Religious Studies, PhD

Gain a firm understanding of the role religion plays in today's world and the expertise that prepares you for careers in academia and beyond.

Program Description

Degree Awarded: PHD Religious Studies
The academic study of religion is a central component of the humanities and has become increasingly recognized as a critical tool in understanding society and politics in a globalized world.

The PhD program in religious studies is designed for graduate students who would benefit from greater expertise regarding the nature and role of religion around the world. The program provides supplementary training that includes history, anthropology, political science, journalism, secondary education and justice studies.

Doctoral tracks in the study of religion approach the study in a variety of contexts. Specifically offered are tracks in:

- anthropology of religion
- global Christianity
- Islam in global contexts
- religion in Asia
- religion in the Americas

At a Glance

- College/School: The College of Liberal Arts and Sciences
- Location: Tempe campus
Degree Requirements

84 credit hours, foreign language exams, a written comprehensive exam, an oral comprehensive exam, a prospectus and a dissertation

Required Core (6 credit hours)
REL 501 The Study of Religion I: Genealogies, Disciplines and Power (3)
REL 502 The Study of Religion II: Epistemology, Practice and Mediation (3)

Other Requirement (3 credit hours)
REL 700 Research Methods: Introduction to College Teaching (3)

Electives (51 credit hours)

Research (12 credit hours)
REL 792 Research (12)

Culminating Experience (12 credit hours)
REL 799 Dissertation (12)

Additional Curriculum Information

Students must choose one of the five focus areas that are listed in the program description, and they select courses for the focus area as part of their electives in consultation with their supervisory committee.

As part of electives, students may include up to three credit hours of REL 690 Reading and Conference. Additionally, students may select up to six credit hours of graduate-level courses from a related discipline that support the student's research.

Other requirement course REL 700 may be substituted with approval of the academic unit.

When approved by the student's supervisory committee and the Graduate College, this program may allow up to 30 credit hours from a previously awarded master's degree to be used for this program. If students do not have a previously awarded master's degree, the remaining coursework will be made up of electives and research.

Admission Requirements

Applicants must fulfill the requirements of both the Graduate College and The College of Liberal Arts and Sciences.

Applicants are eligible to apply to the program if they have earned a bachelor's or master's degree, in any field, from a regionally accredited institution. Transcripts must show evidence of having completed the equivalent of 15 credit hours of undergraduate work in the study of religions, including advanced courses
in both western and Asian or other nonwestern religions. Applicants who have not met this requirement may be required to take additional coursework beyond program requirements to remedy this deficiency.

Applicants must have a minimum cumulative GPA of 3.30 (scale is 4.00 = "A") in the last 60 hours of their first bachelor's degree program, or applicants must have a minimum cumulative GPA of 3.30 (scale is 4.00 = "A") in an applicable master's degree program. The most competitive applicants have a GPA of 3.50 or higher.

All applicants must submit:

1. graduate admission application and application fee
2. official transcripts
3. GRE scores
4. statement of purpose
5. curriculum vitae
6. writing sample
7. contact information for three references
8. proof of English proficiency

**Additional Application Information**

An applicant whose native language is not English must provide proof of English proficiency regardless of current residency. The Graduate College requires a minimum TOEFL score of 550 (PBT) or 80 (iBT).

The statement of purpose should be approximately 1,000 words describing the applicant's academic background, the reasons for wishing to pursue a doctorate in religious studies, the proposed area of specialization, and specific research topics the student plans to engage in at Arizona State University.

The writing sample should be a work of original scholarly writing, approximately 15 to 30 pages in length. It should represent the student's best academic writing.

Students are required to submit contact information for three academic references who are qualified to provide detailed, accurate evaluations of the applicant's potential as a graduate student in religious studies. Professors, particularly faculty advisors, are preferred. Recommenders are contacted by the Graduate College with a request to complete a reference questionnaire. Letters of recommendation can be submitted in addition to answering these questions online.

GRE scores should be no more than five years old. Official scores should be sent by the ETS to ASU using the university code 4007. The department code can be left blank or entered as 0000.

**Application Deadlines**

Fall

**Program Learning Outcomes**
Program learning outcomes identify what a student will learn or be able to do upon completion of their program. This program has the following program outcomes:

- Analyze and present theories and methods in the study of religion through in-class discussion, oral presentation, and submission of original written seminar paper
- Critically analyze religion(s) by formulating research questions, examining various kinds of qualitative data, and drawing connections to relevant secondary literatures
- Conduct original research through a doctoral study drawing connections to relevant secondary literature, collect and analyzes primary data, communicate, and defend responses to research questions.

**Career Opportunities**

The doctoral program in religious studies provides students with training and knowledge relevant to careers in a variety of different roles and in a range of employment sectors. Some typical employers include government agencies, especially the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services; nongovernmental organizations; schools, colleges and universities; charities and nonprofit organizations; social services; and churches and other religious organizations.

Career examples include:

- book editor
- church administrator
- case management director
- foreign service employee
- global affairs writer
- nongovernmental organization professional
- nonprofit manager
- professional researcher and writer
- university instructor

**Contact Information**

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