RELIGIOUS STUDIES, BA

Apart from requirements that apply to all students in the College of Arts and Sciences, the only prerequisites for Religious Studies students are an interest in cross-cultural work in different historical periods and a curiosity about the many ways that human communities--past and present--have devised for creating worlds in which to live and act.

(205) 348-5271
212 Presidents Hall
religiousstudies@ua.edu

Admission into the Major

Students are encouraged to declare a major no later than the fourth semester of full-time enrollment (or at 61 semester hours for transfer students), but students are still able to declare the major beyond these recommendations. Students can declare a major by meeting with an academic advisor and requesting the major be added to their academic record. Prospective majors and double-majors should contact the religious studies office to make an appointment with the REL undergraduate advisor to discuss their career goals and academic interests.

Special Opportunities

The Department of Religious Studies has a variety of special opportunities for motivated undergraduate students. Students regularly participate in undergraduate research, in both small seminars, digital humanities courses, and independent studies. We have an honors option that includes a specialized research project, tailored to the interests of the student, and an Accelerated Master's Program. Qualified undergraduates who apply during their junior year to the Accelerated Master's Program (AMP), if accepted, will take 4 MA courses in their senior year that will count towards their BA Religious Studies major and MA Religion in Culture degree. After their senior year, they will need to complete 24 additional credit hours in the MA program to complete the graduate degree.

The Department has also greatly benefited from donors who have endowed scholarship funds to support its students (either as merit-based awards or funds used throughout the semester, and at the Chair's discretion, to assist those in financial need). The names of the students who have received these awards, selected by a faculty committee each year, are inscribed on plaques that hang in the Department's lounge.

The Department conducts ongoing lecture and discussion series and also supports an active Religious Studies Student Association. Find us on Facebook: "Department of Religious Studies at The University of Alabama" and the "Religious Studies Student Association" or on Twitter/X @StudyReligion, Instagram, and LinkedIn. Finally, in addition to featuring undergraduate research on the department's blog, the Department of Religious Studies hosts an annual student research symposium. Talk to an REL professor about getting involved.

Students earning the bachelor of arts (BA) degree with a major in religious studies must complete all University, College, and departmental degree requirements. These include the general education requirements, the following major requirements, all requirements for an approved minor and other necessary credits to total 120 credit hours.

Code and Title		Hours
Required Courses		
REL 100 or	Intro To Religious Studies	3
REL 105	Honors Intro Relig Stdy	
REL 102	Religions of World	3
REL 490	Senior Capstone Seminar [1]	3
Electives		
Select twenty-one hours of REL electives		21
Total Hours		**30**

Footnotes

[1] REL 490 Senior Capstone Seminar is offered only in the spring semester. Students are expected to enroll during the senior year, but may enroll as early as the junior year. The Department holds seats in this class for REL students so please contact the main office (8-5271) to learn how to enroll.

Grade Point Average

A 2.0 grade point average in the major is required for completion of the degree. Please see the Grades and Grade Points section of this catalog for an explanation on grade point average calculations.

Upper-level Residency

A minimum of 12 hours of 300- and 400-level courses in the major must be earned on this campus.

Ancillary Courses

This major does not require ancillary courses; however, students interested in graduate-level work in the study of religion are advised to take either French or German as part of the undergraduate program of study. Prospective graduate students in religious studies should consult with faculty members concerning additional language study appropriate to their particular scholarly interests.

Required Minor

This major requires the completion of a minor.

Additional Major Requirements

With department approval, the equivalent of up to 12 credit hours can be applied toward the major requirement from relevant coursework done outside the religious studies department. Consult the REL Advisor to discuss the possibility of counting courses done outside REL toward your REL major.

Students can count a maximum of six hours of online REL courses toward the major or minor.

For more information on degree requirements, visit https://religion.ua.edu/undergraduate. Students are responsible for ensuring that they have met all University, College, major and minor requirements. However, each student must meet with an advisor in the major department for academic planning and to be cleared for registration each semester. College advisors are also available for additional assistance with minor, College, and University requirements.

Prerequisites

Although the normal prerequisite to enroll in 300 and 400 upper-level REL courses is at least junior standing, the Department is prepared to make exemptions. Please talk to the professor or the Undergraduate

Director if you are not yet a junior but are interested in any of our upper-level courses.

Special Courses

REL 310: REL Goes to the Movies

REL 310 REL Goes to the Movies is offered every semester and is devoted to studying religion in popular culture/public humanities; it is a one credit hour course repeatable up to a total of three credit hours and is open to all students. REL 310 REL Goes to the Movies meets in the evenings to view and then blog on films (different films are included each semester, with faculty introducing them and leading a discussion afterwards).

REL Departmental Honors

REL 400 REL Honors Thesis is part of REL Honors, which is open to majors/double majors in REL who have at least a 3.0 cumulative GPA and at least a 3.5 GPA in their REL major. It involves enrolling in 3 hours of REL 400 (normally in your senior year) and writing a final thesis (equivalent to a publishable paper in an undergraduate student journal). Departmental Honors also requires that one regularly offered REL seminar be designated as your Honors Seminar, normally taken prior to enrolling in REL 400. An oral defense of your thesis is required. Please speak with the REL advisor no later than your junior year if you are interested in applying for Departmental Honors. For additional information, please contact the REL professor with whom you would intend to pursue thesis work.

AMP Course Work

Highly motivated undergraduates who apply to the Accelerated Masters Program (AMP) will take REL 501 Social Theory Foundations and REL 502 Public Humanities Foundations in the fall semester of their final undergraduate year, plus two MA seminars in the spring semester of their final undergraduate year. These courses will count towards both the BA degree and an MA in Religion in Culture.

Types of Jobs Accepted

Majors and minors in Religious Studies develop crucial skills necessary for citizenship in the 21st century, including critical thinking, oral and written communication skills and cultural literacy. Graduates of the program have pursued careers in a variety of venues, such as medicine, law, non-profit government organizations, various religiously-affiliated ministries, public administration, music and teaching. Read more on our blog about what our students gone on to do with their training.

Learn more about opportunities in this field at the Career Center