 (Religious Studies and Theology) <strong>Offered:</strong> occasionally.</td>
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<td>RST 230</td>
<td>Catholic Belief Today</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>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. <strong>Prerequisite:</strong> RST 101 or HON 111. <strong>Fulfills College Core:</strong> Advanced Writing-Intensive, Field 1 (Religious Studies and Theology) <strong>Offered:</strong> occasionally.</td>
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<tr>
<td>RST 231</td>
<td>Introduction to Catholic Studies</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>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. <strong>Prerequisite:</strong> RST 101 or HON 111. <strong>Fulfills College Core:</strong> Advanced Writing-Intensive, Field 1 (Religious Studies and Theology) <strong>Offered:</strong> occasionally.</td>
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<tr>
<td>RST 236</td>
<td>Religions and Film</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>To learn about major religious traditions of the world by analyzing foreign films created by authors from cultures where those religious traditions are important elements of public discourse. Attendance at film lab is also required. <strong>Prerequisite:</strong> RST 101 or HON 111. <strong>Fulfills College Core:</strong> Field 1 (Religious Studies and Theology), Global Awareness <strong>Offered:</strong> occasionally.</td>
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<tr>
<td>RST 237</td>
<td>Images of Jesus in Film and Art</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>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. <strong>Prerequisite:</strong> RST 101 or HON 111. <strong>Fulfills College Core:</strong> Field 1 (Religious Studies and Theology) <strong>Offered:</strong> occasionally.</td>
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<td>RST 240</td>
<td>Development of Jewish Religious Thought and Practice</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Jewish religious thought and practice from biblical times to the present, including modern trends in Judaism. <strong>Prerequisite:</strong> RST 101 or HON 111. <strong>Fulfills College Core:</strong> Field 1 (Religious Studies and Theology) <strong>Offered:</strong> occasionally.</td>
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<td>RST 304</td>
<td>Women, Gender, and Religion: Judaism, Christianity, Islam</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>This course examines the role of sacred texts and their interpretation in defining both women’s roles and their status as “women,” particularly in terms of their bodies, in three related religious traditions: Judaism, Christianity, and Islam. Emphasis will be placed on contemporary women’s re-interpretation and formation of positive female expressions of religious identity over and against patriarchal traditions and practices. <strong>Prerequisite:</strong> RST 101 or HON 111. <strong>Fulfills College Core:</strong> Diversity, Field 1 (Religious Studies and Theology) <strong>Offered:</strong> occasionally.</td>
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<td>RST 312</td>
<td>Race, Ethnicity, and the New Testament</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>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. <strong>Prerequisite:</strong> RST 101 or HON 111. <strong>Fulfills College Core:</strong> Diversity, Field 1 (Religious Studies and Theology) <strong>Offered:</strong> occasionally.</td>
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<td>RST 314</td>
<td>New Testament in Literature and Art</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>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. <strong>Prerequisite:</strong> RST 101 or HON 111. <strong>Fulfills College Core:</strong> Field 1 (Religious Studies and Theology) <strong>Offered:</strong> occasionally.</td>
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<td>RST 325</td>
<td>Early Christianity</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Historical study of the development of Christianity from its first century roots to its rise as the dominant religion of the Roman Empire. <strong>Prerequisite:</strong> RST 101 or HON 111. <strong>Fulfills College Core:</strong> Field 1 (Religious Studies and Theology) <strong>Offered:</strong> occasionally.</td>
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RST 340 Moral Issues Today
Inquiry into Catholic theological moral theories and exploration of several moral problems.
Prerequisite: RST 101 or HON 111.
Fulfills College Core: Ethics, Field 1 (Religious Studies and Theology)
Offered: occasionally.

RST 341 Catholic Social Ethics: Theological Perspectives
Study of the principles of Catholic Social Teachings articulated in papal and episcopal documents with contemporary applications.
Prerequisite: RST 101 or HON 111.
Fulfills College Core: Advanced Writing-Intensive, Field 1 (Religious Studies and Theology), Justice
Offered: occasionally.

RST 345 Bio-Moral Problems
Inquiry into Catholic theological moral theories and application of theories to problems raised by bioethics and by health care.
Prerequisite: RST 101 or HON 111.
Fulfills College Core: Ethics, Field 1 (Religious Studies and Theology)
Offered: occasionally.

RST 347 Ecotheology
Critical investigation of Christian theologies' messages about and methods of engaging environments.
Prerequisite: RST 101 or HON 111.
Fulfills College Core: Field 1 (Religious Studies and Theology), Oral Communication
Offered: occasionally.

RST 355 The Problem of Suffering
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 or HON 111.
Fulfills College Core: Field 1 (Religious Studies and Theology)
Offered: occasionally.

RST 360 Magic, Science and Religion
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 or HON 111.
Fulfills College Core: Field 1 (Religious Studies and Theology), Global Awareness
Offered: occasionally.

RST 391 Religious Diversity in Buffalo
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
Offered: occasionally.

RST 392 Liberation Theologies
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
Offered: occasionally.

RST 400 Religious Studies and Theology Seminar
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.
Offered: occasionally.

RST 489 Projects for Majors
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 495 Internship
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
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.