

Religious Studies Trail Marker

Religious literacy is essential to the liberally-educated citizen of the world. Bethany students are required to successfully complete [RELS 100](#) (Introduction to Religion: Texts, Contexts, Practices). The course is offered by faculty members of the Department of Humanities and is preferably taken during the first year. RELS 100 takes an academic approach to the study of religion. Students are introduced to critical methods and definitions in religious studies and then proceed to apply one or more of those methods to a comparative study of three different world religions. The lens through which the religions are compared varies with the interest and expertise of the professor teaching the course. Students might consider, for example, religious definitions of the human condition in relation to philosophical, of the political, or moral definitions; the meaning and function of religious rituals; or the way religions develop, reinforce, or challenge gender roles in society.

Learning Objectives (common learning outcomes taken from [RELS 100](#) syllabus)

- Religious Literacy—an understanding of some religious value-systems significant to historic and contemporary American and global society, as well as the historic connections of Bethany College to the Disciples of Christ (Christian Church) and its founder Alexander Campbell.
- Skills in Critical Reflection and Self-Awareness—the ability to think critically about “religion” including, in some cases, one’s own; and an awareness of differences between one’s own worldview and that of others with whom one will work and live.
- Awareness of the Dynamic Character of Human Value Systems—An understanding of religions as complex meaning-making systems of thought and practice that are not static, but adapt to changing experience and develop over time.

Course

[RELS 100](#): Introduction to Religion: Texts, Contexts, Practices