

RELIGIOUS STUDIES

Chair: F. Patrick Nichelson

COLLEGE OF HUMANITIES

Department Office: Faculty Office Building 224
Phone: (818) 677-3392 FAX: (818) 677-3985
E-mail: religious.studies@csun.edu
Website: <http://www.csun.edu/religious.studies>
Administrative Support Coordinator: Linda Jones

FACULTY: Crerar Douglas, Phyllis Herman, Amir Hussain,
Linda Lam-Easton, Jody Myers, F. Patrick Nichelson
(Chair), Mutombo Nkulu-N'Sengha.

EMERITUS FACULTY: James Goss, Howard Happ, John
Hartzog, William Kramer, Thomas T. Love, Mokusen
Miyuki, Robert D. Shofner.

ACADEMIC ADVISOR: Phyllis Herman,
E-mail: phyllis.k.herman@csun.edu

DEGREE PROGRAMS:

Undergraduate Degrees Offered:
B. A. in Religious Studies
Religious Studies Minor

ACADEMIC ADVISEMENT: Advisement is required of all
religious studies majors each semester prior to registration.
Majors may contact Dr. Phyllis Herman during scheduled
office hours and by appointment.

THE MAJOR: The Religious Studies major - the standard
major or contract option major - is designed to provide a
liberal arts education with an emphasis upon the study of
religious phenomena. The Religious Studies Major
provides an excellent basis from which to pursue careers
requiring imagination, problem-solving, communication
skills, and awareness of human diversity.

LEARNING OUTCOMES: A religious studies major will be able
to interpret religious texts, think both empathetically and
critically about conflicting religious claims, acquire
knowledge of the history of more than one major religious
tradition, apply intercultural methods to religious inquiry and
analysis, and articulate a perception of one's role in society,
in both career and public service options.

CAREERS: Skills gained in the Religious Studies major or
minor are applicable to many other areas in the academic,
business, and professional spheres. Religious Studies
majors have pursued careers in government, business,
education, communications, human services, and law.

SCHOLARSHIPS AND AWARDS: The John Cummings
Memorial Scholarship, Howard J. Sturman Memorial
Scholarship, and the Stephen J. Svec Memorial
Scholarship.

REQUIREMENTS FOR THE B. A. DEGREE (42 UNITS) STANDARD MAJOR

LOWER DIVISION REQUIRED COURSES (6 UNITS)

Choose two courses from the following:

RS 100 Introduction to Religious Studies	3
RS 101 The Bible	3
RS 150 World Religions	3
RS 160 Religion in Western Civilization	3

UPPER DIVISION (36 UNITS)

A. RELIGION IN THE UNITED STATES (6 UNITS)

Select two courses from the following:
RS 305 American Sects & Cults 3

RS 306 Minority Religions of America	3
RS 307 Religion in America	3
RS 308 Native American Religions	3
RS 378 American Jewish Experience	3

B. CURRENT ISSUES IN RELIGION (6 UNITS)

Select two courses from the following:

RS 300 Religion and Society	3
RS 302 Modern Religious Ethics	3
RS 303 Religion and Personality	3
RS 304 Women and Religion	3
RS 310 Religion and Literature	3
RS 311 Religion and Film	3
RS 313 Religion and Art	3
RS 356 Contemporary Religious Thought	3
RS 361 Contemporary Ethical Issues	3

C. RELIGIOUS TRADITIONS (9 UNITS)

Select three courses from the following:

JS 300 Humanities in Jewish Society	3
RS 345 Christianity	3
RS 365 Islam	3
RS 380 Asian Religions	3
RS 385 Hinduism	3
RS 390 Buddhism	3
RS 426 Taoism	3

D. SACRED TEXTS OF THE WORLD (3 UNITS)

Select one course from the following:

RS 320 Hebrew Bible (Old Testament)	3
RS 325 New Testament	3
RS 327 Teaching of Jesus	3
RS 375 Classical Judaic Texts	3
RS 383 Asian Religious Texts	3

E. UPPER DIVISION ELECTIVES (9 UNITS)

Choose from any upper division Religious Studies
courses upon consultation with an advisor. Two years
of the study of a foreign language, at the university level
(or its equivalent) may be used for one 3 unit elective in
the major.

Students may apply a Topics in Religion course (RS
396A-Z) to the appropriate category listed above.
Individual Study (499 A-C) may also be substituted.
Consult with the department academic adviser for
approval.

F. Tutorial: RS 498C (3 Units)

CONTRACT OPTION (42 UNITS)

The contract option allows a student to design his/her
own Religious Studies major that reflects that student's
specialized or interdisciplinary interests.

REQUIREMENTS:

- A written outline of the proposed courses and a
statement of expected outcomes or objectives .
- A course of study that includes 42 units.
- 36 of the 42 units must be in upper division courses.
- At least 24 of the 36 upper division units must be in
Religious Studies, 3 units of which must be in the
departmental tutorial.
- The other units may be taken in any other discipline.
- Approval by the department advisor and the department
chair.

Once the contract has been approved by the department,
the written outline will be included in the student's file and
be the basis for determining whether or not a student
completes the contract option in the major.

TOTAL UNITS IN THE RELIGIOUS STUDIES MAJOR: 42
GENERAL EDUCATION (49 UNITS)

TITLE 5 (6 UNITS)

General Education subsection C.3 will be met by completion of the required courses in the Religious Studies major

ADDITIONAL UNITS: 23

TOTAL UNITS REQUIRED FOR B.A. DEGREE: 120

REQUIREMENTS FOR THE MINOR

LOWER DIVISION REQUIRED COURSES (6 Units)

Choose two courses from the following:

RS 100, 101, 150, 160

UPPER DIVISION REQUIRED COURSES

- A. Religion in the United States (select one course) 3
RS 305, 306, 307, 308, 378
- B. Current Issues in Religion (select one course) 3
RS 300, 302, 303, 304, 310, 311, 313, 356, 361
- C. Sacred Texts of the World (select one course) 3
RS 320, 325, 327, 375, 383
- D. Religious Traditions (select two courses) 6
JS 300, RS 345, 365, 380, 385, 390, 426

With approval of the department adviser, students may apply a Topics in Religion course (RS 396A-Z) to the appropriate category listed above.

TOTAL UNITS FOR THE MINOR: 21

COURSE LIST

LOWER DIVISION

RS 100. INTRODUCTION TO RELIGIOUS STUDIES (3)

A study of the elements of religion and selected contemporary religious issues. Examines such subjects as myth and ritual, the sacred and profane, dreams and theophanies, priests and prophets, science and religion, history and religion, and the possibility of religious faith today.

(Available for General Education, Section C.3, Humanities.)

RS 101. THE BIBLE (3)

A survey of the basic content and major themes of the Hebrew Bible (Old Testament), New Testament, and Apocryphal writings. (Available for General Education, Section C.3, Humanities.)

RS 150. WORLD RELIGIONS (3)

A study of selected major world religions with emphasis on tribal religions as well as the historic international faiths of Asia and the Near East. Investigates rituals, ethics, institutional structures and the cultural ethos of religions as well as their myths, doctrines and sacred texts. (Available for General Education, Section F.2, Comparative Cultural Studies.)

RS 160. RELIGION IN WESTERN CIVILIZATION (3)

A study of the role of religion in Western Civilization from the Stone Age to the Renaissance. (Available for General Education, Section F.1, Comparative Cultural Studies.)

RS 250. VALUES IN WORLD RELIGIONS (2)

Designed for students in the Integrated Teacher Education Program. The course will examine the variety of human values embedded in the world's religions by investigating such areas as beliefs in god(s), holidays and festivals, and rites of passage. Special emphasis will be given to the place of teaching about religion in the public schools.

RS 296A-Z. SELECTED TOPICS IN RELIGIOUS STUDIES (3)

Selected topics in Religious Studies with course content to be determined.

UPPER DIVISION

General prerequisites: Students in upper-division courses are expected to have competence in Religious Studies or in related areas, satisfaction of this prerequisite to be determined in consultation with an adviser.

RS 300. RELIGION AND SOCIETY (3)

A study of the relationship of religious views and values to contemporary problems of individual and group behavior, political responsibility, and international order. Regular written assignments are required.

RS 301. RELIGIOUS ETHICS: HISTORY AND INTERPRETATION

An examination of religious ethics in the West to the nineteenth century

RS 302. MODERN RELIGIOUS ETHICS (3)

An examination of religious ethics in the West in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.

RS 303. RELIGION AND PERSONALITY (3)

A study of religion in relation to modern psycho-logical, psychoanalytic, and psychotherapeutic views of man.

RS 304. WOMEN AND RELIGION (3)

An examination of religious views of women in oral and literary cultures, focusing on the roles, symbols, and concepts of women within an international, historical framework. Also addresses women's own perspectives on religion, as reflected in historical sources and in contemporary theology and religious life. Regular written assignments are required. (Available for General Education, Section C.3, Humanities.)

RS 305. AMERICAN SECTS AND CULTS (3)

A survey of some marginal religious groups in America. Presentation, analysis and critique of the classic church/sect/cult typology, including how these theories apply to actual groups and how groups maintain beliefs when rejected by dominant cultures.

RS 306. MINORITY RELIGIONS IN AMERICA (3)

A survey of the religion of groups in America who are marginal to or outside of the historically dominant mainstream Protestant and Civil Religion Ethos. Regular written assignments are required. (Available for General Education, Section F.3, Comparative Cultural Studies.)

RS 307. RELIGION IN AMERICA (3)

The influence of religious traditions on the formation of American (U.S.A.) culture and the modification of religious traditions by the American context. Major American religious thinkers and movements. Religion's role in shaping American thought, literature and ethos. Regular written assignments are required. (Available for General Education, Section C.3, Humanities.)

RS 308. NATIVE AMERICAN RELIGIONS (3)

Seeks to understand the religions of Native Americans in their respective tribal contexts. Inquires to what extent a common religious outlook existed among the cultures occupying what is presently the United States.

RS 310. RELIGION AND LITERATURE (3)

A study of literature to discover to what extent a religious tradition, or the lack of one, influences an author's understanding of human existence. Writers who reflect Protestant, Roman Catholic, or Jewish traditions, as well as those who are informed by humanism or atheism, are read and interpreted. Regular written assignments are required. (Available for General Education, Section C.3, Humanities.)

RS 311: RELIGION AND FILM (3)

Examines how film artists address the major religious issues of our time: the nature of reality, sources of transcendence, the nature of good and evil in the self and society, the possibilities of renewal and hope. Regular written assignments are required.

RS 313. RELIGION AND ART (3)

A study of religion as portrayed in the fine and folk arts, emphasizing the role of the artist as interpreter of the great events and personalities of religious traditions.

RS 320. HEBREW BIBLE (OLD TESTAMENT) (3)

A study of the literature and religion of ancient Israel through the Hellenistic area.

RS 325. NEW TESTAMENT (3)

A Study of New Testament literature and religious thought.

RS 327. TEACHING OF JESUS (3)

A literary and social analysis of the teaching of Jesus. Regular writing assignments are required.

RS 345. CHRISTIANITY (3)

Eastern Orthodox, Roman Catholic, Protestant, and non-traditional forms of Christianity compared and contrasted with one another in their historical and social contexts. Regular written assignments are required.

RS 355. MYSTICISM (3)

A study of mysticism as a distinct religious phenomenon, a major category of religious experience. To understand its character it may be studied either within the great Western religious traditions (Judaism, Islam, Christianity) or cross-culturally.

RS 356. CONTEMPORARY RELIGIOUS THOUGHT (3)

A study of selected major writings in religious thought, with the aim of analyzing representative modern approaches to questions such as God and the world, faith and

self-understanding, and belief and social consciousness. (Available for General Education, Section C.3, Humanities.)

RS 361. CONTEMPORARY ETHICAL ISSUES (3)

Emphasizes the development of skills in critical thinking through analysis of such contemporary ethical issues as abortion, euthanasia, genetic engineering, sexual behavior, racism, gender bias, punishment, animal rights, the environment, and the relationships between religion and morality. (Available for General Education, Section C.3, Humanities.)

RS 363. ISLAM IN THE MODERN WORLD (3)

Introduces students to the contemporary Islamic religious tradition. Focuses on contemporary Muslim religiosity and activity both within the United States and in an international setting. Regular written assignments are required.

RS 365. ISLAM (3)

A study of the varieties of Islamic civilization in their social contexts. Regular written assignments are required. (Available for General Education, Section F.2, Comparative Cultural Studies.)

RS 375. CLASSICAL JUDAIC TEXTS (3)

Examination of the great ideas and issues of ancient and medieval Judaism as reflected in its cultural tradition. Regular written assignments are required.

RS 376. MODERN JUDAIC HERITAGE (3)

Examination of the great ideas and issues of modern Judaism as reflected in its cultural tradition, represented in mystical literature, autobiographies, poetry, and essays from Zionist and modern religious movements. Regular written assignments are required.

RS 377. THE HOLOCAUST: RELIGIOUS RESPONSES (3)

Examines several classic religious explanations for the tragic destruction of the Jews. Studies contemporary responses to the Holocaust on the part of Jewish and Christian theologians, the Churches, and individual artists. Regular written assignments are assigned.

RS 378. AMERICAN JEWISH EXPERIENCE (3)

Seeks to describe the experience of the Jewish religio-ethnic community in America with reference to its own historic background and development, and the relationship of the community to the general American culture and to other particular subcultures or ethnic groups. Emphasizes distinctive Jewish values and customs and evaluates their contribution to American culture. Studies contrasts between religious and secular understandings of Jewishness, between different strands of Jewish immigration, and between Jewish experience in different regions of the United States. (Available for General Education, Section, F.3, Comparative Cultural Studies.)

RS 379. ZIONISM: RELIGIOUS AND SECULAR (3)

Analyzes the religious, intellectual, and historical forces that have shaped Zionist thought, and includes an examination of the continuing debate over the meaning of Zionism and its practical implementation.

RS 380. ASIAN RELIGIONS: COMMUNAL TRADITIONS & TRANSITIONS (3)

Explores Asian religions by comparing human and divine religious figures cross-culturally. Comparison of the figures from the various cultures provides a method to understand the nature of humanity and divinity in Asia. Daily class participation and regular written assignments are required. (Available for General Education, Section F.2, Comparative Cultural Studies.)

RS 383. ASIAN RELIGIOUS TEXTS (3)

Explores Asian Religions by comparing the primary sacred texts of Asian cultures. The sacred texts upon which Asian religious expressions are based are examined first in the specific cultural contexts of Japan, China and India by a reading of primary texts. Comparison of the texts from the various cultures allow the generation of a model of Asian religious order and answer problems concerning the nature of sacrality in Asia. Class participation and regular written assignments are required.

RS 385. HINDUISM (3)

A study of the religious life of India from the Indus Valley civilization to the modern period. (Available for General Education, Section F.2, Comparative Cultural Studies.)

RS 390. BUDDHISM (3)

A study of the fundamental concepts in Theravada and Mahayana Buddhism, e.g., nirvana, enlightenment, karma, dharma. The course examines the historic development of these concepts in their various Asian cultural and geographic settings. (Available for General Education, Section F.2, Comparative Cultural Studies.)

RS 396A-Z. SELECTED TOPICS IN RELIGIOUS STUDIES (3)

Selected topics in Religious Studies with course content to be determined.

RS 426. RELIGIONS OF CHINA: TAOISM (3)

A study of Taoist experience and thought.

RS 450. DEATH AND DYING THE WORLD'S RELIGIONS (3)

Cross-cultural look at death and dying in several different religious traditions. In the first half the course will specifically examine issues of death and dying (as well as issues of life and living) in these traditions. The course studies both beliefs and practices in these traditions. In the second half the course will examine where these different traditions interact, and how they affect the lives and deaths of women, children and men. Regular written assignments are required.

RS 468. SEX ETHICS IN RELIGIOUS THOUGHT (3)

An examination of traditional and contemporary views of human sexuality in selected religions.

RS 498. TUTORIAL IN RELIGIOUS STUDIES (1-3)

Reading and discussion in a specific field or on a specific topic in a small group. May be repeated for credit.

RS 499. INDEPENDENT STUDY (1-3)

Investigation of a significant problem in Religious Studies. Project selected in conference with faculty sponsor and with approval of the department chair.

RS 699. INDEPENDENT STUDY (1-6)

Investigation of a significant problem in Religious Studies. Project selected in conference with faculty sponsor and with approval of the department chair.