

# Religious Studies

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Chair of the Department

## Departmental Mission

Religion is everywhere. It is a vital force in human experience and bears critical historical, cultural and political importance. Rooted in Manhattan College's Lasallian identity, the Religious Studies Department prepares students to live in the twenty-first century by providing a person-centered education that examines the dynamic ways that religion and religious traditions shape culture, values, relationships and social structures.. As part of this mission, the department embraces the college's New York City location, and offers students the opportunity to take advantage of all that a global city has to offer. The department explores the power and persistence of religion in a global context by providing courses on specific religious traditions as well as on issues that span cultures and contexts; by producing quality scholarship in both religious studies and theology; and by actively engaging in the life of the college, the broader academic community, and the world at large.

## Introduction

Instruction in the Department of Religious Studies promotes the mission of Manhattan College by providing a contemporary, person-centered educational experience characterized by high academic standards, reflection on faith, values, and ethics, and lifelong career preparation. These goals are accomplished through our nine-credit requirement **for all students** that includes:

1. One course that introduces the study of religion as an academic discipline and global phenomenon: RELS 110.
2. One course that explores the riches of the Catholic intellectual tradition: any course chosen from RELS 200-299 (Elective Group A)
3. One course that raises awareness of global and/or contemporary issues: any course chosen from RELS 300-399 (Elective Group B)

Our goals for majors and minors include an ability to critically read and analyze religious texts, a facility with the methods of the academic study of religion, a familiarity with specific religious traditions, and an understanding of the role that religion plays in contemporary life. The introductory course focuses on a particular theme while introducing students to some of the research tools used in the academic study of religion. A Catholic Studies concentration is offered and/or an interdisciplinary minor. Students can elect to take cross-listed courses in other departments. In addition, students may write a 6-credit honors thesis for departmental honors recognition.

## Requirements for a Major in Religious Studies

Students majoring in Religious Studies ordinarily complete: 1) RELS 110 (<http://catalog.manhattan.edu/undergraduate/arts/religiousstudies/>) – The Nature and Experience of Religion; 2) 15 credits in courses numbered 200 and above (with at least

one from Elective Group A and at least one from Elective Group B); 3) 12 credits at the 400-level. These courses are selected in consultation with the Department Chair. The elective courses will ordinarily include at least 1 course from each of the following areas of study:

1. Biblical studies
2. Christian theology
3. Ethics
4. World religious traditions

A minimum grade of C is required for credit toward the major.

Please note: Students intending to major must register with the Department Chair.

## **Requirements for a Minor in Religious Studies**

Students minoring in Religious Studies must complete 1) RELS 110 (<http://catalog.manhattan.edu/undergraduate/arts/religiousstudies/>) – The Nature and Experience of Religion; 2) 3 credits from Elective Group A; 3) 3 credits from Elective Group B; 4) 3 credits at the 400 level; and 5) 3 credits in any additional RELS course.

Please note: Students intending to minor must register with the Department Chair.

## **Concentration in Catholic Studies**

A student who majors or minors in Religious Studies may choose to concentrate on the Catholic tradition. This concentration focuses on Catholic beliefs, religious practices, moral teachings, and attitudes to other religious traditions, both in terms of the historical development of Catholicism and as subjects of contemporary discussion and debate. An academic and critical program, the Concentration in Catholic Studies aims at providing the interested student with an understanding of the diversity and richness of the Catholic tradition. The School of Liberal Arts also offers an interdisciplinary minor in Catholic Studies.

Those majoring in Religious Studies who wish to pursue the Concentration in Catholic Studies must complete 1) RELS 110 (<http://catalog.manhattan.edu/undergraduate/arts/religiousstudies/>) – The Nature and Experience of Religion; 2) 3 credits from Elective Group B; 3) 12 credits from Elective Group A; and 4) 12 credits at the 400-level.

Those minoring in Religious Studies who wish to pursue the Concentration in Catholic Studies must complete 1) RELS 110 (<http://catalog.manhattan.edu/undergraduate/arts/religiousstudies/>) – The Nature and Experience of Religion; 2) 3 credits from Elective Group B; 3) 6 credits from Elective Group A; and 4) 3 credits at the 400-level.

## **Religious Studies Honors Thesis**

Both majors and those completing a minor with a 3.5 or greater cumulative index are eligible to develop a year-long independent research project under the supervision of a major reader and a second reader. In fall semester, the student registers for RELS 481 Religious Studies Honors Thesis. In the spring, the student will present a completed and revised honors thesis RELS 482 Honors Thesis II to the readers. Upon the successful

completion of this process, the Religious Studies Department will award the student with honors recognition.

## Courses Meeting the College Religious Studies Requirements

### Freshman Year

RELS 110/RELS 152/RELS 161 The Nature and Experience of Religion

### Elective Group A: Catholic Studies

This requirement is usually met in the sophomore year. In addition to the following courses, a few courses offered by other departments also meet the Catholic Studies requirement. These include ART 260 Monasticism and the Arts and MUSC 240 Catholic Mass and its Music. Students should check with their advisors for a list of additional courses.

RELS 200	Special Topic: in Religion	3
RELS 202	U.S. Latino/A Catholicism	3
RELS 204	Religion and Social Justice	3
RELS 205	Urban America and Catholic Social Teaching	3
RELS 206	Understanding the Bible	3
RELS 207	Central Themes New Testament	3
RELS 209	Paul	3
RELS 210	Jesus	3
RELS 212	Catholic Traditions of Spain	3
RELS 213		
RELS 214	Dante	3
RELS 216	Saints and Catholic Imagination	3
RELS 218	The Bible & Film	3
RELS 219	Self and Other	3
RELS 220	Vatican II	3
RELS 221		3
RELS 225	Contemporary Catholicism	3
RELS 226	Contemporary Catholic Theologians	3
RELS 227	The Gospel of John	3
RELS 231		3
RELS 232		
RELS 233	Contemporary Christian Ethics	3
RELS 235		3
RELS 238	Theologies Of Liberation	3
RELS 243		
RELS 244	The Catholic Mystics	3

RELS 245	Medieval Christian Thought	3
RELS 254	Catholic Social Teaching	3

\* Prerequisite for all 400-level courses: Open only to Religious Studies majors and minors or by permission of instructor.

## Elective Group B: Global Studies and Contemporary Issues

RELS 206	Understanding the Bible	3
RELS 218	The Bible & Film	3
RELS 231		3
RELS 255	Introduction to Peace and Justice Studies	3
RELS 300	Special Topic	3
RELS 302	Religion and Spanish Culture	3
RELS 306	Central Themes in the Hebrew Scriptures	3
RELS 310	Religion & The Holocaust	3
RELS 312	Muslims in America	3
RELS 321	Psychology & Religion	3
RELS 333		3
RELS 336	Native American Religions	3
RELS 337	The American Religious Experience	3
RELS 341	Judaism	3
RELS 342	Islam and Politics	3
RELS 351	God And Evil	3
RELS 353		
RELS 354	Buddhism: Its Development and Interpretation	3
RELS 355	Islam	3
RELS 357	Religions of China & East Asia	3
RELS 358	Religions of India	3
RELS 359	Afro-Caribbean Religions	3
RELS 361		
RELS 362	Ethics in the Workplace	3
RELS 363		
RELS 364		3
RELS 366	Religion and Contemporary Art	3
RELS 367	The Bible In American Culture	3
RELS 372	Religion and Science	3
RELS 373	Death as a Fact of Life	3
RELS 374	Women in Western Religion	3
RELS 375	Religion and the Body	3
RELS 376	Religion and the Media	3

RELS 377	Religion and Environmentalism	3
RELS 378	Religion in New York	3
RELS 379	Religion and Popular Culture	3
RELS 381	Religious Dimensions of Peace	3
RELS 390	Sexuality and the Sacred	3
RELS 399	Criminal Justice Ethics	3
RELS 470	Religious Studies Seminar	3
RELS 475	Internship	3
RELS 480	Religious Studies Tutorial *	3
RELS 481	Religious Studies Honors Thesis *	3
RELS 482	Honors Thesis II	3

\* Prerequisite for all 400-level courses: Open only to Religious Studies majors and minors or by permission of instructor.