

RELIGIOUS STUDIES

CHAIR: Robert K. Gnuse, Ph.D.

OFFICE: 408 Bobet Hall

DIRECTOR OF GRADUATE RELIGIOUS STUDIES: Stephen J. Duffy, S.T.D.

PROFESSORS: Stephen J. Duffy, James W. Gaffney (emeritus), Robert K. Gnuse, Vernon J. Gregson, Kenneth P. Keulman, Earl J. Richard, Catherine Wessinger

ASSOCIATE PROFESSORS: Tiina K. Allik, Peter J. Bernardi, S.J., Thomas A. Smith
ASSISTANT PROFESSORS: E. Christian Brugger, Timothy C. Cahill, Grant A. Kaplan

PROVOST DISTINGUISHED PROFESSOR: Denis R. Janz

The master of arts program in religious studies aims at providing a solid and well-rounded foundation in theology and religious studies.

The curriculum is conceived as a broad comprehensive approach to the study of religion. The major concern is to develop in the degree candidate a capability of approaching the field with a sensitivity to scripture, the historical development of western religious thought, an ecumenical awareness, an interdisciplinary mentality, and knowledge of the field's varied methodologies.

More specifically, the program hopes to provide a solid academic basis in religious studies for its students, who will upon completion of their degree, enter into a variety of occupations: teaching religion in high schools or on the primary level, functioning as religious education coordinators on the parish level, serving as staff members of Christian centers, conducting retreats and workshops, organizing and teaching in adult education programs, or working in offices of religious education. The program is also designed to accommodate those who wish to embark upon the first step to the doctoral degree in religious studies or theology and for priests, ministers, religious, and laity who wish to update their theological understanding. Finally, the program aims to service those who wish to develop their knowledge and understanding of religion as one of the major forces in the shaping of culture in human history.

In conjunction with the School of Law, the department also offers the opportunity to pursue the joint juris doctor/master of arts. This program is particularly well suited to those whose professional work combines legal issues with matters of religion or with cross-cultural concerns. Students in this program must be separately admitted to the School of Law as well as to the graduate program in religious studies. The School of Law and the Department of Religious Studies each accept nine credit hours from the other's program to make a combined total of 103 hours for the J.D./M.A.

ADMISSION TO CANDIDACY

A bachelor of arts degree or its equivalent from an accredited college or university is required for admission. Applicants normally must have an overall average of 2.5 in their undergraduate work.

Applicants must have an appropriate background in undergraduate studies. An applicant without such a background may be expected to take preliminary work in religious studies for undergraduate credit.

TRANSFER OF ACADEMIC CREDIT

Students who have earned academic credit at another accredited college or university may be allowed to transfer a maximum of six credit hours, with the approval of the departmental chair and/or dean of the college. Each degree program has certain restrictions concerning acceptance of courses completed at other institutions. Transfer of credits earned more than five years prior to enrollment will ordinarily not be considered.

Transfer students will be informed of the amount of credit which will transfer prior to their enrollment, if possible, but at the latest, prior to the end of the first academic term in which they are enrolled.

COURSE PROGRAM

Thirty credit hours must be obtained by either of two programs:

Program A: 30 class hours

Program B: 24 class hours plus 6 hours of thesis preparation.

Reading competence in at least one appropriate foreign language, ancient or modern, is required. Competence in a foreign language will be determined by a departmental examination. Students must pass this examination before the completion of 12 credit hours of work.

The Graduate Record Examination must be taken prior to the second semester of enrollment in the M.A. degree program.

Each student is required to complete foundational courses in the following areas:

- biblical literature
- systematic theology
- the history of Christianity
- ethics
- world religions

By choice of electives, students can then develop a concentration in any of these areas.

Upon completion of class requirements for either program A or program B, each student will take comprehensive examinations which will have both written and oral components. J.D./M.A. students have the option of a capstone project instead of comprehensives.

An average of B must be maintained for all work.

RELIGIOUS STUDIES GRADUATE COURSES

RELS A701 Biblical Methodologies

3 cr. hrs.

This course exposes students to contemporary critical methods used in the scholarly analysis of the biblical text, including form criticism, source criticism, and tradition historical criticism among others. Significant portions of the biblical text will be analyzed.

RELS A704 Pauline Writings

3 cr. hrs.

This course offers an introduction to Pauline studies (life of the Apostle, epistolary genre), and an exposition of the thought of Paul and its development in his seven authentic letters with a focus upon Paul as pastoral theologian and his concepts of God's lordship, the nature and role of the Christ-event, and the consequences of this event for humanity. The course concludes with a survey of the Paulinist writers, i.e., those who later wrote in Paul's name.

RELS A706 The Synoptic Writers

3 cr. hrs.

Following a brief introduction to Synoptic research, this course studies each writer in turn—Mark, Matthew, and the author of Luke and the Acts of the Apostles—to discern their sources, structure, purpose, and theology with special attention to the uniqueness of each writer as narrator and thinker, to the story as a totality, and to the intended audience's response.

RELS A708 Johannine Literature

3 cr. hrs.

This course examines the uniqueness of the Johannine corpus (a gospel, a theological tract, and two letters) and community, with a focus on the background, composition, structure, and theology of the Fourth Gospel. Also, the later documents produced by this unusual community as it merged into the wider Christian community will be examined.

- RELS A712 Ethics: Systems and Issues** **3 cr. hrs.**
 This is a basic course acquainting the student with main approaches to normative ethics, both personal and social, and to the analysis of ethical language and argumentation.
- RELS A715 The History of Exegesis** **3 cr. hrs.**
 This course presents an overview of the history of biblical interpretation from the Patristic age to the present. Participants will select an important biblical passage and trace the history of its interpretation.
- RELS A718 Early Christian Thought** **3 cr. hrs.**
 This course looks at the development of Christian thought through the ante and post-Nicene periods to the end of the patristic period, with readings in primary sources.
- RELS A720 Medieval Christian Thought** **3 cr. hrs.**
 This course examines Christian thought from the end of the patristic period to the eve of the Reformation. Within this period, interest will center on the three centuries between 1000 A.D. and 1300 A.D.—the time when the Middle Ages reached their apogee.
- RELS A722 Reformation and Counter Reformation** **3 cr. hrs.**
 This course examines the theological positions advanced by the principal reformers, e.g., Luther, Melancthon, Zwingli, Calvin, etc., and the Roman Catholic response made at the Council of Trent.
- RELS A724 Theology in the 19th and 20th Centuries** **3 cr. hrs.**
 This course will trace the rise and development of liberal and neo-orthodox theology in Protestantism and developments in Roman Catholicism during this period of clash between religion and modernity. Revisionist and post-liberal theologies are also studied.
- RELS A726 Classical Christian Thinkers I** **3 cr. hrs.**
 This course offers an introduction to key episodes in the history of Christian thought by reading recognized theological classics from the pre-Reformation era.
- RELS A727 Classical Christian Thinkers II** **3 cr. hrs.**
 This course gives an introduction to key episodes in the history of Christian thought by reading recognized theological classics from the Reformation and post-Reformation eras.
- RELS A728 The Christian God** **3 cr. hrs.**
 This course looks at the problem of belief as it evolved from the Enlightenment period to the present, bearing on the secularization process, on God-talk and traditional approaches to God. It will include investigation of recent efforts by process thinkers to reconstruct the idea of God, and implications for Christian theology and life.
- RELS A730 Christology** **3 cr. hrs.**
 This course gives a brief overview of New Testament Christology followed by a study of the development of the pre-Nicene views of Christ and his relation to the Father; the rise of heterodox counterpositions; the official response at various stages of dialectic culminating in the Councils of Nicea, Constantinople I, Ephesus, and Chalcedon; and contemporary critiques of the classical Christological model and recent revisions.
- RELS A732 Church and Sacraments** **3 cr. hrs.**
 This course is a study of the theology of Christian sacraments: structure and function of sacramental economy; a theology of the symbol; the dialectic between rite and church; the relationship between sacramental life and secular existence; and the religious import of non-Roman Catholic sacraments.

- RELS A733 Ecumenical Theology** **3 cr. hrs.**
 This course reviews the origins of Christian division and the motives for the restoration of Christian unity. It reviews recent theological literature and focuses on the joint statements of interfaith dialogues.
- RELS A738 Theological Method** **3 cr. hrs.**
 This is a seminar discussion of the problems raised by philosophical theology for doing theology in the contemporary intellectual context. Readings will be taken from authors such as Lonergan, Rahner, Nygren, Gilkey, Ogden, Tracy, and Pannenberg.
- RELS A744 The Theology of Bernard Lonergan** **3 cr. hrs.**
 Bernard Lonergan has developed a contemporary theological method for the integration of religion with the other dimensions of human existence, principally the human and natural sciences and society. This method and its philosophical basis will be studied in detail. Some background in philosophy is recommended.
- RELS A746 Theology of Karl Rahner** **3 cr. hrs.**
 This course offers a reading survey of the writings of the theologian who has probably been the single most important thinker in the reshaping of contemporary Roman Catholic theology.
- RELS A748 Religions of Asia** **3 cr. hrs.**
 This course offers a study of the history and contemporary status of Hinduism, Buddhism, the Chinese religious tradition, and Islam.
- RELS A749 Islam, Muhammad, and Qur'an** **3 cr. hrs.**
 This course looks at the rise and development of Islam. The Qur'an will be critically read. Topics include the life of Muhammad, Sunnah, Shiah, and the Shariah.
- RELS A750 Theology of Religions** **3 cr. hrs.**
 Is a unified understanding of religion possible given the diversity of religious manifestations? This course offers an inquiry into the history and contemporary status of attempts to explore questions surrounding interreligious dialogue.
- RELS A754 Christian Spirituality** **3 cr. hrs.**
 This course provides a historical and theological study of the development of Christian spirituality and of the teachings of the major schools.
- RELS A755 Dynamics of Salvation** **3 cr. hrs.**
 This course is a study of the history and contemporary status of theories of redemption.
- RELS A756 Theological Anthropology** **3 cr. hrs.**
 This course is a study of the doctrine of grace as it emerged from the scriptures, the Patristic tradition, the medieval synthesis, and through the Reformation period down to the present era. The focus is on anthropological implications.
- RELS A758 Biblical Morality** **3 cr. hrs.**
 This course looks at historical exposition accompanied by individual research on selected texts that have strongly influenced Christian morality.
- RELS A760 Schools of Thought in Ethics** **3 cr. hrs.**
 This course is a critical study of historical schools of thought in moral philosophy and theology with special attention to their influence on Christian norms, values, and practices.

RELS A761 The Pentateuch 3 cr. hrs.
Pentateuchal traditions are assessed in this course in terms of their literary quality, meaning, and inter-canonical relationships. Significant scholarly issues will be reviewed and textual evaluation will be emphasized.

RELS A762 Biblical Wisdom Literature 3 cr. hrs.
The didactic literature of the Old Testament is evaluated here in terms of textual, literary, philosophical, and existential categories. Relationships to other intellectual and theological perspectives will be assessed.

RELS A763 Hebrew Prophets 3 cr. hrs.
This course critically evaluates the prophetic corpus in literary, social-historical, and theological categories. Emphasis is placed on the developmental process which culminates in new theological trajectories.

RELS A770 The History of Christianity 3 cr. hrs.
This course is a survey of the history of Christianity from the post-biblical period to the present. Utilizing the methods of intellectual, institutional, and social history, this course focuses on major developments, decisive turning points, prominent personalities, and perennial theological problems in order to give a sweeping overview and orientation for further study.

RELS A800 Social Ethics 3 cr. hrs.
This course investigates methods and theories in social ethics, with attention to their political and economic implications and their relationship to Christian beliefs.

RELS A802 War, Peace, and Global Justice 3 cr. hrs.
This course offers an exploration of ethical issues of war, peace, and global justice in light of Christian ethical principles. The issues of pacifism and just war or just revolution are explored.

RELS A803 Women in Religion and Culture 3 cr. hrs.
This course investigates the mutual impact of religious beliefs and gender roles. Special topics include the origin of patriarchy, structures of patriarchy, function of shamanism in women's lives, women in patriarchal religions, violence perpetuated against women in patriarchal cultures/religions, and women creating women's religion.

RELS A804 Millennium Seminar 3 cr. hrs.
Cross-cultural investigation of the diversity of religious patterns that scholars have termed millennialism, the expectation of an imminent transition to a collective salvation. Catastrophic millennialism, progressive millennialism, nativist millennial movements, and why some millennial groups become involved in violence will be studied.

RELS A805 Comparative Religious Ethics 3 cr. hrs.
This course is an introduction to the theory, method, and practice of comparative religious ethics that provides an objective procedure for analyzing a religious group's ethical system. The method of analysis will allow for a way to conduct a comparative inquiry and draw conclusions that do not distort the ethical systems being analyzed.

RELS A806 Bioethics 3 cr. hrs.
The subject matter in this course is defined as the study of moral issues generated or significantly complicated by the biological sciences, both theoretical and applied. The course surveys values and principles traditionally invoked, investigates a representative variety of cases in personal or professional behavior, and reviews recent trends in the literature.

- RELS A816 Philosophy of Religion** **3 cr. hrs.**
 This course is a study of the rational status of belief in and beliefs about God, illustrated by writings typical of several different philosophical perspectives; problems of religious language; immortality; and competing truth claims of religions.
- RELS A820 Psychology of Religion** **3 cr. hrs.**
 This course offers a general introduction to the psychological study of religious behavior comprising a short history of the subject with special attention to classic writings since 1890, a review of outstanding theories and methods, and a representative sampling of recent research, especially on personality and development.
- RELS A830 Hindu Theology** **3 cr. hrs**
 This course is a study of the rise and development of Hindu theistic thought in the millennium following Shankara (788 – 820 A.D.). The schools of identity, difference, and difference-in-identity will be critically studied.
- RELS A891 Thesis I** **3 cr. hrs.**
- RELS A892 Thesis II** **3 cr. hrs.**
- RELS A893 Directed Reading** **3 cr. hrs.**
- RELS A894 Experimental Course** **3 cr. hrs.**
 An experimental course is a course which is offered on an ad hoc basis.
- RELS A896 Seminar/Workshop** **arr.**
 A seminar is a supervised group of students sharing the results of their research on a common topic. A workshop is a supervised group of students participating in a common effort.
- RELS A898 Research Project** **arr.**
 Focuses on empirical or historical investigation, culminating in a written report.