

Religious Studies

Erik Larson, Associate Professor and Chairperson

Daniel Alvarez, Instructor

Whitney Bauman, Assistant Professor and Undergraduate Program Director

Ana Maria Bidegain, Associate Professor

Christine Gudorf, Professor

Steven Heine, Professor

Nathan Katz, Bhagwan Mahavir Professor of Jain Studies and Professor of Religious Studies

Aisha Musa, Assistant Professor

Lesley Northup, Associate Professor

Andrea Seidel, Associate Professor

Oren B. Stier, Associate Professor and Graduate Program Director

Albert Wuaku, Assistant Professor

Zion Zohar, Assistant Professor

Affiliated Faculty

Thomas A. Breslin

Mohiaddin Messbahi

Thomas Norris

Meri-Jane Rochelson

Dennis Wiedman

Master of Arts in Religious Studies

FIU's Master of Arts in Religious Studies is designed to give students maximum flexibility in pursuing their research interests, while providing a firm foundation in both the general academic study of religion and the student's area of specialization.

The M.A. is a 36-credit hour program: 9 hours of core seminars, 12 hours of 'track' courses, and either 9 hours of electives and 6 hours of thesis work, or 15 hours of electives.

Requirements for Admission

Application to the Master of Arts program in Religious Studies is made through FIU's Graduate Admissions Office. The usual minimum requirements for admission include a baccalaureate degree from an accredited college or university and:

1. A graduate degree in the humanities or social sciences from an accredited college or university *or*
2. A score of 550 or higher on the verbal portion of the Graduate Record Examination (GRE) *or*
3. A UG 60 GPA of 3.5, earned no more than 7 years prior to application.

A student who does not meet any of these three requirements may qualify for admission by fulfilling the following conditions:

- a. Writing an acceptable essay on a topic assigned by the department in a monitored and timed session. *and one of the following:*
- b. A GPA of at least 3.5 in 12 or more hours of graduate study in departmental courses (as a special student) *or*
- c. A score of at least 475 on the verbal portion of the GRE.

4. International graduate student applicants whose native language is not English are required to submit a score for the Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL) or for the International English Language Testing System (IELTS). A total score of 80 on the iBT TOEFL or 6.5 overall on the IELTS is required.

Applications for admission are available from the FIU Office of Graduate Admissions and are evaluated by the Departmental Graduate Studies Committee.

Degree Requirements

1. Prerequisite: undergraduate course REL 3308, Studies in World Religions, to be completed by the end of the first semester of graduate work.
2. Three core seminars: REL 6935 "Seminar on Sacred Texts", REL 6013 "Modern Analysis of Religion", and REL 5038 "Advanced Fieldwork in Religious Studies".
3. A track of four related courses chosen in consultation with the Graduate Program Director.
4. *Either* 9 hours of elective courses and a thesis (involving either 6 hours of thesis credit or 3 of thesis and 3 of independent research), or 15 hours of electives and no thesis. Students must register with the Department's Graduate Committee for thesis track or non-thesis track during the semester in which they will complete 12 hours of credit in the program. Registration in the thesis track will require securing the agreement of a member of the Graduate Faculty to serve as Thesis Advisor.

The Department of Religious Studies does not regard the non-thesis track as appropriate preparation for further graduate study in Religious Studies.

Combined BA/MA in Religious Studies

To be considered for admission to the combined bachelor's/master's degree program, students must have completed at least 75-90 credits in the bachelor's degree program at FIU and meet the admissions criteria for the graduate degree program to which they are applying. Students need only apply once to the combined degree program, but the application must be submitted to Graduate Admissions before the student starts the last 30 credits of the bachelor's degree program. A student admitted to the combined degree program will be considered to have undergraduate status until the student applies for graduation from their bachelor's degree program. Upon conferral of the bachelor's degree, the student will be granted graduate status and be eligible for graduate assistantships. Only 5000-level or higher courses, and no more than the number of credits specified by the program catalog, may be applied toward both degrees.

Admission Requirements

- Current enrollment in the Bachelor's Degree program in Religious Studies, or any humanities major that allows at least 12 hours of electives.
- Current GPA must be 3.4 or higher.
- Two letters of recommendation.
- Approval of the Graduate Committee.
- Submission of acceptable writing sample, complete with bibliography, to Turnitin.com.

Graduation Requirements

Completed BA at FIU including,
 REL 4931 Religious Studies Seminar
 REL 6935 Seminar in Sacred Texts
 REL 6013 Modern Analysis of Religion
 Six additional hours of graduate credit in Religious Studies (for majors, graduate level enrollment in six hours of Focus Courses) must also be taken as Graduate courses.

Required

- A four course track, either in one religious tradition, or one theme across religious traditions, approved by the Graduate Director.
- The two graduate seminars taken in the senior year of the BA as well as the Focus courses taken at the Graduate level (limit 12 hours double-counted).
- Six credits of electives selected from the Religious Studies Graduate Course Offerings.
- Six hours of thesis, or six additional hours from the Religious Studies Graduate Course Offerings.

All courses must be completed with a grade of "B" or above.

Course Descriptions

Definition of Prefixes

REL-Religion.

REL 5018 Religion, Literature, and Critical Theory (3). Examines intersections between world religions and contemporary literature in light of modern theories of interpretation. Themes explored include scriptural rereadings and spiritual journeys. Prerequisites: Graduate standing or permission of the instructor.

REL 5023 Religious Ritual (3). Examines the critical relationship of ritual, religious practice and belief, and culture, while introducing the principles and methods of ritual studies. Prerequisites: Graduate standing or permission of the instructor.

REL 5025 Myth and Religion (3). Investigates the role, function, and meaning of myth in religious experience and practice through an examination of specific myths, mythic patterns, and critical theories. Prerequisites: Graduate standing or permission of the instructor.

REL 5038 Advanced Fieldwork in Religious Studies (3). Techniques of ethnography used in Religious Studies beginning with research design and including participant observation, interviews, surveys.

REL 5106 Religions, Latino/as and Immigration (3). The course will analyze the relationships between the complex phenomenon of Latinos/as immigration and religions. This area of study necessarily demands an interdisciplinary approach including gender.

REL 5122 African-American Religion (3). Survey of development of African-American Religions with emphasis on North American experience during slavery, Jim Crow and contemporary eras. Prerequisites: Graduate standing or permission of the instructor.

REL 5125 Religion and Public Life (3). Examines the relationship of religion and government in the United States, with focus on the First Amendment and issues of

separation of church and state. Prerequisites: Graduate standing or permission of the instructor.

REL 5137 North American Religion (3). Historical examination of religious groups and influences in North America, focusing on their contributions and cultural impact. Prerequisites: Graduate standing or permission of the instructor.

REL 5138 Sects, Cults, and New Religions (3). Explores and critically analyzes the multiplicity of new American religious movements and the unique combination of factors that has encouraged them. Prerequisites: Graduate standing or permission of the instructor.

REL 5143 Latinas and Religion in the Americas (3). This course will review the practices, beliefs, social and political activism, and theological and biblical reflections of Latinas in the Americas from a historical perspective to modern day.

REL 5144 Women and Religion (3). Examines the influence of religion on social construction of gender and the definition of woman's nature and role, with a focus on Western developments. Prerequisites: Graduate standing or permission of the instructor.

REL 5149 Religion, Violence, and Conflict (3). Is religion peaceful or violent? Theoretical analysis of the role of religion in violent, social and political conflicts, such as the Crusades, the Arab-Israeli conflict, and the Haitian Revolution. Prerequisites: Graduate standing or permission of the instructor.

REL 5165 Science and Religion (3). Surveys the interaction between science and religion from conflict models to integration; special attention to specific natural sciences including cosmology and biology. Prerequisites: Graduate standing or permission of the instructor.

REL 5182 Religion and Ethics (3). Investigation of methods, resources for ethics in world religions, and some examples of issues. Prerequisites: Graduate standing or permission of the instructor.

REL 5183 Religion, Nature, and Globalization (3). Through exploring sources for contemporary attitudes and values about "nature", this course examines environmental ethical issues surrounding the process commonly referred to as globalization. Prerequisites: Graduate standing or permission of the instructor.

REL 5184 Sexuality, Religion and Social Change (3). Traces various religions' accommodation to and rejection of both new scientific research on sexuality and new economic and social trends. Prerequisites: Graduate standing or permission of the instructor.

REL 5192 Seminar in Mysticism (3). The issues of consciousness, language, and morality in mystical tradition of the east and west, including Kabbalah, Neoplatonism, Sufism, Yoga, Taoism, and Zen. Prerequisites: Graduate standing or permission of the instructor.

REL 5208 Studies of the Dead Sea Scrolls (3). Overview of the Dead Sea Scrolls explores the new techniques being used in their study. Prerequisites: Graduate standing or permission of the instructor.

REL 5211 Bible I: The Hebrew Scriptures (3). Extensive reading in the Hebrew Scriptures, how the various texts of

the Hebrew Scriptures came to be written, and how they can be interpreted - both within the context of faith communities and within the cultural contexts out of which the texts were written. Prerequisites: Graduate standing or permission of the instructor.

REL 5232 Hebrew Exegesis I (3). Provides a comprehensive survey of the fundamentals of the language of the Hebrew Bible designed to equip the student for the task of exegesis. Prerequisites: Graduate standing or permission of the instructor.

REL 5233 Hebrew Exegesis II (3). A continuation of Hebrew Exegesis I emphasizing the reading of select passages of the Hebrew Bible to develop skills in translation and interpretation. Prerequisites: REL 5232 and graduate standing.

REL 5242 New Testament and Qumran (3). Detailed investigation of the possible contacts between the New Testament and Qumran in such areas as Biblical Exegesis, Apocalypticism, Eschatology, and Messianism. Prerequisite: Graduate standing.

REL 5244 Bible II: The New Testament (3). History, theology, and interpretation methods of the New Testament. Prerequisites: Graduate standing or permission of the instructor.

REL 5262 New Testament Greek Exegesis I (3). A detailed overview of the principles of Greek grammar that shows the student how to use Greek in the study of the New Testament. Prerequisite: Graduate standing.

REL 5263 New Testament Greek Exegesis II (3). Careful reading of selected passages of the New Testament and early Christian literature designed or selected to develop skills in translation and interpretation. Prerequisite: REL 5262 and graduate standing.

REL 5331 Religions of India (3). Topics include: religion in prehistoric and ancient India, classical Hindu texts and schismatic movements, medieval theism, the acculturation of extrinsic religions, Hindu-Muslim-Sikh syncretism, and the modern period. Prerequisites: Graduate standing or permission of the instructor.

REL 5334 Studies in Diaspora Hinduisms (3). Research methods and theory in the study of Hinduisms in the Diaspora, with a special focus on Hindu institutions in Florida.

REL 5338 Classical Hinduism (3). A study of the textual and philosophic traditions of classical India, as well as theoretical and methodological issues pertinent to their study. Prerequisites: REL 3330 or REL 3333 or REL 5331.

REL 5346 Seminar on Buddhism (3). The central doctrines and rituals of the Buddhist tradition, including the views on causality, mindfulness, monasticism, salvation, purity, and ethics in the Theravada, Tantric, and Zen schools. Prerequisites: Graduate standing or permission of the instructor.

REL 5352 Religions of East Asia (3). The history, philosophy, and cultural impact of the major religious traditions of East Asia, including Confucianism, Taoism, Buddhism, Shinto, and syncretic folk religions. Prerequisites: Graduate standing or permission of the instructor.

REL 5360 Classical Arabic (3). Introduces the grammar and vocabulary of classical Arabic necessary for developing the ability to read classical texts.

REL 5365 Advanced Interpretation of the Quran: Gender and Jihad (3). History, interpretation and translation of the Quran through a close examination of passages related to issues of gender and jihad.

REL 5368 Voice of the Prophet (3). Familiarizes students with the position and history of prophetic traditions (Hadith) in Islam.

REL 5372 The Globalizing of African Spirituality (3). Intensive investigation of select forms of traditional spirituality in sub-Saharan Africa, including ritual, sacrifice, and spirit possession, and Africanized Christian and Islamic devotion. Prerequisites: Graduate standing or permission of the instructor.

REL 5384 Rasta, Vodou, Santeria (3). Critical, sociological and phenomenological analysis of the history, beliefs, rituals, and social significance of Rastafarianism, Vodou, and Santeria on the Caribbean and the United States. Prerequisites: Graduate standing or permission of the instructor.

REL 5385 Native American Religions (3). An advanced study of Native American religions and the methods employed to investigate them. Attention will be given to traditional and contemporary expressions. Prerequisites: Graduate standing or permission of the instructor.

REL 5386 Latinas' Religious Experience (3). Focus on the diversity of religious experiences among women born and educated in Latin cultures such as: Brazil, Haiti and Hispanic American, including Hispanic in the U.S.

REL 5387 Native Religions of Latin America (3). Focuses on major culture areas, history of tribes, changes in religious practice through contact with Christianity.

REL 5394 Jewish Mystical Texts (3). A study of the major movements and figures in the development of Jewish mysticism through its significant texts, from biblical times up to the present. Prerequisites: Graduate standing or permission of the instructor.

REL 5435 Feminist Theory and Religion (3). Surveys the development of feminist work in religion based in general feminist theory; includes work in major world religions. Prerequisite: Graduate standing.

REL 5462 Religion and Philosophy (3). Examines the use of philosophical reasoning to justify religious belief or its rejection. Such topics as natural theology, atheism and fideism will be examined. Prerequisites: Graduate standing or permission of the instructor.

REL 5488 Theology and Liberation Movements (3). Comparison of Latin American, feminist, and African American theologies of liberation, including methods, social analysis, social location, interlocutor, ecclesiology, theology, eschatology and use of scripture. Prerequisites: Graduate standing or permission of the instructor.

REL 5495 Interreligious Dialogue (3). The intellectual basis, the classical formulations, and the contemporary practice of interreligious dialogue in a variety of cultural settings. Prerequisites: Graduate standing or permission of the instructor.

REL 5501 History of Christianity I (3). Christianity from its origins to the Middle Ages. Doctrinal and organizational development of the church and characteristic aspects of its spiritual life. Prerequisites: Graduate standing or permission of the instructor.

REL 5502 Saints, Witches and Missionaries (3). Survey of movements, reforms, divisions, and major ideas within institutional Christianity, 1400 to present. Prerequisites: Graduate standing or permission of the instructor.

REL 5515 History of Early Christianity (3). Origin and growth of Christianity from the first to the fifth century, and the adaptation of its message to the Greco-Roman world. Prerequisites: Graduate standing or permission of the instructor.

REL 5565 Modern Catholicism (3). Theology and liturgical practice in the Roman Catholic Church from Trent (16th c) to the present, with primary and secondary sources. Prerequisites: Graduate standing or permission of the instructor.

REL 5605 Studies in Judaism (3). Historical overview of Jewish belief and practice, with special consideration of Jewish ritual life. Prerequisites: Graduate standing or permission of the instructor.

REL 5606 Rabbinic Judaism (3). The theology and ideologies of the 1700-year period in the history of Judaism known as Rabbinic Judaism. Prerequisites: Graduate standing or permission of the instructor.

REL 5614 Ancient Judaism (3). The history, literature and characteristic institutions of Judaism from the Persian period to Amoraic times. Attention given to developments in the land of Israel and the diaspora. Prerequisites: Graduate standing or permission of the instructor.

REL 5615 Medieval Judaism (3). The works of major thinkers in Medieval Judaism, including Maimonides, Nahmanides, Halevi, Luzatto, and such topics as Jewish mysticism (Kabbalah) and Hasidism. Prerequisites: Graduate standing or permission of the instructor.

REL 5616 Religion, Culture and Politics in Israel (3). Exploration of the history of modern Israel. Discussion of issues, state and religion, ethnic and denominational tensions, democratic characters of the state and the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

REL 5617 Jews and Muslims in the Middle Ages (3). Study of Jewish culture from the rise of Islam in the 7th century -- usually considered the start of Jewish Medieval Era -- to the end of the Middle Ages.

REL 5618 Modern Judaism (3). Explores the ways in which religious beliefs and traditional concepts of Jewish self identity have changed as a result of emancipation and participation of Jews in the modern Western world. Prerequisites: Graduate standing or permission of the instructor.

REL 5619 Holocaust Representations: Religion and Remembrance (3). Examines the symbolic and cultural representations of the Holocaust through its religious/theological discourse and its remembrance. Implications for Jewish life and thought are also explored. Prerequisites: Graduate standing or permission of the instructor.

REL 5620 Kabbalah and Gender (3). Exploration of the theme of Gender within the context of Jewish mysticism. Analysis of central Kabbalistic texts pertaining to the issue of gender and sexuality.

REL 5628 Jewish Thought and Thinkers (3). The principal of Sephardic and oriental thinkers since the Middle Ages includes philosophers, rabbinics.

REL 5629 Kabbalah, Peace and War (3). Study of the basic categories of Kabbalah as an esoteric doctrine and evaluate its unique approach to peace and war within the historical context of the Jewish mystical experience.

REL 5698 Sephardic and Oriental Jewry Colloquium (3). In depth examination of important issues in the study of Sephardic and Oriental Jewry.

REL 5907 Independent Study in Sephardic and Oriental Jewry (1-6). For advanced students who possess proven significant knowledge of the field of Sephardic and Oriental Jewry, to engage in a guided research on the topic of their choice within the field. Prerequisites: REL 4610, REL 5xxx Jews of Arab Lands, REL 3xxx Sephardic Jewry, SYD 4606.

REL 5911 Independent Research (1-5). Topics are selected to meet the academic needs of the individual student. Prerequisites: Permission of the instructor is required.

REL 5934 Graduate Pedagogy (1-3). Advanced work in Religious Studies pedagogy, including classroom teaching, assignment development and grading, and seminar discussion of pedagogical issues.

REL 5937 Special Topics (3). Topics will be selected to meet the academic needs of groups of students.

REL 5945 Internship in Sephardic and Oriental Jewry (1-3). Work and study with the leadership of and research one of the Sephardic and Oriental communities in Florida. This serves as field study in which the classroom learning comes alive. Prerequisites: REL 4610, REL 5xxx Jews of Arab Lands, REL 3xxx Sephardic Jewry, SYD 4606.

REL 6013 Modern Analysis of Religion: Classic Texts in Religious Studies (3). Surveys history of religious approaches to religion (Eliade, Otto), social scientific approaches to religion (Freud, Durkheim, Weber, Geertz), and postmodern / poststructuralist approaches (Foucault, de Certeau, Baumann, Braudillard, Butler etc.). Prerequisites: Graduate standing or permission of the instructor.

REL 6094 Seminar in Religious Fundamentalism (3). Evolution of Fundamentalism from inception to our times as it began to encompass a wider umbrella of global organizations with a focus on the 3 Abrahamic traditions and advanced analysis of their texts.

REL 6096 Advanced Religious Fundamentalism: A Viewpoint for National Security (3). Evolution of Fundamentalism from inception to our time as it began to encompass a wider umbrella of global organizations with a focus on the 3 Abrahamic traditions and advanced analysis of their texts.

REL 6097 Muslim Concepts of War: A Perspective for National Security (3). Intended to acquaint students with the history and development of Muslim concepts of war

prepare them to make meaningful contributions to policy deliberations.

REL 6175 Ethics and Development (3). Examines problems in development programs, such as bribery and corruption, labor rights, child labor, gender justice, environmental sustainability, from both religious and secular justice traditions.

REL 6176 Religions and Human Rights (3). Examines sources of human rights theory in the West and compares it to a variety of religious conceptions of the rights of human beings.

REL 6195 Sociological Approaches to Religion (3). Sociological Method/Theory in religious studies scholarship on religious ritual around life cycle events. Individual and group projects. Prerequisites: Graduate standing or permission of the instructor.

REL 6285 Biblical Archaeology (3). Introduces the methods used in archaeological excavations. Finds from the Bronze Age to the Greco-Roman period are examined for the ways they bring new understanding to the texts of the Bible. Prerequisites: Graduate standing or permission of the instructor.

REL 6322 Seminar in Western Religions (3). Similarities and differences in the three Western monotheistic religions of Judaism, Christianity and Islam during their historical development. Prerequisites: Graduate standing or permission of the instructor.

REL 6332 Studies in Modern Hinduisms (3). Research methods and theory in the study of modern Hindu movements and issues in contemporary Hinduism.

REL 6347 Seminar on Pali Buddhism (3). The "original" teachings of the Buddha as preserved in the Pali Tipitaka and its commentaries readings in translation. Students knowing Pali will work with instructor. Prerequisites: REL 4340 or equivalent or permission of instructor.

REL 6348 Seminar on Tibetan Buddhism (3). Study of influential Tibetan texts in their historical contexts. Prerequisites: REL 4340 or REL 3344 or equivalent or permission of instructor.

REL 6395 Seminar in Asian Religions (3). Asian religious traditions, texts, rituals, or artifacts. May be repeated with change in content. Prerequisites: Graduate standing or permission of the instructor.

REL 6442 Religion in the Contemporary World (3). Society and religion in processes of secularization and pluralism. Attention to religious interpretations of sociocultural processes. Prerequisites: Graduate standing or permission of the instructor.

REL 6696 Indian Judaism (3). The stories, rituals, interactions and identities of four Indian Jewish communities and their implications for Indo-Israeli relations and contemporary American Judaism. Prerequisite: Graduate standing.

REL 6921 Colloquium (1). Students attend a minimum of three lectures, conferences, or professional presentations, with seminar report and discussion. May be repeated. Prerequisite: Graduate standing.

REL 6930 Pedagogy Workshop (1). Two-day teaching workshop offered by the Academy for the Art of Teaching. Prerequisite: Graduate standing.

REL 6931 Pedagogy Seminar (1). Provide Teaching Assistants with pedagogical skills, such as lecture preparation, exam preparation and grading, advising and small group work. Prerequisite: Graduate standing.

REL 6935 Seminar in Sacred Texts (3). Sacred texts with a common theme from several religions. Problems of interpretation are a central concern. Prerequisites: Graduate standing or permission of the instructor.

REL 6938 Pedagogy Forum (1). Students attend at least six (6) teaching forums for certificate offered by the Academy for the Art of Teaching. Prerequisite: AAT Summer Teaching Workshop.

REL 6940 Teaching Religious Studies (3). Assist the instructor in an introductory course and attend seminar meetings. Topics: 'faith' vs 'objectivity' in the classroom; student diversity; religious studies as a profession; designing an introductory course. Prerequisites: Graduate standing or permission of the instructor.

REL 6942 Teaching Internship (1-3). Advanced work in Religions Studies pedagogy, including classroom teaching, assignment development and grading, and seminar discussion of pedagogical issues. Prerequisite: Graduate standing.

REL 6971 Thesis (1-6). For students working on the thesis for the M.A. in Religious Studies. Prerequisites: Graduate standing and permission of the instructor.

REL 6972 Thesis Proposal Development (3). Elements of thesis construction, including thesis statement, feasibility research, bibliography, methodology. Initial 3 credits of thesis may be required for some students by GPD and thesis advisor. Prerequisite: Permission of instructor.