



# Honours in Religious Studies

An Honours degree in Religious Studies requires a minimum of 54 credit hours in Religious Studies courses, at least 12 credit hours of which must be at the 4000-level, including:

RELG 1006 Introduction to Religious Studies

*and one of the following from the Tools Courses:*

RELG 2243 Texts and Contexts

RELG 2313 Introduction to the Hebrew Bible

RELG 2333 Introduction to the New Testament

RELG 2353 Introduction to the Qur'an

*as well as*

RELG 2413 Ritual Studies

*as well as one of the following Research Methodology Courses:*

RELG 2003 Exploring History (HIST)

RELG 2013 Research Design (SOCl)

RELG 3053 Qualitative Research Methods (GERO, HMRT, SOCl)

*as well as one of the following from the Multidisciplinary Courses:*

RELG 2223 Psychology of Religion (PSYC)

RELG 2543 Sociology of Religion (SOCl)

RELG 3423 Reason and Religion (PHIL)

RELG 3643 Anthropology of Religion (ANTH)

*In addition, the Honours degree requires*

RELG 4023 Scope and Methods

*and*

RELG 4033 68TJETEMC /Span Lang (158 11DC BT2541180y f) 5.or.8 0 0 7.8 36p60 Td(A)3d0 Tdamdss)T

## Introductory Course

### **RELG-1006. Introduction to Religious Studies**

A thematic, issues-oriented introduction to the study of religions. While each section of the course is different because it is taught by a different professor, the issues and themes are common to all. Some of the themes and issues encountered are prejudice, sexuality, death and after death, the long search, evil and suffering, music and religion. The data to illustrate these themes and issues are drawn from the religious traditions of the world. Fundamental to the course methodology is the identification of focal questions. The intention of the course is to foster in students an active appreciation of the religious dimension of life and to share with them the tools to think critically about it.

## Intermediate and Advanced Courses

### 1. Multi-Religious Courses

**RELG-2193. New Religious Movements: Cults in the New Age**

New religious movements often challenge the values and vision of mainstream religious traditions. This course is a collaborative inquiry into the historical and cultural contexts, self-understanding and practices of such new religious movements as the Church of Scientology, the Branch Davidians, the International Society for Krishna Consciousness, Euro-Indians, and the Vineyard Renewal.

**RELG-2233. Women and Religion**

**RELG-3573. Religion and Social Ethics**

The study of the relationships which shape the nature of human interaction informed by or oriented towards values and specific goals. The role of religious beliefs and communities in analyzing and responding to economic, social, and political problems will be examined.

**RELG-3583. Media and Ethics**

A critical and foundational examination of the role and function of media in Western society, focussing on its formative influence on religion and culture. Issues may include the business of news, entertainment, the nature of advertising, and religion and media. This course requires students to have a background in ethics and/or critical theory.

**RELG-3953. Portrayals of Jihad and Crusade: History, Memory and Film (HIST)**

This course considers the diverse ways in which modern global audiences have come to understand histories of religious violence. Our focus will be on academic and popular interpretations of so-called jihad or crusade conflicts from the Middle Ages to the present. Print, electronic and film sources will be examined, reflecting a wide range of often conflicting viewpoints as they have evolved over time.



**RELG-3453. Religious Traditions of India I**

An inquiry into the religious traditions of India, including Hinduism in its many varieties, early Buddhism, and Jainism.

**RELG-3473. Native American Religions**

An inquiry into the issues in the study of Native American religions, and the results of that study. The focus will be on some of the diverse religions of First Nations people in what is now Canada and the United States.

**RELG-3533. Islam in the West (Art and Architecture in New York City)**

This course examines the physical presence of Islam in New York City. Students will tour the mosques of New York, visit collections of Islamic art and manuscripts, observe ritual music and dance, and taste food from around the Muslim world. Themes will include spiritual Islamic art, Islam in the West, and North American Muslims today. The goal of the course is to provide students with material objects that will enrich their understanding of culture.

**RELG-3553. Islamic Ethics and Spirituality**

This course will look at the various forms of Islamic spirituality, as expressed by individuals and organized orders. It will explore the symbolic path of the mystic and how it coalesced with popular piety and sainthood. It will also look at the ethical systems of rational mystics who combined theology, philosophy, and mysticism.

**RELG-3653. Women and Christianity**

Women's rights, gender sensitivities, and feminist movements both inside and outside the churches have inspired lively and complex debates within contemporary Christian theologies. By deconstructing, revising and rebuilding basic issues in theology on the basis of women's experiences and gender analysis, a substantial range of feminist theologies has emerged. This course will explore theological themes and interests central to the diversity of feminist theologies.

**RELG-4173. Independent Study**

A course of independent study under the supervision of the Religious Studies Department. Students will normally collaborate on a description of the study project with the staff member or members who will guide the independent study. This description must be approved by the Department Chair and submitted to the registrar for his records.

## Specialized Courses

The Department of Religious Studies offers special interest courses at the 2000, 3000, and 4000 level.

At the 2000 level, the purpose of the Tools courses is to build skills and resources for the critical study of religious traditions. These courses are required for a Minor, Major or Honours in Religious Studies.

At the 2000 and 3000 level, the purpose of the Research Methodology and Multidisciplinary courses is to expand the range of critical intellectual skills for the study of religious traditions. Students seeking an Honours degree in Religious Studies are required to obtain 3 credit hours from the Research Methodology courses and a further 3 credit hours from the Multidisciplinary courses. Students seeking a Major in Religious Studies are encouraged but not required to obtain 3 credit hours in either of these if not both.

At the 4000 level, the purpose of these seminars is to provide a measure of integration at the

end of a Major or Honours program of study; and to provide students majoring or honouring a platform for further studies in a broad range of academic or professional programs.

## 1. Tools Courses

Students of religions engage in the analysis of three main sources of religious identity: action, rituals and texts. The intent of these courses is to provide critical resources for the analysis of religiously-based action, rituals and texts. Tools courses remain open to all students with a general interest in religious studies. There are no prerequisites, except the completion of the first year of university-level study or its equivalent.

### **RELG-2243. Texts and Contexts**

This course will explore the interaction between text and context of several writings deemed to be sacred, whether traditional or not, from a variety of religious traditions. Attention will also be paid to the particular situations and conditions in which these texts are created and received.

### **RELG-2313. Introduction to the Hebrew Bible**

This course will provide an introduction to the study of the Hebrew Bible, commonly referred to by Christians as the Old Testament. A first chapter will provide an overview of the history of Israel from the early centuries of the second millennium B.C. to the end of the first century A.D. A second chapter will look at the various canonical collections of scriptural books accepted by the Samaritans, the Palestinian Jews, the Jews of the Diaspora and Catholic, Orthodox and Protestant Christians.

### **RELG-2333. Introduction to the New Testament**

This course will investigate the history of the growth of the New Testament Canon of twenty seven books and then study two apocryphal books.



**RELG-2003. Exploring History: Critical Approaches to Historical Methods and Theories (HIST)**

This mandatory course for History Majors and Honours students provides an introduction to the discipline of History. The course examines a variety of historiographical and methodological approaches to History, as well as the history of History. It encourages students to re-examine their assumptions about History, but it will also help students develop their basic historical research and writing skills. Exploring History provides a foundation for upper-year History courses and students are strongly encouraged to take it before their third year. Prerequisite: At least 6 credit hours in History courses at St. Thomas University.

**SOCI 2013 Research Design & Method (NATI)**

An introduction to the main research approaches used in sociology. The course includes practical experience in developing a research program by considering research question development, research design, methods of data collection, research ethics and data analysis. Of particular interest are the strengths and weaknesses of different approaches.

**RELG-3053. Qualitative Research Methods (GERO) (HMRT) (SOCI)**

This course is intended for third-year Honours students who are considering using qualitative analysis in the research for their Honours thesis. It will address theoretical foundations of qualitative analysis, research ethics for qualitative researchers, and provide hands-on experience in developing a research question and collecting and analyzing data using basic qualitative techniques including observation, in-depth interviewing, and unobtrusive measures.

**3. Multidisciplinary Courses**

Religious Studies is a multidisciplinary endeavour of research, analysis and interpretation. The intent of these courses is to provide students with an intellectual experience of the multidisciplinary interests representative of Religious Studies in order that students might become skillful in negotiating multiple disciplinary perspectives.

**RELG-2223. Psychology of Religion (PSYC)**

The examination of religious experience drawing from the classic approaches to psychology such as William James, Sigmund Freud, and Carl Jung, and their contemporary interpreters.

**RELG-2543. Sociology of Religion (SOCI)**

This course focuses on the relations between the beliefs and institutionalized practices that people hold sacred, and contemporary community life. The students explore the contradictory trends of mass secularism and the rise of religious fundamentalism, and the practices through which people collectively mobilize to sustain, challenge, and change religious identities. The question raised by Durkheim is explored: If religion expresses and reinforces community solidarity, how can modern societies accommodate religious diversity? A further question is: How are religions implicated in political struggles, the women's movement, nationalism, and war?

**RELG 3423. Reason and Religion (PHIL)**

A survey of issues and authors, both classical and contemporary, in the philosophy of religion. Consideration will be given to the following: defining religion, religious experience and faith, the problem of evil, the meaning of religious language, the question of life beyond death. Prerequisite: PHIL 1013 and 1023, or permission of the instructor.

**RELG-3643. Anthropology of Religion (ANTH)**

This course emphasizes an understanding of religious phenomena by viewing religion in the context of the diversity of cultures. Prerequisite: None.

**4. Majors and Honours Required Seminars**

**RELG-4023. Scope and Methods**

An in-depth analysis of selected issues in Religious Studies, focusing on the distinctive concerns of the discipline and the furthering of research skills appropriate to it. The course fosters reflection on the variety of methods used in Religious Studies, mindful of the