

RELIGION MAJOR

The Religion Major combines a diversity of approaches through study at the 300 level in each of the four modes of inquiry (Interpretive, Historical, Comparative and Constructive) with the freedom to pursue particular interests through a broad range of topics, to focus in one of the four modes, or to focus in a particular area of emphasis (see possible options below). The study of religion leads in many directions and intersects with all disciplines. The Religion Major provides the academic grounding and preparation for graduate study and leadership in faith-based organizations. Religion Majors also take their learning and experience into careers in such fields as medicine, business, government, social work, law, non-profit leadership, and international diplomacy.

Major Requirements

Both Religion 200 (Christianity and Religious Diversity) and the 300-level Religion course in the Core curriculum are counted in the nine courses for the major. Students should normally declare a major by the end of the second year and develop a plan of study in consultation with a department advisor. Students are encouraged to organize their religion major around an emphasis (see below).

Religion majors can earn **honors** for superior achievement in coursework. Upon the recommendation of the religion department's assessment committee, honors will be awarded on the basis of grade point average and the senior research seminar paper.

The requirements for a **major in religion** are 36 credits:

Code	Title	Hours
Religion Courses		
REL 200	Christianity and Religious Diversity	4
Select 4 credits from each mode of inquiry as identified in the catalog: ¹		16
Interpretive Studies		
Historical Studies		
Comparative Studies		
Constructive Studies		
Religion Electives		
12 additional elective credits from religion courses ²		12
Research Seminar		
REL 410	Research Seminar ³	4
Total Hours		36

¹ The second Core religion course (Religion 300 J) would be included as one of these four courses and would apply to one of the 4 areas of study.

² Notes: Elective credits can include REL 211 Biblical Hebrew I and REL 212 Biblical Hebrew II; 4 credits in REL 390 Academic Internship or 4 credits in REL 490 Practicum can be counted in elective credits. When offered, REL 210 Invitation to the Study of Religion will count as one of the courses.

³ This course is offered during the fall semester and should be taken during the senior year. Students who expect to be studying off campus that semester should take the Research Seminar during their junior year.

Religion Emphases

The requirements for the religion major are flexible enough to allow students to tailor their studies in religion around their specific interests and passions. Religion majors (and minors) are encouraged to pursue an **emphasis** that develops their particular interests and passions and prepares them for their vocational aspirations. A list of possible emphases through which religion majors and minors can focus their study of religion include:

Religion, Ecology, and the Body

Do animals, trees, and rivers have souls? Are religions responsible for climate change? Is sexual desire sinful? What is a "good body?" These are the kinds of questions students pursuing the Religion, Ecology, and Body Emphasis can explore through their study of humans as embodied beings who depend on the eco-systems they are a part of for sustenance and survival. This emphasis develops students' skills for thinking critically about the concrete effects of religious and cultural beliefs, systems, and values on diverse human bodies and on the environment, and for envisioning the flourishing of all bodies, human and non-human alike. For more information, please contact Dr. Lelwica or Dr. Mocko.

Sacred Texts and Contexts

Where in the world do these sacred texts come from and how do we make sense of them? The Sacred Texts and Contexts Emphasis seeks to answer these and other vital questions. Students pursuing this emphasis can explore the sacred texts of Judaism, Christianity, and Islam from three angles:

1. the diverse historical, cultural, linguistic, and religious contexts out of which these sacred texts emerged;
2. the multifaceted perspectives on life, purpose, God, and the world these literary works contain;
3. varied interpreters of these texts of differing economic and social circumstances, racial, ethnic, sexual and community identities, and historical periods.

For more information, please contact Dr. Solvang.

Religion, Ethics, and Social Justice

Many of the world's great social justice leaders have rooted their activism in their spiritual convictions, including Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., Dorothy Day, Mahatma Gandhi, Wangari Maathai, and the Dalai Lama. Religion has inspired some of the most important forms of resistance to oppression by individuals and communities. Tragically, religion has also perpetuated grave injustices in matters related to economics, gender, race, and sexuality. The Religion, Ethics and Social Justice Emphasis explores religion's roles as perpetrator and resister in the struggles for justice. For more information, please contact Dr. Pranger or Dr. Solvang.

Religion and Global Diversity

How do cultural differences and social divisions affect how religious people in different parts of the world live out their faith? The Religion and Global Diversity Emphasis invites students to closely examine religious traditions, practices, and cultures around the globe, and to explore the relationships between and within different religions (including world Christianity). Students pursuing this emphasis will be challenged to develop interreligious and intercultural competency and sensitivity. They will also develop skills for contextualizing, historicizing, and questioning their own worldviews and assumptions, thereby clarifying their own views

in conversation with the perspectives of others. For more information, please contact Dr. Mocko or Dr. Pranger.

Christian Histories and Traditions

The Christian Histories and Traditions Emphasis looks at the fascinating traditions and ideas of the past. Have you ever wondered how Christianity came to look the way it does? Students interested in questions like, “What is the nature of God?,” “Why is there suffering?,” “How do I live a good life?,” and “What is evil?” will enjoy the Christian Histories and Traditions Emphasis. Through this emphasis, students will study ideas about religious history, spirituality, biography, community, and conflict, as well as the influence of religion in past societies. For more information, please contact Dr. Solvang.

Religion majors and minors may choose to pursue one of these emphases, or they can combine any of these emphases or create their own emphasis in consultation with a faculty member in the religion department. This consultation will enable students to select religion courses that are most conducive to pursuing their particular interests and developing expertise surrounding those interests. Students are generally encouraged to cluster three or more courses around an emphasis. It is also strongly recommended that students enrich their emphasis through study away experiences, such as the semester abroad programs; the summer course in South Africa; the Exploration Seminar in Israel and Palestine; and Justice Journeys.

Although religion emphases are not monitored by the registrar and do not show up in DegreeWorks, they can help religion majors and minors identify, communicate, and promote their specific interests and expertise in religion during and after their years at Concordia.

Degree and Graduation Requirements

In addition to the program-specific requirements listed above, all students must complete the graduation requirements specified for their degree. See the Degree and Graduation Requirements (<https://catalog.concordiacollege.edu/undergraduate-academic-community/degree-graduation-requirements/>) section for more information.