Why Study Religion at Tufts?

To study religion in an academic setting is to learn how to think about religion from a critical vantage point. As a critical and comparative discipline, the study of religion provides a powerful set of tools for exploring other cultures and thinking about the world we live in. Students learn to ask pressing questions about the role religion plays in personal experience and human society; about the nature and origin of religion; and about the dynamic interplay among religion and other dimensions of human culture, from biology, sociology, and economy to psychology, politics, and gender.

The study of religion is central to a liberal arts education and provides excellent preparation for a wide range of careers from education, medicine, law, and the arts to social work, ministry, and foreign service. Through the critical study of religion students develop the kinds of critical thinking skills essential for responsible engagement in their community and the larger world. The study of religion is an ideal preparation for entrance into graduate programs in religious studies, theological studies, or seminary training.

The study of religion provides a wonderful complement to other majors and programs at Tufts such as History, Philosophy, Sociology, English and International Relations.

The Department of Religion at Tufts is dedicated to the exploration and critical analysis of religion as a central aspect of human history and culture. Courses seek to promote:

- Awareness of the diversity of religious experience around the globe and throughout history
- Empathetic engagement with the beliefs, texts, and practices of the world’s religions
- Mastery of a range of methods for studying religion
- Reflection on the role religion plays in shaping human customs, values, beliefs, and institutions.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Course</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Instructor</th>
<th>Days, Times</th>
<th>Location/Code</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>REL 06</td>
<td>Philosophy of Religion</td>
<td>Elizabeth Lemons</td>
<td>D+, TR, 10:30-11:45 AM</td>
<td>CLST: PHIL 16</td>
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<tr>
<td>REL 22</td>
<td>Introduction to the New Testament</td>
<td>Jennifer Eyl</td>
<td>K+, MW, 4:30-5:45 PM</td>
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<tr>
<td>REL 37</td>
<td>Global History of Christianity since the Middle Ages</td>
<td>Craig Tichelkamp</td>
<td>T+, TR, 9:00-11:15 AM</td>
<td>CL: CST 37, HIST 15</td>
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<tr>
<td>REL 43</td>
<td>Asian Religions</td>
<td>Brian Hatcher</td>
<td>L+, TR, 4:30-5:45 PM</td>
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<tr>
<td>REL 45</td>
<td>Introduction to Buddhism</td>
<td>Joseph Walser</td>
<td>1, T, 9:00-11:30 AM</td>
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<tr>
<td>REL 56</td>
<td>Contemporary Catholicism</td>
<td>Peggy Hutaaff</td>
<td>H+, TR, 1:30-2:45 PM</td>
<td>CL: AMER 94-06</td>
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<td>REL 60</td>
<td>Hindus and Christians</td>
<td>Brian Hatcher</td>
<td>7, W, 1:30-2:45 PM</td>
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<td>REL 76</td>
<td>After God: Atheism and Secularism</td>
<td>Ken Garden</td>
<td>G+, MW, 1:30-2:45 PM</td>
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<td>REL 104</td>
<td>Feminist Theologies</td>
<td>Peggy Hutaaff</td>
<td>J+, TR, 3:00-4:15 PM</td>
<td>CL: WGSS 140</td>
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<td>REL 106</td>
<td>Religion, Violence, and Sexuality</td>
<td>Elizabeth Lemons</td>
<td>F+, TR, 12:00-1:15 PM</td>
<td>CL: AMER 180-02, WGSS 142</td>
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<td>REL 141</td>
<td>Indian Philosophies</td>
<td>Joseph Walser</td>
<td>10, M, 6:30-9:00 PM</td>
<td>CL: PHIL 122</td>
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<tr>
<td>REL 152</td>
<td>Islam and Modernity</td>
<td>Ken Garden</td>
<td>R+, MW, 9:00-10:15 AM</td>
<td>CL: REL 194-01 (IR seminar level)</td>
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Crosslisted from in other departments or programs

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<tr>
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<td>REL 137</td>
<td>The Story of King David</td>
<td>JS 136</td>
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<td>REL 142</td>
<td>Jewish Experience on Film</td>
<td>JS 142</td>
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<tr>
<td>REL 157</td>
<td>Spiritual Development Across the Life-Span</td>
<td>CSHD 157</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Faculty

Heather Curtis | Department Chair | Associate Professor
Eaton Hall, Room 316A | heather.curtis@tufts.edu
History of Christianity and American Religions

Jennifer Eyl | Assistant Professor
Eaton Hall, Room 312 | jennifer.eyl@tufts.edu
Ancient Christianity and Religions of the Ancient World

Kenneth Garden | Associate Professor
Eaton Hall, Room 313 | ken.garden@tufts.edu
Islam and Sufism

Brian Hatcher | Professor and Packard Chair of Theology
Eaton Hall, Room 314 | brian.hatcher@tufts.edu
Hinduism and Religion in Modern South Asia

Peggy Hutaff | Senior Lecturer
Eaton Hall, Room 316B | peggy.hutaff@tufts.edu
Christian Studies

Elana Jefferson-Tatum | Mellon Bridge Assistant Professor
*On Leave 2019-2020*
Eaton Hall, Room 313 | elana.jefferson_tatum@tufts.edu
African Religious Cultures

Elizabeth Lemons | Senior Lecturer
Eaton Hall, Room 316B | elizabeth.lemons@tufts.edu
Religion and Culture

Joseph Walser | Associate Professor
Eaton Hall, Room 329 | joseph.walser@tufts.edu
Buddhism and Religion in Ancient South Asia
Requirements

The Religion Major

Ten (10) courses distributed as follows:

**Foundation Requirement**
After taking two courses in the department, students must take REL 99 Theory and Method in the Study of Religion.

**Diversity Requirement (four courses)**
Students should have exposure to at least four different religious traditions. This may be accomplished through classes in which four different traditions are taught, or through four courses, each focused on a different religious tradition, or through some combination thereof. Students are to take four classes within the department to achieve the diversity requirement. The advisor and the chair of the Department of Religion must approve the courses taken to fulfill this requirement.

**Depth Requirement (three courses)**
Students must choose a subfield in religious studies. This may be one religious tradition, the traditions of a geographical region, or a religious textual tradition. Students must demonstrate that they have taken at least three classes in that specialty. One of the three courses must be in the doctrinal (theological and philosophical) aspects of religion. In their chosen areas of specialization, students must take two above-100 level courses. These may include an independent study or a senior thesis. The departmental advisor and the chair must approve the student’s area of specialization. No course may count for both the diversity and depth requirements.

**Two Additional Courses**
The two courses can be listed or cross-listed within the department.

The Religion Minor

Five (5) courses distributed as follows:

**Foundation Requirement**
After taking two courses in the department, students must take REL 99 Theory and Method in the Study of Religion.

**Diversity Requirement (three courses)**
Students should have exposure to at least three different religious traditions. This may be accomplished through classes in which three different traditions are taught, or through three courses, each focused on a different religious tradition, or through some combination thereof. The advisor and the chair of the Department of Religion must approve the courses taken to fulfill this requirement.

**Upper-division Requirement**
One other course numbered above 100. This course may not be counted as one of the three courses of the above requirement.
Course Descriptions

REL 06  Philosophy of Religion
Elizabeth Lemons  D+, TR, 10:30-11:45 AM  CL: PHIL 16

This course offers an introduction to the philosophical analysis of major religious issues. We will explore such topics as the nature of religion, religious experience, and ultimate reality, the problem of evil and/or suffering, and the relationship between faith and reason and the relationship between religion and science. By exploring different philosophical approaches to the study of religion—including existential, phenomenological, linguistic and comparative, students will develop constructive responses to the variety of ways in which philosophers analyze religious beliefs and practices in diverse world religions. This course counts toward the Humanities distribution requirement.

REL 22  Introduction to the New Testament
Jennifer Eyl  K+, MW, 4:30-5:45 PM

We will study the origins of Christianity and the evolution of its earliest beliefs and practices, as reflected in the writings ultimately selected for its canon. Topics will include: Jesus and his interpreters, Paul and his letters, beginnings of the church, interaction between Christians and their Jewish and Greco-Roman environments, and women’s participation in the shaping of early Christian history. Occasional readings from non-canonical literature will add perspective. This course counts toward the Humanities distribution requirement.
REL 37     Global History of Christianity since the Middle Ages
Craig Tichelkamp       T+, TR, 9:00-11:15 AM       CL: CST 37, HIST 15

This course explores the development of Christianity as a world movement from the early modern period to the present. We will study major historical events such as the Protestant Reformation; expansions of Catholicism and Protestantism through exploration, trade, conquest and mission; the growing diversity and transformations of Christian traditions in colonial and postcolonial societies; the rise of indigenous expressions of Christian faith and practice in Asia, Africa, and Latin America; the global spread of evangelicalism and pentecostalism; and development of Christian 'internationalism' in an era of increasing globalization. This course counts toward the Humanities or Social Sciences distribution requirement.

REL 43     Asian Religions
Brian Hatcher       L+, TR, 4:30-5:45 PM

An introduction to the major religious traditions of Asia that seeks to promote critical reflection on and imaginative engagement with the history, texts, and practices central to Hinduism, Buddhism, Daoism, Confucianism, and Shinto. This course counts toward the Humanities distribution requirement, World Civilization requirement, East Asian Culture/ Diasporas and Region of Origin, and South/Southeast Asian Culture and Region of Origin options.
REL 56  Contemporary Catholicism
Peggy Hutaff    H+, TR, 1:30-2:45 PM

A study of the complex landscape of contemporary Catholicism in the U.S., emerging from the mandates for reform and renewal set forth by Vatican Council II (1962-65). We will study basic Catholic beliefs and practices; evolving models of church, ministry, and vocation; contemporary interpretations of ancient traditions and dogmas; the impact of critical scholarship in Religion and greater access to theological education; dialogues around ethical issues, such as contraception, abortion, diverse sexual identities, and lifestyles; controversies over women's ordination, optional priestly celibacy, and divorce; calls for change from feminist and other liberation-theological and social justice initiatives; parish closings; disclosures of clergy sexual abuse; the aesthetics and religious imagination of Catholic culture in its diverse expressions. Major focus on how Catholics in the U.S. have “lived their religion” amidst the push and pull of unity and diversity, continuity and change, gain and loss, in the wake of Vatican II. This course counts toward the Humanities distribution requirement.
REL 60      Hindus and Christians
Brian Hatcher      7, W, 1:30-2:45 PM
Introduction to central issues in the encounter between Hindus and Christians, especially during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Special consideration given to understanding this encounter against the backdrop of British imperialism and Christian missions, to investigating key thinkers and themes from 1800 to the present, and to appreciating its impact on the modern discourse of religious pluralism. This course counts toward the Humanities distribution requirement, the World Civilization requirement, and the South/Southeast Asian Culture and Region of Origin option.

REL 76      After God: Atheism and Secularism
Ken Garden      G+, MW, 1:30-2:45 PM
What is religion, and can people live without it? This course explores the question by looking at Atheism, the rejection of the existence of god/s, and Secularism, the removal of religion from public life. We will compare ancient atheisms, such as Epicureanism, to that of contemporary “New Atheists,” to look at what is at stake in different arguments for atheism and what kind of value systems they entail. We will also engage with different theories of the origins of Western secularism and its implications for modern life. This course counts toward the Humanities distribution requirement.
“Feminism,” says theologian Judith Plaskow, “is a process of coming to affirm ourselves as women/persons – and seeing that affirmation mirrored in religious and social institutions.” This course will survey the impact that the growth of feminist/womanist consciousness since the 1960’s has had on the religious commitments of women, as well as on traditional institutions, beliefs, and practices. We will explore new approaches and methods which recent feminist scholarship has brought to the study and interpretation of ancient religious texts and other historical sources, and will assess how the inclusion of women’s critiques and perspectives is challenging, enlarging, and enriching the craft of theology itself. Also to be considered: the rise of feminist rituals and alternative spiritualities, and the relation of religious feminism to other struggles for human dignity and liberation. This course counts toward the Humanities distribution requirement.

REL 106    Religion, Violence, and Sexuality
Elizabeth Lemons   F+, TR, 12:00-1:15 PM
CL: AMER 180-02, WGSS 142

This course will analyze representative ethical and theological positions on current issues related to violence/nonviolence and sexuality in the U.S. We will look at the treatment of these issues in a variety of contemporary religious and secular traditions. Topics include responses to war, terrorism, structural oppressions (such as racism, sexism, classism, heterosexism), and sexual violence, as well as controversies around reproductive rights and same-sex marriage. This course counts toward the Humanities distribution requirement.
The radical transformation in human societies, economies, institutions, and world-views over the past 200 years known as modernity has posed challenges to all religious traditions. This course will begin with a survey of the major figures and movements in modern Islamic thought from the 19th century to the present and end with a survey of the contemporary religious landscape of Egypt, covering the Muslim Brotherhood, different trends in Salafism, and the “new preachers.” This course counts toward the Humanities distribution requirement, World Civilization requirement, and the Middle Eastern Culture and South & Southeast Asian Culture options.
SCHOOL OF ARTS AND SCIENCES

Religion

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