

# RELIGIOUS STUDIES

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## Departmental Facilities

The School of Religion is housed on three floors of Theological Hall, one of the oldest buildings on the campus of Queen's University. Our facilities include seminar rooms, lounges, and offices. Our main office is located on the second floor.

The Stauffer Library, just a short walk away, has substantial holdings in religious studies, and its collection is continually being expanded.

## Field of Research

Our faculty are dedicated to the academic study of religion, and are available to supervise research on a wide range of topics, cultures, traditions, and historical periods.

## Graduate Student Support

The university offers a number of Queen's Graduate Awards, senior fellowships, and other financial support for students in our Master's program.

Departmental Teaching and Research Assistantships are awarded to suitably qualified students.

Graduate students are also encouraged to apply for additional funding through the annual Ontario Graduate Scholarships (OGS) and Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council (SSHRC) competitions.

## Admission Requirements

Applicants to our program will be accepted according to the General Regulations of the School of Graduate Studies.

Normally, the minimum qualification for admission to the Master of Arts Program in Religious Studies is upper second-class standing in a four-year Honours undergraduate degree program in Religious Studies, or equivalent, awarded by a recognized university.

## Faculty

### Director

Husain, A.

### Graduate Coordinator

Xavier, M.S.

### Professor

Ascough, R.S., Trothen, T.J.

### Associate Professor

Jahanbakhsh, F., Mosurinjohn, S.C.

### Assistant Professor

Amarasingam, A., Atlas, D.N., Leath, J., Legoas, J., Xavier, M.S.

## Master of Arts

The course requirements for our program are 27.0 units of study, which includes the year-long RELS 800, a monthly colloquium of professional development and speakers, core courses RELS 801 and RELS 802, and the final research essay RELS 898 (6.0 units)

Of the remaining 12.0 units of study, a minimum of 3.0 units must be taken from our list of Dedicated graduate courses, and a maximum of 6.0 units can be taken from our list of Cross-listed graduate courses. In any case, a minimum of 6.0 units must be taken from our list of RELS graduate courses (Dedicated and Cross-listed) offered in a particular year.

With approval from the Graduate Coordinator, a maximum of 6.0 course units may be taken from another cognate department.

Students who have not completed in their undergraduate programs the equivalent of the Queen's University course RELS 354 Theory in Religious Studies will be required to take RELS 854 either instead of one of their elective courses or as an overload in addition to the required 27.0 units.

## Courses

Not all the courses listed below will be offered in any given year. Applicants should consult the Department about the courses to be offered. All courses are 3.0 credit units except RELS 898, which is 6.0 credit units.

## Required Courses

### RELS 800 Professional Development Seminar

Monthly seminar series for building graduate students' professional academic and alt-academic skills through workshops, Q&As, and presentations about topics including: publishing, conferencing, funding, applying for further graduate study or employment, etc. Topics will be timed to the appropriate point in the cycle of each academic year (i.e. sessions on SSHRC and OGS will occur early in Fall semester). This is a mandatory course. This course is graded on a Pass/Fail basis. Fall/Winter. M.S. Xavier

### RELS 801 Core Course I: Religion and Modernity

Examines the nature of religious transition in response to various pressures for religious change. Fall. F. Jahanbakhsh



### **RELS 802 Core Course II: Theory and Method in Religious Studies**

Looks at recent articulations and applications of theories and methods in Religious Studies. Winter. A. Amarasingam

### **RELS 898 Master's Essay**

A research essay. The Master's Essay must demonstrate appropriate competence in the application of theoretical and methodological approaches to a suitable research topic in the study of religion. The Master's Essay will not be subject to an oral defence but will normally be read by one member of the department in addition to the essay supervisor.

## **Dedicated Graduate Courses**

Two of these courses will be offered each year.

### **RELS 808 Readings in Religion I**

Advanced seminar providing detailed reading of one contemporary theme or thinker in Religious Studies. Not offered 2022-23.

### **RELS 809 Readings in Religion II**

Advanced seminar providing detailed reading of one contemporary theme or thinker in Religious Studies. Winter. J. Legoas.

### **RELS 884 Feminist Studies and Religious Studies**

Examination of feminist theory and its application to the study of religion. Not offered 2022-23.

### **RELS 885 Religious Fundamentalisms**

Religious fundamentalism is a modern phenomenon not exclusive to any religion. In the past few decades, religious fundamentalist movements have been shaping new social, cultural and political norms in a predominately secular age. The course explores theoretical aspects and examines specific case studies across various religions and cultures. Offered jointly with RELS 385 with additional work required for graduate students. Winter. F. Jahanbakhsh  
EXCLUSION: RELS 385

### **RELS 886 Religion and Technology**

Examines the connections between religion and the rise of technology in the modern period. Not offered 2022-23.

### **RELS 887 Problems in Ancient Mediterranean Religions**

An interdisciplinary study of the religions and mythical traditions of Mediterranean and Near Eastern cultures from the Bronze Age to Late Antiquity. Topics will vary according to instructor. The course will have special regard for, but not be limited to, the Levant, and the Greek and Roman world. Fall. F. Colivicchi.

## **Cross-listed Courses**

These courses will be offered concurrently with a linked undergraduate course. A maximum of 1.0 courses (6 credit units) from this list is permitted for the M.A.

M.A. students will be required to attend classes with the undergraduate students but will have separate course requirements including additional readings and different assignments. They will also meet with the instructor on occasion separately from the undergraduate students.

### **RELS 806 Directed Special Studies 1**

Advanced seminar providing detailed reading in one contemporary theme or thinker in Religious Studies. Winter. R. Ascough.

### **RELS 807 Directed Special Studies 2**

Advanced seminar providing detailed reading in one contemporary theme or thinker in Religious Studies. Winter. D.N. Atlas.

### **RELS 810 Modern and Contemporary Christian Thought**

Exemplary work in recent and contemporary Christian theology. Not offered 2022-23.

### **RELS 811 Jesus: The Continuing Historical Quest**

This course provides an introduction to the methods and premises used in the modern quest to understand the historical facts of Jesus life. Particular attention will be given to understanding the historical Jesus in his first-century socio-cultural context. Offered jointly with RELS 311. Not offered 2022-23.  
EXCLUSION: RELS 311

### **RELS 812 Christian Feminist Theology**

Issues raised by the feminist critique of traditional Christian theology and feminist attempts at theological reconstruction. Not offered 2022-23.

### **RELS 814 Queering Religion**

This course examines the complex intersection of gender, sexuality and religion and the ways in which religious traditions have shaped and continue to shape complex notions of gender and sexuality in the modern era. It considers a review of feminist, gender studies and queer theories, thereafter we will apply these concepts to case studies. Offered jointly with RELS 314. (3.0 credit units). Fall. J. Leath.  
EXCLUSION: RELS 314

### **RELS 821 Greek and Roman Religions**

A study of the development and organization of non-civic religious associations in the Greek and Roman empires using inscriptions, papyri, and literary texts. Insight into

religious practices of the Greco-Roman period comes through exploration of groups organized by deity, cult, occupation, or ethnic identity, and the so-called mystery religions. Not offered 2022-23.

**RELS 822 Yoga in India and the West**

Surveys the history and philosophy of yoga in India and the West. Yoga practicum: estimated cost \$85.00. Not offered 2022-23.

**RELS 826 Religion and Politics in Muslim Societies**

Explores the role of religion in the politics of Muslim societies with particular attention to the modern period. Not offered 2022-23.

**RELS 827 Indigenous Traditions in North America**

Introduction to the study of Indigenous traditions in North America. Not offered 2022-23.

**RELS 828 Apocalypse**

The primary focus of the course will be the theological perspectives and social functions of apocalyptic in select religious traditions. The course will also survey the appropriation of apocalyptic themes throughout history in artistic forms such as art, fiction, and film, with particular attention to our modern times and cultures. Offered jointly with RELS 328. Winter. D.N. Atlas.  
EXCLUSION: RELS 328.

**RELS 831 Religion and Violence**

Links between violence and religious beliefs, practices, and institutions; for example, sacrifice, holy wars, scapegoating, and suicide. Not offered 2022-23.

**RELS 834 Jewish Views of the Other**

A study of the tensions that come into play as Jews formulated views of the Other to balance co-existence with them. Source materials include authoritative writings of Jewish commentary and law and social scientific views of them. Not offered 2022-23.

**RELS 840 Religion and Democracy**

Deals with the role of religion in the public sphere and its relation to liberal democracy. It examines the (in)compatibility of some tenets of certain religions with modern democratic principles. Not offered 2022-23.

**RELS 841 Spirituality, Secularity, and Nonreligion**

A study of concepts intended to summarize positions which are necessarily defined in reference to religion but considered to be other than religious. We explore the origins and presence of perspectives and experiences including the secular, spiritual –but-not-religious, atheistic, and other forms of imitation, indifference, and hostility to religion. Not offered 2022-23.

**RELS 842 Indigenous epistemologies of the environment**

The seminar deals with the knowledges and practices through which Indigenous peoples conceptualize and approach what the West calls "Nature". Applying their underlying principles, we further analyze contemporary initiatives to promote interspeciesism, and to grant rights to Nature and legal personhood to different elements of the environment. (3.0 credit units). Offered jointly with RELS 342.  
EXCLUSION: RELS 342

**RELS 846 AI, Biohacking, and Future Technologies**

This course looks at issues raised by the intersection of religion and human enhancement technologies. We will consider categories of biohacking, AI, and possible future technologies including mind uploading. Engaging diverse religious issues, we will consider what it means to be human and "better." (3.0 credit units) Offered jointly with RELS 346. Winter. T. Trothen.  
EXCLUSION: RELS 346

**RELS 852 The Contemporary Religious Situation**

Religion in modernity; traditional groups, newer religious movements, contemporary ideologies and social trends of religious significance. Offered jointly with RELS 452. Not offered 2022-23.  
EXCLUSION: RELS 452

**RELS 854 Theory in Religious Studies**

An introduction to major theoretical approaches to the study of religion. Offered jointly with RELS 354. Fall. D.N. Atlas.  
EXCLUSION: RELS 354

**RELS 888 Critical Ethnography in the Study of Religion**

The course will engage in the theory and method of ethnography as it has been used in the study of religion. It will engage with various examples of ethnographic case studies, particularly as they interrogate questions of insider/outsider positionalities while exploring ways in which gender, sexuality and race, trauma and safety have been negotiated in various field work projects by religious studies scholars. Fall. M. S. Xavier.

**RELS 893 Buddhism in the Modern World**

Encounter between Buddhism and the West, major movements and thinkers, and socio-politically engaged Buddhism. Fall. A. Sen Chowdhury.

**RELS 894 Religion and Politics in Contemporary China**

Examines Chinese and foreign religions in mainland China from 1949 to the present day. Topics include the status of established religions, the political control of new religious movements and the resurgence of traditional Chinese religion and ideologies including Daoism and Confucianism. Not offered 2022-23.



**RELS 896 Islam in the Modern World**

Exploration of Islamic developments since the 19th century: major thinkers, trends of thought, and contemporary movements as responses to modernity. Offered jointly with RELS 396. Fall. F. Jahanbakhsh  
EXCLUSION: RELS 396.

**RELS 897 Judaism in the Modern Age**

The development of modern Jewish religious thought and practice, including the Reform, Orthodox, Conservative and Reconstructionist movements. The consequences of the Holocaust and the establishment of the modern state of Israel. Not offered 2022-23.