

RU Interested in . . .

# RELIGIOUS STUDIES

## AT A GLANCE . . .

<b>Department at RU:</b>	Philosophy and Religious Studies
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<b>Faculty Liaison:</b>	Dr. Kim Kipling, Chair
<b>College at RU:</b>	College of Arts and Sciences
<b>Degree Type:</b>	Bachelor of Arts or Bachelor of Science
<b>Homepage:</b>	<a href="http://www.radford.edu/~phre">http://www.radford.edu/~phre</a>

## AREA OF STUDY

The religious studies concentration within the Department of Philosophy and Religious Studies provides students with a basic knowledge of the world's major religions (including Hinduism, Buddhism, Daoism, Judaism, Christianity, and Islam); a broad understanding of the common elements and themes in religion; and a familiarity with the various approaches and methods used to study the substance and functioning of religion. The academic study of religion serves to develop intellectual abilities important for life as a whole, beyond the knowledge and skills required for any particular profession. It enhances analytical, critical and interpretive capacities that are applicable to any subject matter, and in any human context.

## CAREER OPTIONS

As recent studies show, employers want, and reward, many of the capacities which the academic study of religion develops: the ability to communicate effectively in speech and in writing, to generate and organize ideas, to analyze and summarize complex data, to perceive issues from many perspectives. Thus, while many religious studies majors pursue careers in education and in church-related organizations, there are people trained in religious studies in just about every field: social work, government service, counseling, journalism, law, and international relations.

## QUESTIONS STUDENTS OFTEN ASK

- **What can I do with a degree in religious studies?**  
A major in religious studies prepares students for any career that requires a deep understanding of human motivations and an appreciation of diverse perspectives and values, such as social services or cross-cultural endeavors, and for graduate training in religious studies in universities or seminaries with a view toward teaching or church-related vocations. It is also excellent preparation for post-graduate work in other liberal arts disciplines leading to careers in a wide range of scholarly or professional fields. The skills and capacities developed through the disciplined study of religion are applicable to virtually any career and can readily be integrated with the requirements for nearly any entry-level job. More than a preparation to make a living, the academic study of religion prepares one for living--as a critical and participating member of the world community.
- **How does religious studies differ from religious training, attending church, or simply being religious?**  
Religious studies is an academic discipline pursued within the context of the liberal arts. In this discipline religion is approached as a type of human experience and behavior, as a phenomenon found among all peoples of the world throughout history. The academic study of religion does not seek to induce belief or to determine which religion is "correct," but to understand the doctrines and practices of religions and the human sources and consequences of faith. Persons of virtually any or no personal religious faith may profitably engage in the academic study of religion.

- **Is there a particular course that will best introduce me to the field of religious studies?**

One might begin in religious studies either with Introduction to Religion (RELN 111) or with Survey of World Religions (RELN 112). Introduction to Religion focuses on the methods and approaches used in the academic study of religion and examines recurrent forms and issues in religion such as rituals, myths, and the nature of the divine. Survey of World Religions examines the origins, foundational figures, scriptures, beliefs, and practices of the world's major religions.

- **What is a religious studies course like?**

Religious studies courses differ greatly from one another, depending on the instructor, the topics, the level, and other factors. Typically, religious studies teachers emphasize not only what is said in the texts and what is done in various religious practices, but why it is said and done; and what students themselves think about the matter.

- **What minors or concentrations would enhance my education as a religious studies major?**

Students majoring in religious studies are encouraged to pursue a second major or a minor in any discipline of their interest. Among the most frequently selected fields are history, psychology, sociology, anthropology, and foreign languages. Students intending to go to a seminary or to graduate school in religious studies or another liberal arts field are strongly encouraged to supplement the major with studies in a foreign language.

- **Is graduate study or further professional study necessary to find a job in this field?**

For a teaching position in religious studies at the college or university level, an advanced degree is essential. Employment in the ministry generally requires specialized training beyond the Bachelor's degree. There are, however, many church-related careers for which advanced study is not required. And because the skills and abilities gained through the academic study of religion are applicable to virtually any vocation, a bachelor's degree in religious studies qualifies one for a wide range of entry-level positions in business, social work, government service, and education.

- **Where can I obtain more information about career opportunities in the field of Religious Studies?**

- RU Department of Philosophy and Religious Studies
- RU Career Services Center
- RU McConnell Library
- RU Center for Counseling and Student Development
- RU Advising Centers

**For an application to Radford University  
contact the RU Admissions Office**

Radford University Office of Admissions  
Martin Hall  
P.O. Box 6903  
Radford University  
Radford, VA 24142

Phone: (540) 831-5371 or (800) 890-4265  
Fax: (540) 831-5038  
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