

Religion Department

Contact Us

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Description

The study of religion is among the oldest pursuits in human intellectual history. Each of the world's living religions has a long and rich history of scholarship on its sacred texts and interpretive traditions. The curriculum in the Department of Religion involves a dynamic combination of traditional textual study, ethnographic engagement, historical reflection, and theory-practice learning. Courses are designed to introduce students to the origins and historical developments of ancient religious systems as well as the living religions of the world. Equally important, courses in the department and related programs provide a context for stepping back from the "inside" of a particular religion in order to study aspects of religion comparatively and thematically across traditions (e.g., religion in public life, religion and gender, religion and culture, religion and conflict). Religion majors and minors include students seeking careers in medicine, law, and the sciences, as well as those whose interests lie more in the humanities and liberal arts. Faculty in the Department of Religion are deeply committed to interdisciplinary work and thinking, and expect the same of their students. Many of our faculty members co-teach their courses with faculty in other disciplines in order to enliven their thinking about a particular topic. Faculty are also engaged in the Emory community, working on educational and scholarly projects with student groups. Faculty have designed student internships with the religious communities of Atlanta, and field trips and site visits are a regular component of many Emory religion classes. We are also an intentionally pluralist community--with no single "majority" of scholars studying one particular religious tradition or using one particular method of study. Faculty numbers are equally strong in Christianity, Judaism, Islam, Hinduism, Buddhism, and American studies. There is growing strength in African American religions, as well as ethnography of religions and the study of comparative sacred texts. Thanks to the high engagement of faculty in interdisciplinary work, the department now is participating in several University initiatives in contemplative studies; religion and conflict; religion and health; religion and sexuality; and religion and the arts. Students are highly encouraged to take part in these initiatives. More than half the faculty members have been recognized for excellence in teaching. The department also hosts fifteen associated faculty from other departments, including History, Classics, Political Science, Art History, Philosophy, Women's Studies, and Middle Eastern and South Asian Studies. The Graduate Division of Religion, the Institute of the Liberal Arts, Candler School of Theology, the Marial Center (Myth and Ritual in American Life), The Carter Center, The Center for Law and Religion, and the American Academy of Religion at Emory University enrich the academic environment and provide additional faculty resources for undergraduate students of religion. The department also has important connections with centers of learning from within the religious traditions, such as the Aquinas Center for Catholic Studies, the Drepung Loseling Institute for Buddhist Studies, and the Jewish Community Center of Atlanta

Concentrations

Majors are offered in the area(s) of: **Religion; Religion and Anthropology; Religion and Classical Civilization; Religion and History; Philosophy and Religion; Religion and Sociology**. For details, see the Major page for each area. Minors are offered in the area(s) of: **Religion; Catholic Studies; Ethics**. For details, see the Minor page for each area.

Faculty

Chair/Director: Gary Laderman
Director of Undergraduate Studies: Michael Berger

Core Faculty

Michael Berger; David Blumenthal; Paul Courtright; Dianne Diakité; Tara Doyle; John Dunne; Wendy Farley; Joyce Flueckiger; William Gilders; Pamela Hall; Gary Laderman; Deborah Lipstadt; Richard C. Martin; Sara L. McClintock; Satya Negi; Barbara "Bobbi" Patterson; Eric Reinders; Jill Robbins; Vernon Robbins; Don Seeman; Theophus "Thee" Smith

Associated Faculty

Sandra Blakely; Maria Carrion; Vincent Cornell; Kevin Corrigan; Ruby Lal; Robert McCauley; Gordon Newby; J. Judd Owen; Michael Leo Owens; Edward Queen; Walter Reed; Devin Stewart; Sharon Strocchia

Emeriti Faculty

Eugene Bianchi; Martin Buss

Courses

Core Subjects

This department offers courses in the following subject(s): **Religion**. For a list of specific courses in each subject area, see the course descriptions page for that subject.

Programs

Honors Program

See "Honors Program" under the curriculum section of the catalog and consult the department for further details.

The Honors Program affords students the opportunity for long-term, in-depth research on a topic of their interest. Together with a faculty adviser, students plan a rigorous program of scholarly reading and writing. Topics have ranged from historical analysis and textual exegesis to theological treatises and ethnographic studies. Students with a cumulative average of 3.50 at the end of their first three years of study are eligible and may be invited by the Department of Religion to participate in the Honors Program. In consultation with a departmental faculty director, students will choose two additional faculty members to serve on their honors committee. The honors committee must include one member from outside the Department of Religion and, in the case of joint majors, the committee must include one faculty member from outside both departments. A minimum of two successive semesters of Honors Directed Reading (REL 495R) is required for the honors degree. The department strongly encourages the student to find and take a graduate seminar related to the honors topic. Successful honors candidates are awarded the degree with honors, high honors, or highest honors. The Department of Religion hosts a chapter of Theta Alpha Kappa, the national religious studies honor society. Local membership is determined by grade average and class standing as set forth by the national council.

Awards and Honors

The department's prizes and awards include the William A. Beardslee Prize in Religious Literature for the best paper on religion submitted in a course offered by Emory College; the Vaddadi R. Rao Prize for overall excellence in the field of religion, limited to department majors; and the John Fenton Prizes in the Comparative Study of Religion for undergraduate and graduate student scholarship in the comparative study of religion.