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.
Spring 2015 Courses

REL 06  Philosophy of Religion
Lemons  F+  TR  12:00-1:15 pm  CLST: PHIL 16

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

REL 37  Christianity & Globalization since the Middle Ages
Curtis  E+  MW  10:30-11:45 am  CLST: HIST 80-02

REL 40  History of Religion in America since the Civil War
Curtis  G+  MW  1:30-2:45 pm  CLST: HIST 83-01, AMER 194-10

REL 44  Introduction to Hinduism
Hatcher  J+  TR  3:00-4:15 pm

REL 53  Introduction to the Religions of China
Walser  10  M  6:30-9:00 pm

REL 56  Contemporary Catholicism
Hutaff  F+  TR  12:00-1:15 pm

REL 104  Feminist Theologies
Hutaff  H+  TR  1:30-2:45 pm

REL 106  Religion, Violence, and Sexuality  CLST: AMER 194-18
Lemons  D+  TR  10:30-11:45 am

REL 145  Tibetan Buddhism and Buddhism of the Himalayas
Walser  1  T  9:00-11:30 am

REL 152  Islam and Modernity
REL 194-03  Islam and Modernity – IR seminar level
Garden  I+  MW  3:00-4:15 pm

REL 191-04  Approaches to Middle East Studies
Garden  10+  M  6:00-9:00 pm

REL 192  Independent Study
REL 199  Senior Honors Thesis

Courses Co-Listed with Religion

REL 0010-19  From Creation to Redemption: The History of Judaism  JS 92-05
REL 00136  Religion in Japanese History  HIST 132
REL 0023/0121  Early Islamic Art  FAH 0021/121
REL 0065  Introduction to Yiddish Culture  JS 65
REL 0078  Jewish Women  JS 78
REL 0120  Armenian Art, Arch & Pol 14th-15th Cent.  FAH 120
REL 0122  Iconoclasm & Iconophobia  FAH 122
REL 0126  Roots of Jewish Imagination  JS 126
REL 0158  Music & Prayer in Jewish Tradition  JS 150
Faculty

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

The Religion Major

Ten 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 religions traditions 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.

• **Depth Requirement (three courses)**
  Students must choose a religious tradition, the traditions of a geographical region, or a religious textual tradition and take at least three classes in that specialty. One of the three courses must be in the doctrinal (theological or philosophical) aspects of religion and two must be 100-level courses.

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

The Religion Minor

Five 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 religions traditions 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.

• **Upper-division Requirement**
  One other course at the 100-level that does not count for any of the above requirements.
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 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.

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  Christianity & Globalization since the Middle Ages  
Heather Curtis  E+  MW  10:30-11:45 am  CLST: HIST 80-02  
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 Reformations; expansions of Catholicism and Protestantism through exploration, trade, conquest and mission; the growing diversity and transformations of Christian traditions in colonial and post-colonial 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 40  History of Religion in America since the Civil War  
Heather Curtis  G+  MW  1:30-2:45 pm  CLST: HIST 83-01, AMER 194-10  
This course is about religion in the United States from the Civil War to the present. We will study major figures, events and issues that have shaped American religious history, while paying particular attention to the ways that social and cultural contexts have influenced religious experience in different times and place. Throughout, we will ask how religion has influenced the history of the United States, and conversely, how religious traditions have been transformed by American culture. Key topics and themes include immigration and ethnicity; pluralism and diversity; responses to urbanization, industrialization, and science; evangelicalism, fundamentalism and pentecostalism; social change and civil rights. This course counts toward the Humanities or Social Sciences distribution requirement.
REL 44  Introduction to Hinduism
Brian Hatcher     J+ TR  3:00-4:15 pm

An overview of the Hindu religious tradition, combining historical and
textual study with investigation of contemporary practice. Promotes critical
reflection on Hindu beliefs, social structures, popular customs, and rituals.
This course counts toward the Humanities distribution requirement, the
World Civilization requirement, and the South and Southeast Asian Culture
option.

REL 53  Introduction to the Religions of China
Joseph Walser     10 M  6:30-9:00 pm

This course will cover the major religious
traditions of China. We will trace the
development of and interactions between
Buddhism, Confucianism, and Daoism from
the Shang dynasty to the present. Emphasis
will be placed on the mutual influence
between the philosophical, political, literary
and economic aspects of each religion.
This course counts toward the Humanities
distribution requirement, the World
Civilization requirement, and the East Asian
Culture and Diasporas option.
REL 56  Contemporary Catholicism
Peggy Hutaff      F+   TR   12:00-1:15 pm

A study of the complex landscape of contemporary Catholicism, 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 multiple locations and 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 104  Feminist Theologies
Peggy Hutaff      H+   TR   1:30-2:45 pm

“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 which the growth of feminist/womanist consciousness during the last four decades has had on the religious commitments of women, as well as on traditional religious institutions, beliefs, and practices. We will explore new approaches and methods which recent feminist scholarship has brought to the study of ancient religious texts and other historical sources, and will assess how the inclusion of women’s perspectives is challenging, enlarging, and enriching the craft of theology itself. Also to be considered: the rise of new women’s rituals and alternative spiritualities, and the relationship 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     D+  TR  10:30-11:45 am   CLST: AMER 194-18

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 towards the Humanities distribution requirement.

REL 145    Tibetan Buddhism and Buddhism of the Himalayas
Joseph Walser     1  T  9:00-11:30 am

Survey of Tibetan Buddhism, as it is practiced in Western China and Nepal. Focus on two monastic specialties: philosophical/debate and ritual/yogic practice. Explores issues of gender, economics, political power, and ethnic identity as they are related to tantric forms of Buddhism throughout the region. This course counts toward the Humanities distribution requirement, the World Civilization requirement, and the East Asian Culture & Diasporas and South & Southeast Asian Culture options.
REL 191-04  Approaches to Middle East Studies  
Ken Garden  10+  M  6:00-9:00 pm  
Prerequisites: Sophomore standing

Middle Eastern Studies can be approached through a wide variety of academic disciplines: anthropology, art history, ethnomusicology, history, political science, and religious studies. This seminar aims to expose students to many of these different ways of seeing the Middle East by having a different professor lead the discussion each week, exploring the region through the lens of their particular discipline. Students will gain a richer appreciation for both the region and the many ways it can be studied. This course counts toward the Humanities distribution requirement.

REL 192  Independent Study
REL 199  Senior Honors Thesis
Prerequisites: Permission of Instructor
Please register in Eaton 302. See website for more details.

REL 152/REL 194-03  Islam and Modernity  
Ken Garden  I+  MW  3:00-4:15 pm  
Register under REL 194-03 for IR seminar level

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, the World Civilization requirement, and the Middle Eastern Culture and South & Southeast Asian Culture options.