

An interdepartmental program

Courses of Study:
Minor

Religious Studies

Objectives

The modern field of religious studies contributes significantly to a liberal arts education, cultivating the investigation of religious thought, ritual, spiritual insight, culture, history, and sacred texts. The goal of the Program in Religious Studies is to expose students to several scholarly and pedagogical approaches to a variety of religious phenomena, often in a comparative context. The program's course offerings are designed to encourage students to deepen their understanding of religion and its manifestations through the perspectives of several disciplines and departments. Students survey systematic approaches to the field (REL 107a) and complete courses in at least two different religious traditions.

The program fosters interaction between its faculty and students by requiring completion of either an independent study or a senior essay course. The university, with its commitment to ethical responsibility, and the wide range of religious and ethnic backgrounds represented in its student body, provides a unique context for examining religion with open-minded curiosity and sympathetic understanding.

How to Become a Minor

Students may enter the program at any time in their undergraduate careers, but an early start maximizes a student's range of choice because a number of the courses are only offered every other year. Ideally, students should take the core course (REL 107a) early in their career. Students should consult with their advisor and the head of the program to map out their particular design.

Committee

Tzvi Abusch, Chair
(Near Eastern and Judaic Studies)

Bernadette Brooten
(Near Eastern and Judaic Studies)

Wendy Cadge
(Sociology)

Jonathan Decter
(Near Eastern and Judaic Studies)

Gila Hayim
(Sociology)

Patricia Johnston
(Classical Studies)

Edward Kaplan
(Romance and Comparative Literature)

Charles McClendon
(Fine Arts)

Jerry Samet
(Philosophy)

Ellen Schattschneider
(Anthropology)

The following faculty members are affiliated with the program:

Marc Brettler (NEJS)
John Burt (ENG)
Stephen Dowden (GRALL)
Sylvia Fishman (NEJS)
ChaeRan Freeze (NEJS)
Gregory Freeze (HIST)
Eli Hirsch (PHIL)
Jane Kamensky (HIST)
William Kapelle (HIST)
Reuven Kimelman (NEJS)
Ann Koloski-Ostrow (CLAS)
Sarah Lamb (ANTH)
Richard Lansing (ROMS)
Avigdor Levy (NEJS)
Leonard Muellner (CLAS)
Richard Parmentier (ANTH)
Michael Randall (ROMS)
Jonathan Sarna (NEJS)
John Schrecker (HIST)
Eugene Sheppard (NEJS)
Govind Sreenivasan (HIST)
Cheryl Walker (CLAS)
David Wright (NEJS)
Palle Yourgrau (PHIL)

Requirements for the Minor

A. Core Course: REL 107a (Introduction to World Religions). Ideally, the core course should be taken early in the student's career at Brandeis, but not necessarily as the first course in the program.

B. Students must complete at least two courses covering at least two different religious traditions from the traditions courses listed below.

C. Students must complete at least two courses from the list of electives listed below.

D. A Senior Essay (REL 97a) may replace one of the two electives with the approval of the program chair.

E. A passing letter grade must be obtained in each course taken for program credit. Pass/fail courses are not allowed. Students must achieve a GPA of at least 2.00 in program courses.

Courses of Instruction

REL 97a Senior Essay

Usually offered every year.
Staff

REL 97b Senior Essay

Usually offered every year.
Staff

REL 98a Independent Study

Usually offered every year.
Staff

REL 98b Independent Study

Usually offered every year.
Staff

REL 107a Introduction to World Religions

[hum nw]

This course serves as an introduction to the study of religion; it surveys some of the major religions of the world.

Staff

REL 131b The Dynamics of Religious Experience

[hum]

A comparative study of religious experience, including Christian, Jewish, nonbiblical, and feminist responses to modern anguish and the quest for identity and absolute meaning. Topics include doubt, sin, conversion, prayer, mysticism, holiness, and social action. Usually offered every third year.

Mr. Kaplan

REL 151a The Buddha: His Life and Teachings

[hum nw]

Few human beings have had as much impact on the world as Siddhartha Gotama Shakyamuni, known to us as Buddha. This course explores his life and teachings as reflected in early Buddhist literature and Western scholarship. Usually offered every year.

Staff

Traditions Courses

The following courses are approved for the program. Not all are given in any one year. Please consult the *Schedule of Classes* each semester.

ANTH 80a

Anthropology of Religion

CLAS 170a

Classical Mythology

HIST 181a

Seminar on Traditional Chinese Thought

IMES 104a

Islam: Civilization and Institutions

NEJS 3a

Introduction to Judaism, Christianity, and Islam

NEJS 5a

Foundational Course in Judaic Studies

NEJS 9a

The World of the Ancient Near East

NEJS 111a

The Hebrew Bible/Old Testament

NEJS 114b

Biblical Ritual, Cult, and Magic

NEJS 116a

Ancient Near Eastern Religion and Mythology

NEJS 128a

Introduction to Christianity

NEJS 130a

The New Testament: A Historical Introduction

NEJS 153a

Hasidism as a Religious and Social Movement

NEJS 155b

Judaism and the Religious Quest

NEJS 186a

Introduction to the Qur'an

NEJS 187b

Shi'ism and Political Protest in the Middle East

NEJS 198b

Modern Islamic Thought: The Eighteenth Century through the Contemporary Era

REL 151a

The Buddha: His Life and Teachings

Elective Courses

The following courses are approved for the program. Not all are given in any one year. Please consult the *Schedule of Classes* each semester.

AAAS 81b

Religion in African-American History

AMST 167b

The Cultural Work of Religion in America

AMST 168b

American Religious History

ANTH 105a

Myth and Ritual

ANTH 137b

Violence and the Sacred in Asia

COML 179a

Life Stories, Spiritual and Profane

FA 13b

Buddhist Art

FA 15b

Arts of the Ming Dynasty

FA 42b

The Age of Cathedrals

FA 45a

St. Peter's and the Vatican

FECS 147a

Jewish Identities in France since 1945

HIST 110b

The Civilization of the High and Late Middle Ages

HIST 123b

Reformation Europe (1400–1600)

HIST 126a

Early Modern Europe (1500–1700)

HIST 148a

Religion and Society in Modern Russia

HIST 152b

Salem, 1692

HUM 10a

The Western Canon

IECS 140a

Dante's *Divine Comedy*

NEJS 112a

The Book of Genesis

NEJS 115a

The Book of Deuteronomy

NEJS 115b

Women and the Bible

NEJS 122a

Magic and Witchcraft in the Ancient Near East

NEJS 127b

The Jewish Liturgy

NEJS 153b

Abraham Joshua Heschel: Spirituality and Action

NEJS 158b

Topics in Jewish Devotional Literature of the Medieval and Later Periods

NEJS 159a

Major Trends in Modern Jewish Philosophy

NEJS 162a

American Judaism

NEJS 163a
Jewish-Christian Relations in America

NEJS 164a
Judaism Confronts America

NEJS 166b
"Divided Souls": Jewish Conversion and Identity in Historical Perspective

NEJS 175b
Responses to the Holocaust in Literature

NEJS 190b
Islamic Philosophy

NEJS 196a
Marriage, Divorce, and Sexual Ethics in Islamic Law

PHIL 24a
Philosophy of Religion

PHIL 146a
Idea of God

PHIL 178b
Major Figures in the Christian Faith

POL 145b
The Islamic Challenge: Politics and Religion in the West

REL 131b
The Dynamics of Religious Experience

SOC 128a
Religion and Globalization

SOC 129a
Sociology of Religion

Romance Studies

Courses of Study:
See French and Francophone Studies.
See Hispanic Studies.
See Italian Studies.

Faculty

Edward Kaplan, Chair
French romanticism. Michelet. Hugo. Modern French poetry and theory. Baudelaire. Jabès. Bonnefoy. Religion and literature. Comparative literature. Translation.

French and Francophone Studies

Jane Hale
French and comparative literature. Twentieth-century French fiction and drama. Beckett, Queneau. Literature and painting. Francophone literature of Africa and the Caribbean. Comparative literature.

Michael Randall, Undergraduate Advising Head for French
Late medieval and Renaissance poetry, prose, and philosophy. Comparative literature.

Italian Studies

Richard Lansing, Undergraduate Advising Head for Italian Studies
Dante. Italian medieval and Renaissance literature. Modern Italian literature. Comparative Literature.

Hispanic Studies

Roxanne Dávila
Modern and contemporary Latin American literature and culture. Latin American and Latino studies.

Dian Fox
Spanish medieval and early modern drama, poetry, and prose. Cervantes. Women's and gender studies.

James Mandrell
Modern and contemporary Hispanic literature. Comparative literature. Women's, gender, and sexuality studies. Film.

Marisol Negrón
Latin American and Latino studies.

Ronnie Perelis
Early modern peninsular and transatlantic studies.

Ángela Pérez-Mejía
Colonial Latin American literature. Latin American film and cultural studies. Latin American women writers.

Fernando Rosenberg, Undergraduate Advising Head for Hispanic Studies
Latin American and Latino studies. Comparative literature.

French Language

Hollie Harder, Director of Language Programs
French language and culture. Language pedagogy. Nineteenth- and twentieth-century French literature. Women's studies.

Esther Ratner
French language and culture.

Martine Voiret
French language and culture.

Italian Language

Paola Servino
Italian language and culture.

Nives Dal Bo-Wheeler
Italian language and culture.

Spanish Language

Jorge Arteta
Spanish language.

Mary Nasielskier de Burstin
Spanish language.

Elena González Ros
Spanish language and language pedagogy.

Scott Gravina
Spanish language.

Olmanda Hernández
Spanish language and Hispanic cultures.

Raysa Mederos
Spanish language.

Lucía Reyes de Deu
Spanish language and culture.

Requirements

For course offerings and requirements for the major, refer to the sections found elsewhere in this *Bulletin* for European Cultural Studies, French and Francophone Studies, Hispanic Studies, and Italian Studies.