RELIGIOUS STUDIES

"Religious studies" introduces students to the academic study of religion and spirituality as well as the variety of religious traditions around the world (e.g., Hinduism, Buddhism, and Sikhism; Judaism, Christianity, and Islam; Chinese religious traditions; Indigenous religious traditions in North America and in Africa; atheism and agnosticism, pagan and other nature-based traditions). Students with a particular thematic interest may pursue the study of "religion and film," "spirituality and wellness," and/or "religion and human rights." Because religion is deeply implicated in history, culture, politics, literature, and medicine, the *study* of religion is critical to understanding and explaining complex global issues in both the past and the present. One does not have to be "religious" or "spiritual" to study religion, nor is the study of religion directed toward establishing the truth of one religion over another.

To major in religion (i.e., religious studies) means to engage some of the most profound questions people ask themselves: What does it mean to be human? How are we part of a world of animals and plants, water and earth? What are our responsibilities to other persons and the earth? How do we make decisions about fundamental individual and social issues? Is there a world of invisible agents (e.g., ancestors, spirits, gods, and God) or ultimate meaning and value? If so, what difference does it make? With these questions in mind, we pursue the academic study of religion and spirituality from a variety of theoretical and methodological perspectives, including anthropology, archaeology, cognitive sciences, fine arts, history, philosophy, psychology, sociology, and textual analysis.

Because religious studies is an interdisciplinary field of study, students may use the major in religion in many different ways: as preparation for graduate school; as a stand-alone or second major in a program of study leading to a career in business, healthcare, public service, social services, or teaching; or, simply and most profoundly, to enrich personal knowledge and skills and understanding of others. Students commonly combine religious studies with another major or minor to improve their cultural awareness and enhance their career and civic life.

Consistent with this interdisciplinary emphasis, religious studies faculty teach courses supporting a variety of major and minor programs, including ancient Mediterranean studies, international studies, Islamic studies, Medieval and Renaissance studies, Latino/a Latin American studies, Native American studies, women's and gender studies, medical humanities, and human rights studies.

Underlying the practical applications in different fields and professions, the basic intellectual purpose of religious studies is to develop an appreciation for, an understanding of, and a critical insight into the rich variety of the world's religious and spiritual traditions in the complex global realities (cultural, social, economic, political, and environmental) of the twenty-first century.

Other Information

All coursework taken for the Religion major or minor must be completed with a grade of "C-" or better.

Online Option

The Religion major and minor are both flexible programs, offering students the option to earn either while taking courses in-person on UNO's campus, entirely online, or as a combination of the two.

Contact

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402.554.2628

Website (http://www.unomaha.edu/college-of-arts-and-sciences/religion/)

Degrees Offered

- Religion, Bachelor of Arts (http://catalog.unomaha.edu/undergraduate/college-arts-sciences/religious-studies/religion-ba/)

Minors Offered

- Religion Minor (http://catalog.unomaha.edu/undergraduate/college-arts-sciences/religious-studies/religion-minor/)

Religious Studies majors graduate with valuable knowledge and skills, including opportunities to gain experience through service learning classes and internships. A major in Religious Studies at UNO cultivates skills that employers say are particularly important: written and verbal communication, problem-solving, teamwork, and leadership. In diverse professional roles, Religious Studies alums find their knowledge of religious, spiritual, and other cultural traditions extremely helpful in their ability to communicate clearly and respectfully with diverse coworkers, managers, patients, clients, family, and friends.

These advantages can propel students into a number of different careers:

- business
- counseling
- education
- healthcare
- public service
- social services
- writer and/or poet.

UNO Religious Studies graduates may move into masters and doctoral level work in any one of many different fields (e.g., history, political science, sociology/anthropology, social work, etc.). The majority of our graduates have taken their knowledge and experience into a spectrum of careers and professions. Some of these careers currently pursued by graduates, and other former students, of Religious Studies at UNO include:

- accountant
- business owner
- chaplain
- farmer
- musician
- librarian
- non-profit administrator
- physician
- poet and writer
- and university professor