

Religious Studies

Degree Type

Major

Religious Studies Program Description

The Religious Studies department at Bethany is distinctive in its dual focus on social justice and gender studies. The completion of a Religious Studies degree at Bethany College is preparatory for a variety of career paths, as well as graduate level programs. Our students gain in-depth, global religious and cultural literacy, as well as the critical thinking and writing skills required for careers or the graduate classroom.

While some of our graduates attend seminary, aspiring to ministry in its variety of forms, others have attained successful careers as health care workers, counselors, social workers, language instructors, and professors of religious studies. Religious Studies majors and minors at Bethany learn to care about, respect, and enjoy religious diversity; they also learn critical tools for investigating this world.

Religious Studies Program Goals

*The Religious Studies Program at Bethany provides students opportunities to study religious texts through multiple critical lenses, in a supportive environment that encourages diversity of thought.

*Our program fosters the appreciation of religions as global forces for cultural change in both constructive and destructive contexts.

*The Religious Studies program supports the pursuit of intersectional justice while providing interfaith experiences for all students.

*Our program provides opportunities in every classroom setting for students to develop their critical thinking and reading skills utilizing a myriad of mediums.

*The Religious Studies program supports the critical writing process by emphasizing appreciation for scholarly research, the recursive cycle of writing, and detailed feedback from instructors and peers

Religious Studies Program Outcomes

The Religious Studies program at Bethany College is designed to achieve the following goals for its students:

- Biblical literacy
 - Knowledge of biblical literature and familiarity with its influence on global literature and cultures
- Religious literacy
 - Knowledge of the intellectual, ritual, moral and practical dimensions of the world's major religions;
 - Appreciation for those traditions as dynamic, historically adaptive traditions by which human communities seek ultimate meaning or identify/construct an ultimate horizon under which meaning-making occurs;
- Cultural literacy
 - Awareness of the interaction and mutual influence among religions and other forms of human endeavor in the arts, politics, literature, ethics, etc .

- Capacity for critical reading and thinking
 - Ability to master new concepts and complex information;
 - Recognize patterns and themes in and across difficult texts in the humanities;
 - Pose relevant, critical questions on the basis of such reading
- Excellence in writing
 - Ability to produce well-organized, grammatically-correct, rhetorically-persuasive arguments

Requirements for the Major

The following courses are required for all students:

Item #	Title	Credits
RELS 224	Religion and Culture	3
RELS 220	Introduction to World Religions	3
	RELS 301 or 311	3
RELS 352	Islamic Civilization	3
RELS 490	Senior Project	2-4
	RELS 210, 231, or 244	3
	12 hours of electives at the 200 or 300 level	12
		29-31