

Religious Studies

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Affiliated Faculty

Daniel Bass

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Master of Arts in Religious Studies

FIU's Master of Arts in Religious Studies is designed to give students maximum flexibility in pursuing their research interests, while providing a firm foundation in both the general academic study of religion and the student's area of specialization.

The M.A. is a 36-credit hour program: 6 hours of core seminars, 12 hours of 'track' courses, and either 12 hours of electives and 6 hours of thesis work, or 18 hours of electives.

Requirements for Admission

Application to the Master of Arts program in Religious Studies is made through FIU's Graduate Admissions Office. The usual minimum requirements for admission include a baccalaureate degree from an accredited college or university and:

1. A graduate degree in the humanities or social sciences from an accredited college or university
or
2. A score of 550 or higher on the verbal portion of the Graduate Record Examination (GRE)
or
3. An undergraduate GPA of 3.5, earned no more than 7 years prior to application.

A student who does not meet any of these three requirements may qualify for admission by fulfilling the following conditions:

- a. Writing an acceptable essay on a topic assigned by the department in a monitored and timed session.
and one of the following:
- b. A GPA of at least 3.5 in 9 or more hours of graduate study in departmental courses (as a special student)
or
- c. A score of at least 475 on the verbal portion of the GRE.

4. International graduate student applicants whose native language is not English are required to submit a score for the Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL) or for the International English Language Testing System (IELTS). A total score of 80 on the iBT TOEFL or 6.3 overall on the IELTS is required.

Applications for admission are available from the FIU Office of Graduate Admissions and are evaluated by the Departmental Graduate Studies Committee.

Degree Requirements

1. Prerequisite: undergraduate course REL 3308, Studies in World Religions, to be completed by the end of the first semester of graduate work.
2. Two core seminars. The first, the "Seminar on Sacred Texts," will be offered every fall. The second core seminar, "Modern Analysis of Religion," will be offered every spring.
3. A track of four related courses chosen in consultation with the Graduate Program Director.
4. *Either* 12 hours of elective courses and a thesis (involving either 6 hours of thesis credit or 3 of thesis and 3 of independent research), *or* 18 hours of electives and no thesis. Students must register with the Department's Graduate Committee for thesis track or non-thesis track during the semester in which they will complete 24 hours of credit in the program. Registration in the thesis track will require securing the agreement of a member of the Graduate Faculty to serve as Thesis Advisor.

The Department of Religious Studies does not regard the non-thesis track as appropriate preparation for further graduate study in Religious Studies.

Course Descriptions

Definition of Prefixes

REL-Religion.

REL 5018 Religion, Literature, and Critical Theory (3).

Examines intersections between world religions and contemporary literature in light of modern theories of interpretation. Themes explored include scriptural re-readings and spiritual journeys. Prerequisites: Graduate standing or permission of the instructor.

REL 5023 Religious Ritual (3).

Examines the critical relationship of ritual, religious practice and belief, and culture, while introducing the principles and methods of ritual studies. Prerequisites: Graduate standing or permission of the instructor.

REL 5025 Myth and Religion (3).

Investigates the role, function, and meaning of myth in religious experience and practice through an examination of specific myths, mythic patterns, and critical theories. Prerequisites: Graduate standing or permission of the instructor.

REL 5122 African-American Religion (3).

Survey of development of African-American Religions with emphasis on North American experience during slavery, Jim Crow and contemporary eras. Prerequisites: Graduate standing or permission of the instructor.

REL 5125 Religion and Public Life (3).

Examines the relationship of religion and government in the United States, with focus on the First Amendment and issues of

separation of church and state. Prerequisites: Graduate standing or permission of the instructor.

REL 5137 North American Religion (3). Historical examination of religious groups and influences in North America, focusing on their contributions and cultural impact. Prerequisites: Graduate standing or permission of the instructor.

REL 5138 Sects, Cults, and New Religions (3). Explores and critically analyzes the multiplicity of new American religious movements and the unique combination of factors that has encouraged them. Prerequisites: Graduate standing or permission of the instructor.

REL 5144 Women and Religion (3). Examines the influence of religion on social construction of gender and the definition of woman's nature and role, with a focus on Western developments. Prerequisites: Graduate standing or permission of the instructor.

REL 5149 Religion, Violence, and Conflict (3). Is religion peaceful or violent? Theoretical analysis of the role of religion in violent, social and political conflicts, such as the Crusades, the Arab-Israeli conflict, and the Haitian Revolution. Prerequisites: Graduate standing or permission of the instructor.

REL 5165 Science and Religion (3). Surveys the interaction between science and religion from conflict models to integration; special attention to specific natural sciences including cosmology and biology. Prerequisites: Graduate standing or permission of the instructor.

REL 5182 Religion and Ethics (3). Investigation of methods, resources for ethics in world religions, and some examples of issues. Prerequisites: Graduate standing or permission of the instructor.

REL 5183 Ethics and Environment (3). A study of cultural and religious sources of contemporary ethical attitudes and values about the environment. Also includes consequences of these for specific environmental issues. Prerequisites: Graduate standing or permission of the instructor.

REL 5184 Sex, Ethics, and Religion (3). Religious treatment of sexual activity, desire and procreation in major religions, with special focus on contemporary scientific research on sexuality and spirituality. Prerequisites: Graduate standing or permission of the instructor.

REL 5192 Seminar in Mysticism (3). The issues of consciousness, language, and morality in mystical tradition of the east and west, including Kabbalah, Neoplatonism, Sufism, Yoga, Taoism, and Zen. Prerequisites: Graduate standing or permission of the instructor.

REL 5208 Studies of the Dead Sea Scrolls (3). Overview of the Dead Sea Scrolls explores the new techniques being used in their study. Prerequisites: Graduate standing or permission of the instructor.

REL 5211 Bible I: The Hebrew Scriptures (3). Extensive reading in the Hebrew Scriptures how the various texts of the Hebrew Scriptures came to be written, and how they can be interpreted - both within the context of faith communities and within the cultural contexts out of which the texts were written. Prerequisites: Graduate standing or permission of the instructor.

REL 5232 Hebrew Exegesis I (3). Provides a comprehensive survey of the fundamentals of the language of the Hebrew Bible designed to equip the student for the task of exegesis. Prerequisites: Graduate standing or permission of the instructor.

REL 5233 Hebrew Exegesis II (3). A continuation of Hebrew Exegesis I emphasizing the reading of select passages of the Hebrew Bible to develop skills in translation and interpretation. Prerequisites: REL 5232 and graduate standing.

REL 5242 New Testament and Qumran (3). Detailed investigation of the possible contacts between the New Testament and Qumran in such areas as Biblical Exegesis, Apocalypticism, Eschatology, and Messianism. Prerequisite: Graduate standing.

REL 5244 Bible II: The New Testament (3). History, theology, and interpretation methods of the New Testament. Prerequisites: Graduate standing or permission of the instructor.

REL 5262 New Testament Greek Exegesis I (3). A detailed overview of the principles of Greek grammar that shows the student how to use Greek in the study of the New Testament. Prerequisite: Graduate standing.

REL 5263 New Testament Greek Exegesis II (3). Careful reading of selected passages of the New Testament and early Christian literature designed or selected to develop skills in translation and interpretation. Prerequisite: REL 5262 and graduate standing.

REL 5331 Religions of India (3). Topics include: religion in prehistoric and ancient India, classical Hindu texts and schismatic movements, medieval theism, the acculturation of extrinsic religions, Hindu-Muslim-Sikh syncretism, and the modern period. Prerequisites: Graduate standing or permission of the instructor.

REL 5346 Seminar on Buddhism (3). The central doctrines and rituals of the Buddhist tradition, including the views on causality, mindfulness, monasticism, salvation, purity, and ethics in the Theravada, Tantric, and Zen schools. Prerequisites: Graduate standing or permission of the instructor.

REL 5352 Religions of East Asia (3). The history, philosophy, and cultural impact of the major religious traditions of East Asia, including Confucianism, Taoism, Buddhism, Shinto, and syncretic folk religions. Prerequisites: Graduate standing or permission of the instructor.

REL 5360 Classical Arabic (3). Introduces the grammar and vocabulary of classical Arabic necessary for developing the ability to read classical texts.

REL 5365 Advanced Interpretation of the Quran: Gender and Jihad (3). History, interpretation and translation of the Quran through a close examination of passages related to issues of gender and jihad.

REL 5372 African Spirituality (3). Intensive investigation of select forms of traditional spirituality in sub-Saharan Africa, including ritual, sacrifice, and spirit possession, and Africanized Christian and Islamic devotion. Prerequisites: Graduate standing or permission of the instructor.

REL 5384 Rasta, Vodou, Santeria (3) Critical, sociological and phenomenological analysis of the history, beliefs, rituals, and social significance of Rastafarianism, Vodou, and Santeria on the Caribbean and the United States. Prerequisites: Graduate standing or permission of the instructor.

REL 5385 Native American Religions (3). An advanced study of Native American religions and the methods employed to investigate them. Attention will be given to traditional and contemporary expressions. Prerequisites: Graduate standing or permission of the instructor.

REL 5394 Jewish Mystical Texts (3). A study of the major movements and figures in the development of Jewish mysticism through its significant texts, from biblical times up to the present. Prerequisites: Graduate standing or permission of the instructor.

REL 5462 Religion and Philosophy (3). Examines the use of philosophical reasoning to justify religious belief or its rejection. Such topics as natural theology, atheism and fideism will be examined. Prerequisites: Graduate standing or permission of the instructor.

REL 5488 Theology and Liberation Movements (3). Comparison of Latin American, feminist, and African American theologies of liberation, including methods, social analysis, social location, interlocutor, ecclesiology, theology, eschatology and use of scripture. Prerequisites: Graduate standing or permission of the instructor.

REL 5495 Interreligious Dialogue (3). The intellectual basis, the classical formulations, and the contemporary practice of interreligious dialogue in a variety of cultural settings. Prerequisites: Graduate standing or permission of the instructor.

REL 5501 History of Christianity I (3). Christianity from its origins to the Middle Ages. Doctrinal and organizational development of the church and characteristic aspects of its spiritual life. Prerequisites: Graduate standing or permission of the instructor.

REL 5502 Saints, Witches and Missionaries (3). Survey of movements, reforms, divisions, and major ideas within institutional Christianity, 1400 to present. Prerequisites: Graduate standing or permission of the instructor.

REL 5515 History of Early Christianity (3). Origin and growth of Christianity from the first to the fifth century, and the adaptation of its message to the Greco-Roman world. Prerequisites: Graduate standing or permission of the instructor.

REL 5565 Modern Catholicism (3). Theology and liturgical practice in the Roman Catholic Church from Trent (16th c) to the present, with primary and secondary sources. Prerequisites: Graduate standing or permission of the instructor.

REL 5605 Studies in Judaism (3). Historical overview of Jewish belief and practice, with special consideration of Jewish ritual life. Prerequisites: Graduate standing or permission of the instructor.

REL 5606 Rabbinic Judaism (3). The theology and ideologies of the 1700-year period in the history of Judaism known as Rabbinic Judaism. Prerequisites: Graduate standing or permission of the instructor.

REL 5614 Ancient Judaism (3). The history, literature and characteristic institutions of Judaism from the Persian period to Amoraic times. Attention given to developments in the land of Israel and the diaspora. Prerequisites: Graduate standing or permission of the instructor.

REL 5615 Medieval Judaism (3). The works of major thinkers in Medieval Judaism, including Maimonides, Nahmanides, Halevi, Luzatto, and such topics as Jewish mysticism (Kabalah) and Hasidism. Prerequisites: Graduate standing or permission of the instructor.

REL 5618 Modernization of Judaism (3). Explores the ways in which religious beliefs and traditional concepts of Jewish self identity have changed as a result of emancipation and participation of Jews in the modern Western world. Prerequisites: Graduate standing or permission of the instructor.

REL 5619 Holocaust Representations: Religion and Remembrance (3). Examines the symbolic and cultural representations of the Holocaust through its religious/theological discourse and its remembrance. Implications for Jewish life and thought are also explored. Prerequisites: Graduate standing or permission of the instructor.

REL 5934 Graduate Pedagogy (1-3). Advanced work in Religious Studies pedagogy, including classroom teaching, assignment development and grading, and seminar discussion of pedagogical issues.

REL 5XXX Studies in Native American Religions (3). Topics include: Cosmologies, mythologies, concepts of the supernatural, relations with nature, shamans, vision quests, tribal ceremonies, syncretism, and contemporary issues.

REL 5XXX Jews and Muslims in the Middle Ages (3). Study of Jewish culture from the rise of Islam in the 7th century -- usually considered the start of Jewish Medieval Era -- to the end of the Middle Ages.

REL 5XXX Jewish Thought and Thinkers (3). The principal of Sephardic and oriental thinkers since the Middle Ages includes philosophers, rabbinics.

REL 5XXX Latinas and Religion in the Americas (3). This course will review the practices, beliefs, social and political activism, and theological and biblical reflections of Latinas in the Americas from a historical perspective to modern day.

REL 5XXX Voice of the Prophet (3). Familiarizes students with the position and history of prophetic traditions (Hadith) in Islam.

REL 6013 Modern Analysis of Religion: Classic Texts in Religious Studies (3). Critical reflection upon the nature and function of religion, as found in classics of the field. Prerequisites: Graduate standing or permission of the instructor.

REL 6195 Sociological Approaches to Religion (3). Sociological Method/Theory in religious studies scholarship on religious ritual around life cycle events. Individual and group projects. Prerequisites: Graduate standing or permission of the instructor.

REL 6285 Biblical Archaeology (3). Introduces the methods used in archaeological excavations. Finds from

the Bronze Age to the Greco-Roman period are examined for the ways they bring new understanding to the texts of the Bible. Prerequisites: Graduate standing or permission of the instructor.

REL 6322 Seminar in Western Religions (3). Similarities and differences in the three Western monotheistic religions of Judaism, Christianity and Islam during their historical development. Prerequisites: Graduate standing or permission of the instructor.

REL 6347 Seminar on Pali Buddhism (3). The "original" teachings of the Buddha as preserved in the Pali Tipitaka and its commentaries readings in translation. Students knowing Pali will work with instructor. Prerequisites: REL 4340 or equivalent or permission of instructor.

REL 6348 Seminar on Tibetan Buddhism (3). Study of influential Tibetan texts in their historical contexts. Prerequisites: REL 4340 or REL 3344 or equivalent or permission of instructor.

REL 6395 Seminar in Asian Religions (3). Asian religious traditions texts, rituals, or artifacts. May be repeated with change in content. Prerequisites: Graduate standing or permission of the instructor.

REL 6442 Religion in the Contemporary World (3). Society and religion in processes of secularization and pluralism. Attention to religious interpretations of socio-cultural processes. Prerequisites: Graduate standing or permission of the instructor.

REL 6696 Indian Judaism (3). The stories, rituals, interactions and identities of four Indian Jewish communities and their implications for Indo-Israeli relations and contemporary American Judaism. Prerequisite: Graduate standing.

REL 6921 Colloquium (1). Students attend a minimum of three lectures, conferences, or professional presentations, with seminar report and discussion. May be repeated. Prerequisite: Graduate standing.

REL 6930 Pedagogy Workshop (1). Two-day teaching workshop offered by the Academy for the Art of Teaching. Prerequisite: Graduate standing.

REL 6931 Pedagogy Seminar (1). Provide Teaching Assistants with pedagogical skills, such as lecture preparation, exam preparation and grading, advising and small group work. Prerequisite: Graduate standing

REL 6935 Seminar in Sacred Texts (3). Sacred texts with a common theme from several religions. Problems of interpretation are a central concern. Prerequisites: Graduate standing or permission of the instructor.

REL 6938 Pedagogy Forum (1). Students attend at least six (6) teaching forums for certificate offered by the Academy for the Art of Teaching. Prerequisite: AAT Summer Teaching Workshop.

REL 6940 Teaching Religious Studies (3). Assist the instructor in an introductory course and attend seminar meetings. Topics: 'faith' vs 'objectivity' in the classroom; student diversity; religious studies as a profession; designing an introductory course. Prerequisites: Graduate standing or permission of the instructor.

REL 6971 Thesis (1-6). For students working on the thesis for the M.A. in Religious Studies. Prerequisites: Graduate standing and permission of the instructor.

REL 6972 Thesis Proposal Development (3). Elements of thesis construction, including thesis statement, feasibility research, bibliography, methodology. Initial 3 credits of thesis may be required for some students by GPD and thesis advisor. Prerequisite: Permission of instructor.

REL 6942 Teaching Internship (1-3). Advanced work in Religions Studies pedagogy, including classroom teaching, assignment development and grading, and seminar discussion of pedagogical issues. Prerequisite: Graduate standing.