

# RELIGIOUS STUDIES MAJOR

## Overview

The Theology and Religious Studies Department offers two majors which are distinguished by virtue of both their primary content and their methodological approach. Students may choose one of these majors in conjunction with their other studies, or they may double major within the department and get a degree in both Theology and in Religious Studies.

Religious Studies focuses upon the study of one or more non-Christian religions. Methodologically, Religious Studies is devoted to the study of religion as a fundamental human phenomenon. Its scope is broad, encompassing in principle all forms of religious experience, belief and practice in whatever contexts they are found. Religious Studies is nonconfessional in the sense that it is not committed in advance to any religious (or indeed, non-religious) worldview or doctrine. Religious Studies as we understand it neither endorses a naïve objectivism in the study of "facts" divorced from values nor elevates a single theological, philosophical or scientific principle or program to the level of an unassailable norm. Rather, Religious Studies is intentionally eclectic and open-ended, drawing upon the full range of methods available to the academic study of things human, from philosophy or literary theory, for example, to cognitive science and evolutionary psychology. It is united only by its subject matter, religion as a fundamental, albeit contested, dimension of human experience.

If you are more interested in focusing your studies on Christian Theology, please take a look at the Theology major. (<https://academiccatalog.sju.edu/arts-sciences/theology-religious-studies/theology-major/>)

## Learning Goals and Objectives

**Goal 1:** Students will study at least two religious traditions beyond an introductory level, including their histories, beliefs, practices and contemporary expressions.

**Outcome 1:** Students will be able to identify and articulate the historical nature of religious texts and traditions, and the tensions that arise within religious communities as they undergo historical change.

**Goal 2:** Students will study the implications of religious belief for moral decision making and ethical action in the world.

**Outcome 2:** Students will be able to identify, define, and/or explain the content, core concepts, and theories that serve as the foundation for studying at least one non-Christian religious tradition.

**Goal 3:** Students will utilize methods of research and argumentations within the multidisciplinary context of the academic study of theology and religion.

**Outcome 3:** Students will be able to apply a variety of tools, methods, and perspectives to critically analyze and evaluate various components typical of most if not all religions.

## Requirements

### Cornerstone Core Curriculum Requirements

Consist of 14 core and 2 overlay requirements. See below for additional detailed information on each of these requirements.

Code	Title	Hours
<b>First Year Course Requirements</b>		
ENG 101	Craft of Language	3
World History Course Area		3
<b>Philosophy Requirements</b>		
Either Level One or Level Two (but not both) – must be Ethics designated. If approved, philosophy courses may count for a student's Writing Intensive overlay. Students may not double-count the same course as Philosophy Level Two and as a Mission Overlay course.		
Philosophy Level One		3
Philosophy Level Two		3
<b>Theology &amp; Religious Studies Requirements</b>		
If approved, Theology & Religious Studies courses may count for a student's Writing Intensive overlay. Students may not double-count the same course as CCC Theology and as a Mission Overlay course.		
Theology		3
Religious Studies		3
<b>Diversity &amp; INT 151 Requirements</b>		
A student's Diversity course may not count for any other CCC course area requirement or as their Mission Overlay course. If approved, Diversity courses may count for a student's Writing Intensive Overlay requirement. INT 151 may not count for any other CCC requirements. This course must be taken in the first two years		
Diversity		3
INT 151	Inequality in American Society	1
<b>Math &amp; Natural Science Requirements</b>		
If approved, Math & Natural Science Requirements may count toward overlay requirements.		
Mathematics		3-4
Natural Science		4
<b>Social Science Requirement</b>		3
If approved, such Social Science Requirement may count toward a student's overlay requirements.		
<b>Non-Native Language Requirement</b>		3-4
A single Non-Native Language course may not count as an overlay course but a second language course fulfills a student's Mission Overlay requirement.		
<b>Literature Requirement</b>		3
If approved, Literature courses may count toward a student's overlay requirements.		
<b>Fine and Performing Arts, Creativity, and Design Requirement</b>		3
If approved, Fine and Performing Arts, Creativity, and Design courses may count toward a student's overlay requirements.		
<b>Overlay Requirements</b>		
Writing-Intensive		3

If approved, Writing-Intensive courses may double count as major courses, minor courses, electives, or as any CCC course area requirement except for the first-year courses (World History and Rhetoric and Composition).	
Mission-Overlay	3
Mission Overlay courses may double count as major courses, minor courses, elective courses, or any of the following CCC course areas: Fine and Performing Arts, Creativity, and Design, Literature, Mathematics, Natural Science, or Social Science.	
<b>Total Hours</b>	<b>47-49</b>

Recommended CCC Courses

Code	Title	Hours
<b>Mission-Overlay</b>		
Second semester of Non-Native Language		

Major Requirements

No one course may be counted more than once for the various requirements of the major. However, some courses might be eligible for more than one category. In those cases, students can choose which category the course would be applied to, in consultation with one's advisor or the department chair. Students should consult with their advisors or the department chair to determine the best distribution of courses relative to their own interests and needs.

Code	Title	Hours
<b>Encountering the Catholic Tradition</b> <sup>1</sup>		<b>3</b>
Will count for CCC: Theology		
THE 153	Encountering the New Testament	
THE 154	Catholic Theological Tradition	
THE 155	Catholic Social Tradition	
<b>Institutional Identity Course</b>		<b>3</b>
One additional THE course in any level in New Testament, History of Christianity, Systematic Theology, or Theological Ethics		
<b>Methodology Course</b>		<b>3</b>
REL 395	Approaches toStudy of Religion	
REL 495	Theory & Method Study Religion	
<b>Any one course in THE or REL at the 200 level or above</b>		<b>3</b>
<b>Non-Christian Religions</b>		<b>18</b>
Six courses in non-Christian religions, with one covering South/ East Asian religions and one covering Comparative religions.		
<b>Research Requirement</b>		<b>3</b>
In addition to completing the coursework, graduating seniors must demonstrate that they have completed at least one significant research paper in Theology or Religious Studies. This can be done in a variety of ways, including through courses, independent studies, Summer Scholars projects, or Honors Program projects. See your advisor for more information and to develop your plan.		
<b>Total Hours</b>		<b>33</b>

<sup>1</sup> While double-dipping may occur, duplicate credit for the same course will not be earned (e.g., taking THE 154 for the major and CCC Theology requirement will only earn 3 credits, not 6.) 120 total credits must be completed, in addition to all CCC and major requirements, in order to graduate. Complete enough free electives to reach or surpass 120 total credit hours.

Free Electives

Any 11-14 courses, depending upon how many overlays are taken as part of the courses for the major. Graduation requires 120 credits. Any credits necessary to reach that number outside of the CCC and major requirements are considered free electives.

Typical Course Sequence

Course	Title	Hours
<b>First Year</b>		
<b>Fall</b>		
REL 101	Comparative Religion	3
ENG 101	Craft of Language	3
Mathematics		3
Philosophy Level One		3
Non-Native Language		3-4
<b>Hours</b>		<b>15-16</b>
<b>Spring</b>		
THE 153 or THE 154 or THE 155	Encountering the New Testament or Catholic Theological Tradition or Catholic Social Tradition	3
Non-Christian Course (2 of 6)		3
Philosophy Level Two		3
World History		3
2nd Non-Native Language/Mission Overlay		3-4
<b>Hours</b>		<b>15-16</b>
<b>Sophomore</b>		
<b>Fall</b>		
Non-Christian Course (3 of 6)		3
Diversity		3
Fine, Performing Arts, Creativity		3
Social Science		3
INT 151	Inequality in American Society	1
Free Elective		3
<b>Hours</b>		<b>16</b>
<b>Spring</b>		
Institutional Identity course2		3
Non-Christian Course (4 of 6)		3
Writing Intensive		3
Literature		3
Free Elective		3
<b>Hours</b>		<b>15</b>
<b>Junior</b>		
<b>Fall</b>		
Non-Christian Course (5 of 6, South/East Asian Religion)		3
Methodology Course (REL 395 Approaches to the Study of Religion or REL/THE 495 Theories and Methods in the Study of Religion)3		3
Free Electives		9
<b>Hours</b>		<b>15</b>
<b>Spring</b>		
Natural Science		4
Non-Christian Course (6 of 6, Comparative)		3
THE or REL elective (200-level or higher)		3
Free Electives		6
<b>Hours</b>		<b>16</b>
<b>Senior</b>		
<b>Fall</b>		
Free Electives		15
<b>Hours</b>		<b>15</b>

Spring	
Free Electives	15
<b>Hours</b>	<b>15</b>
<b>Total Hours</b>	<b>122-124</b>