RELIGIOUS STUDIES

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
Hussain, A.

Graduate Coordinator
Mosurinjohn, S.C.

Professor
Ascough, R.S., Morrow, W.S., Trothen, T.J., Young, P.D.

Associate Professor
Goldberg, E., Jahanbakhsh, F.

Assistant Professor
Amarasingam, A., Atlas, D.N., Mosurinjohn, S.C., 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.

RELS 801 Core Course I: Religion and Modernity
Examines the nature of religious transition in response to various pressures for religious change.
RELS 802  Core Course II: Theory and Method in Religious Studies
Looks at recent articulations and applications of theories and methods in Religious Studies.

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.

RELS 809  Readings in Religion II
Advanced seminar providing detailed reading of one contemporary theme or thinker in Religious Studies.

RELS 884  Feminist Studies and Religious Studies
Examination of feminist theory and its application to the study of religion.

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.

EXCLUSION: RELS 385

RELS 806  Directed Special Studies 1
Advanced seminar providing detailed reading in one contemporary theme or thinker in Religious Studies.

RELS 807  Directed Special Studies 2
Advanced seminar providing detailed reading in one contemporary theme or thinker in Religious Studies.

RELS 810  Modern and Contemporary Christian Thought
Exemplary work in recent and contemporary Christian theology.

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.

EXCLUSION: RELS 311

RELS 812  Christian Feminist Theology
Issues raised by the feminist critique of traditional Christian theology and feminist attempts at theological reconstruction.

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.

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

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.

RELS 827  Indigenous Traditions in North America
Introduction to the study of Indigenous traditions in North America.

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.

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

RELS 810  Modern and Contemporary Christian Thought
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RELS 827  Indigenous Traditions in North America
Introduction to the study of Indigenous traditions in North America.
RELS 828  Interpretation of Apocalyptic Literature
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.
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.

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.

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.

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.

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.
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.
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/outside 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.

RELS 893  Buddhism in the Modern World
Encounter between Buddhism and the West, major movements and thinkers, and socio-politically engaged Buddhism.

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.

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.

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.