

# RELIGIOUS STUDIES, BA

Religion is a complex network of ideas and actions (ethical and ritual) that express a group's sense of ultimate meaning of life. The academic study of religion examines how the beliefs and values of contemporary and historical cultures shape and are shaped by societal factors, long-standing traditions, and distinctive forms of literary and artistic expression.

Because of the multi-faceted nature of the subject matter, the University of Pennsylvania's Religious Studies major program of study is open to students looking to tailor their educational experience to fit with their own personal and academic areas of interest. Each undergraduate who wishes to major in Religious Studies will meet with the Chair of the Department prior to claiming the major to discuss their desired coursework and create a individualized plan of execution.

As our core faculty shares research foci and skills in the study of material culture (art, manuscripts, archaeology, inscriptions, and other primary historical sources), we are well-suited to lead serious students in intensive research to better prepare them for graduate study which requires research and evaluation skills.

The minimum total course units (<https://www.college.upenn.edu/credits-needed-major/>) for graduation in this major is 32. Double majors may entail more course units.

**For more information:** [https://www.sas.upenn.edu/religious\\_studies/undergraduate/major](https://www.sas.upenn.edu/religious_studies/undergraduate/major) ([https://www.sas.upenn.edu/religious\\_studies/undergraduate/major/](https://www.sas.upenn.edu/religious_studies/undergraduate/major/))

For information about the General Education requirements, please visit the College of Arts & Sciences Curriculum (<https://www.college.upenn.edu/curriculum/>) page.

Code	Title	Course Units
<b>College General Education Requirements and Free Electives</b>		
Foundational Approaches + Sectors <sup>1</sup> + Free Electives		20
<b>Major Requirements</b>		
<i>Requirements</i>		
Select 3 course units in Beginner RELS 0001-1999		3
Select 3 course units in Intermediate RELS 2000-4999		3
Religious Studies Upper Level Seminar <sup>2</sup>		1
RELS 2560	Existential Despair	
RELS 3330	Material Christianities	
RELS 5000	Theory and Method in the Study of Religion	
<i>Culminating Experience</i>		
Select 1 course unit in Independent Study/Culminating Experience		1
<i>Electives</i>		4
4 Credits in RELS 0000-4999 (Or, course with Attribute = ARRS) ( <a href="http://catalog.upenn.edu/attributes/arrs/">http://catalog.upenn.edu/attributes/arrs/</a> )		
<b>Total Course Units</b>		<b>32</b>

<sup>1</sup> You may count no more than one course toward both a Major and a Sector requirement. For Exceptions, check the Policy Statement (<http://www.college.upenn.edu/sectors-policy/>).

<sup>2</sup> See the Religious Studies advisor for more upper level seminars.

## Honors

Code	Title	Course Units
RELS 3999	Directed Reading	1
RELS 3099	Honors Thesis Seminar	1

The degree and major requirements displayed are intended as a guide for students entering in the Fall of 2024 and later. Students should consult with their academic program regarding final certifications and requirements for graduation.