

# RELIGIOUS STUDIES

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The academic study of religion has deep roots in Western intellectual history. One cannot adequately grasp the full dynamics of world culture without attending to the role of religion. In the last hundred years, scholars in the West have paid increasing attention to non-Western religions and to the category of "religion" itself as a dimension of human experience.

Religious studies courses do not encourage or discourage religious belief; rather, they engage in the academic study of religion as a crucial element of human culture. Religious studies employs a variety of methods including anthropological, sociological, historical, philosophical, phenomenological, literary, and linguistic approaches. The principal goal of religious studies is submitting sacred texts and traditions to descriptive, analytical, critical, and empathetic scrutiny.

In terms of employment potential, a religious studies minor primarily serves a student in the same way that history or philosophy might by increasing a student's understanding of persons and cultures. Key liberal arts skills in close reading, analysis, research, and oral and written communication are central to religious studies. Some students will use religious studies to enhance their chances of acceptance in graduate programs in areas such as anthropology, sociology, social work, international relations, history, or various area studies. Others may use the minor as a broadly based stepping stone for professional training in theological seminaries or rabbinical schools.

## Minors

- Religious Studies Minor (<https://catalog.uidaho.edu/colleges-related-units/letters-arts-social-sciences/religious-studies/religious-studies-minor/>)