Religious Studies, BS, BA

Department: Religious Studies Program
College: College of Humanities and Social Sciences

Overview

About This Degree

Religious studies focuses on worldviews, values, ritual, symbol systems, and morality, as well as their institutional expression in all cultures.

The religious studies program at USU is the only one of its kind in Utah and one of only three in the Intermountain West. It provides a neutral place to study religion and its role in society, whether or not students are privately religious. Students who graduate from the program obtain cultural literacy about religion. They master skills of critical thinking and expression applicable in diverse fields — whether students are preparing for law school, work in international relations, service with religious groups and charitable organizations, or many other careers.

Religious studies majors learn to be thoughtful about the influence of religion upon culture and the influence of culture upon religion. They learn to analyze the influence of religious values and concepts on individuals and communities. They gain competence in thinking about how humans make meaning in the face of confusing and sometimes painful realities. Through examining these and other issues concerning religion, students develop strong research, communication, and imaginative skills that are highly valued by employers.

The curriculum consists of courses specifically in religious studies but also in related areas, such as history, art history, English, philosophy, anthropology, languages, and more. These courses help students examine religious topics through multiple lenses, giving students' education a range of depth and breadth.

Students receive a **BS** by completing all required courses in the major. To receive a **BA**, students must also gain proficiency in one or more foreign languages.

Career Options

Many religious studies majors use their excellent writing and research skills to continue on to law school or graduate programs. A degree in religious studies can also prepare students for potential ordination in many religious groups. Graduates with a bachelor's degree can also pursue the following careers:

- Church administrator
- Religious education, broadcasting, and publishing industries (as writers, editors, journalists, etc.)
- Human resources for businesses and other organizations
- Legislative work
- Lobbyist

Career Services provides counseling and information on hundreds of job and internship opportunities and even helps students apply and interview.

What it takes

Admissions Requirements

In addition to Utah State University's admissions requirements, the religious studies program has additional requirements:

- **Freshmen:** New freshmen admitted to USU in good standing qualify for admission to this major.
- **Transfer students:** Transfer students from other institutions or students transferring from other USU majors need a 2.5 total GPA for admission to this major.

International students have additional admissions requirements.

Major Requirements

Click here to see course requirements for the **Bachelor of Science**.

Click here to see course requirements for the **Bachelor of Arts**.

Contact

Advising

All new USU students participate in a New Student Orientation program, where they receive detailed information about major requirements, registering for classes, and other important advising information.

Get Involved

Professional Organizations, Honor Societies, and Clubs

American Academy of Religion: This is a society and professional association of teachers and research scholars. Its members teach in some 1,000 colleges, universities, seminaries, and schools around the world. The academy is dedicated to furthering knowledge of religion and development of religious institutions. This is accomplished through academy-wide and regional conferences, publications, programs, and membership services.

Society of Biblical Literature: This is the oldest and largest international scholarly membership organization in the field of biblical studies. Founded in 1880, the society's members include teachers, students, religious leaders, and individuals who share a mutual interest in the critical investigation of the Bible.

USU Religious Studies Club: This club is composed of students from different majors and different religious backgrounds. Through the club, students are offered a chance to talk about different religious groups. Faculty, graduate students, and undergraduate students gather to discuss various religions and learn together.

Theta Alpha Kappa: This is the only national honor society dedicated to recognizing academic excellence in undergraduate and graduate students and recognizing scholars in the fields of religious studies and theology. Theta Alpha Kappa maintains a vigorous national program of scholarship awards and fellowship competitions; its primary publication, *Journal of Theta Alpha Kappa*, offers an annual prize and publishes outstanding student papers.

Labs, Centers, Research

With the second oldest undergraduate research program in the nation, USU offers students a wide range of opportunities to gain hands-on research experience. The Undergraduate Research and Creative Opportunities program allows students to apply for grants and receive funding. USU's Honors Program prepares students for excellent graduate programs by helping them build relationships with professors, participate in research projects, take smaller, more intensive classes, and develop leadership skills.