

CAREER GUIDE

**Department of Religious Studies
Arizona State University**

[Department Website](#)

Religious Studies Career Guide

I. Introduction

A Bachelor of Arts degree in Religious Studies is a foundational, transdisciplinary and multi-cultural course of study that embodies the intellectual, entrepreneurial, and social ideals of Arizona State University as the New American University.

As partners in the New American University at Arizona State University, the faculty of the Department of Religious Studies seek to foster civic responsibility and global awareness and the following University goals:

- Provide quality education that is accessible to a broad population
- Conduct transdisciplinary research for the public good
- Maintain a global perspective in our endeavor

<http://asu.edu/president/newamericanuniversity>

The Department of Religious Studies is uniquely positioned to contribute to these ideals because of its concern for understanding everyday religious life in all human cultures, past and present.

Religious Studies students with an interest in careers in the local, state, regional, and national communities will find transdisciplinary encouragement and support.

Religious Studies students who are attracted to international study will find the undergraduate program rich in multi-cultural course work and study abroad opportunities.

All Religious Studies students will find many opportunities for practical experience leading to careers in the academic study of religion, in public service, including governmental and non-governmental agencies, and in professional careers in a variety of organizations, including all of the helping professions.

II. Career Emphases: What you can do with a Religious Studies Degree

The faculty of the Department of Religious Studies study religion as a central aspect of human life, and as a result we train students for professional success in a variety of fields. The advising staff and faculty are happy to discuss with you how to develop a program of study and strategies customized for your interests and a program of study that will ensure your professional achievement. You should realize that in this complex world graduate education is most often required for professional success.

You should consider three broad career emphases each of which offer distinctive professional opportunities:

Academic Careers in research and teaching religious studies. Prospective employers include universities, colleges, public and private secondary schools, and research programs, institutes, and foundations.

- American Academy of Religion: www.aarweb.org/profession/career.asp
- Chronicle of Higher Education: <http://chronicle.com/jobs/profiles>
- Council on International Education Exchange: www.ciee.org
- H-Net Job Guide: <http://www.h-net.msu.edu/jobs/>
- Postsecondary Education: <http://stats.bls.gov/oco/ocos066.htm>
- Teaching English as a Second Language: <http://esl.about.com>

Public Service Careers in academic, criminal justice, human services, legal, medical, governmental and non-governmental organizations within the United States and abroad

- AmeriCorps: <http://www.americorps.org>
- National Association of Schools of Public Affairs and Administration: <http://www.naspaa.org/students/students.asp>
- Partnership for Public Service: <http://ourpublicservice.org/OPS/programs/calltoserve/>
- Peace Corps: www.peacecorps.gov
- USA Jobs: www.usajobs.opm.gov
- U. S. Department of State: www.state.gov
- USAID: www.usaid.gov

Professional Careers as communication officers, policy advisors, cultural brokers in situations of negotiation and conflict (international, religious, civil, and indigenous), foreign affairs in the U.S. government and foreign service, and in international organizations, public communications, and in all sorts of programs that address intergroup relations, including the ministry; religious education, politics, public foundations, and faith-based social service institutions.

- American Institute for Foreign Study: www.aifs.com
- Council of the Americas: www.counciloftheamericas.org
- Fulbright Scholars Program: www.cies.org
- Human Services Career Network: <http://www.hscareers.com>
- International Schools Services: www.iss.edu
- Public Relations: <http://www.workinpr.com/index.asp>
- Public Relations Society of America: <http://www.prsa.org>
- Riley Guide International Resources: www.rileyguide.com/internet.html
- National Association of Schools of Public Affairs and Administration: www.naspaa.org
- United Nations: www.un.com

III. Professional Emphases and Programs of Study

Humanistic and Multi-cultural Studies

Religious Studies pursues the principles of humanistic and multi-cultural studies: the comparative, ritual, political, and ethical meaning of the graphic and visual arts, architecture, music, dance, oral tradition, ritual spaces, and story-telling, as well as the cultural and social meanings of birth, maturation, marriage, kinship, pain and suffering, death and the afterlife, particularly in the contexts of community and national life, religious conflict, religious encounter, and religious change.

Transdisciplinary

As a transdisciplinary field in theory and practice, Religious Studies encourages its majors to pursue related course work and degrees in a variety of disciplines. We ask you to come to understand what contribution and how Religious Studies is making to the human sciences. This related course of study includes, but is not limited to, the theories and methods of socio-linguistics, and social and cultural anthropology, art, architecture, dance and music, communication, geography, global studies, history, journalism, justice studies, languages, law, literature, philosophy, political science, psychology, race, gender and ethnic studies, sociology, and transborder-chicana/o and latina/o studies.

Majors are encouraged to pursue concurrent degrees in these related University departments, and many students also benefit from the specialized topical and geographical certificate programs listed below for your consideration. Most academic departments also offer a minor in their particular discipline.

Literacy and Intellectual Excellence

The Department of Religious Studies is also committed to foundational intellectual excellence, teaching multi-cultural literacy in the oral and written interpretation of written texts, expressive performances, oral traditions, cultural values, and political, economic, and social systems.

These skills highlight higher-order reasoning, critical reading, persuasive writing and oral argumentation, and systems analysis. These skills are highly valued in any professional career, and largely determine professional success.

Coursework

For the degree requirements for a major in Religious Studies please go to:

http://www.asu.edu/clas/religious_studies/undergraduate/. These requirements provide students a common matrix for the comparative study of religious life and cultures. In what follows, additional ways are outlined for organizing and tailoring a transdisciplinary course of study, and thus for planning effective and versatile professional careers.

Hemispheric Religious Studies

The department examines religious issues and phenomena in a variety of specialized ways, particularly in offering courses on the ethnography, history, and encounters of religious cultures in North and South America.

Related ASU certificate programs are available to all students:

- African-American Studies: www.asu.edu/clas/afamstu/
- American Indian Studies: www.asu.edu/clas/americanindian
- Civic Education: www.asu.edu/clas/polisci/undergraduate/civic-certificate.html
- Ethnicity, Race and First Nation Studies, ASU West: www.west.asu.edu/ethnic/minor_certificate/index.htm
- Latin American Studies: www.asu.edu/clas/latin/undergraduatecertificate.htm
- Writing Certificate: www.asu.edu/clas/english/writingcertificate/index.html

World Religions

The department also offers courses that examine religious life, history, and traditions throughout the world, including not only major religions, but indigenous religions as well.

Related Certificate programs include:

- Arabic Studies: www.asu.edu/clas/dll/arb/docs/Certificate_Program_in_Arabic_Studies.pdf
- Asian Pacific American Studies: www.asu.edu/clas/apas/certificate.htm
- Asian Studies: www.asu.edu/clas/asian/certificate.html
- East Asian Studies: www.asu.edu/clas/asian/certificate.html
- Islamic Studies: www.asu.edu/clas/religious_studies/isc.html
- Jewish Studies: www.asu.edu/clas/jewishstudies/certificateinfo.htm
- Russian, Eurasian and East European Studies: www.asu.edu/clas/eesc/reesccertificate.htm
- Spanish Translation: www.asu.edu/clas/dll/spa/certrans.htm
- Southeast Asia: www.asu.edu/clas/asian/certificate_undergrad.html
- Writing Certificate www.asu.edu/clas/english/writingcertificate/index.html

Theory and Method

Other course work lays the theoretical and methodological groundwork necessary for all of the human sciences, including the Religious Studies required core courses REL 305: “Myth, Ritual and Symbol,” and REL 400: “Theories of Religion”. Many other courses explore the theory and method of studying the relationship of religion and the cultural forms of social, economic, political, and diplomatic life. All of these topics are foundational for understanding religion in the modern world, and particularly the troublesome and challenging relationship between religion and conflict.

Theory and Method Certificate programs include:

Classical Studies: www.asu.edu/clas/dll/classics/certificate.htm

Ethics: www.asu.edu/clas/philosophy/ethics_certificate.htm#ethics

History and Philosophy of Science: <http://sols.asu.edu/>

International Studies: www.asu.edu/clas/polisci/undergraduate/intl-certificate.html

Leadership and Ethics: <http://spa.asu.edu/programs/Leadership&Ethics.htm>

Leadership and Management: American Humanics: <http://scrd.asu.edu/nonprofit.html>

Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender Studies: www.asu.edu/copp/bis/lgbt-studies.pdf

Medieval and Renaissance Studies

www.asu.edu/clas/acmrs/web_pages/academic_programs/ac_pro_certificate.html

Multimedia Writing and Technical Communication, ASU Polytechnic:

<http://www.poly.asu.edu/ecollege/multimedia/sub-degree.htm>

Public Administration and Public Management:

http://spa.asu.edu/programs/undergrad_certificate.htm

Symbolic Systems: www.asu.edu/clas/philosophy/symb_sys_certificate.htm#symbolic_sys

Women’s and Gender Studies www.asu.edu/clas/womens_studies/students/

Women’s Studies, ASU West: www.west.asu.edu/ws/requirements/

Writing: www.asu.edu/clas/english/writingcertificate/index.html

IV. Strategies for Success, Or, How to Build a Winning Resume

There are many ways of thinking and acting that contribute to professional success in the Religious Studies degree program and beyond. Many of these strategies highlight the need to develop professional communication skills. In the work-a-day world of the twenty-first century, collaboration with others, team playing in other words, is the crucial skill. Each of these strategies are important in themselves, and they also have two long-range impacts. First, they will help you to think about your resume as the means of communicating to prospective graduate and professional schools, as well as prospective employers, evidence of your professional maturity. Second, they provide a database for your own self-interpretation in the letters of application, and in the personal statements, that you will write to further your career. Resume building should be a crucial focus of your undergraduate preparation.

Achieve excellence in verbal, written, and creative multi-media modes of communication

Acquire reading and speaking skill in appropriate languages for achieving your career objectives

Apply for scholarships, fellowships, internships (and all other kinds of support).

Attend university and college lectures and other academic and cultural events

Catalog University Professional Resources to support your professional development including, for example, ASASU, Career Services, Computing Resources, the University Libraries, the University Writing Center. (And see “Special Opportunities” below

Create community

Develop grant-writing skills to propel, promote, and market your career.

Enlist significant others as members of your individual support team. Seek the advice and counsel of parents, faculty, and professional practitioners in your targeted career field. **Pursue** professional mentoring relationships with staff and faculty, and give back by mentoring your peers.

Establish a high grade point average (GPA).

Gain research, computer, desktop publishing, and media skills.

Join professional organizations like the American Academy of Religion.

Motivate yourself and others.

Organize course work around your professional and research interests.

Plan ahead for achieving effective letters of recommendation from faculty who know you well and admire your accomplishments

Prepare for the Graduate Record, LSAT and other professional exams.

Provide leadership in student government, the State Press, student clubs (including the Religious Studies Society), peer mentoring, resident assistantships, and national student organizations.

Seek work related experience, including paid and unpaid internships, volunteer activities, part-time employment, summer employment, and service learning opportunities.

Talk with faculty and staff about your developing (and shifting) plans, challenges, opportunities and achievements.

Volunteer and Serve others in structured and unstructured programs

Write and Revise a professional resume (a curriculum vitae for academic purposes).

V. Special Opportunities

There are a number of University units, centers, and programs that offer ways and resources to amplify professional development for Religious Studies majors. Some of the more important ASU units are briefly described below:

Center for Nonprofit Leadership and Management

Building the capacity of the nonprofit sector will help organizations improve the quality of life in their communities. ASU's Center for Nonprofit Leadership and Management demonstrates social entrepreneurialism by providing knowledge and tools that enhance the effectiveness of those who lead and manage nonprofit organizations. Nonprofit organizations work with the center through a self assessment process that connects research at the university with expertise in the community. Professional development programs help community leaders manage their organizations more effectively, stretch limited dollars, and succeed in a competitive fundraising environment. Nonprofit leadership education programs prepare ASU students to change lives and solve their communities' toughest problems. www.asu.edu/copp/nonprofit/

Center for the Study of Religion and Conflict

The Center for the Study of Religion and Conflict at Arizona State University promotes interdisciplinary research and education on the dynamics of religion and conflict with the aim of advancing knowledge, seeking solutions and informing policy. By serving as a research hub that fosters exchange and collaboration across the university as well as with its broader publics—local, national, and global—the Center fosters innovative and engaged thinking on matters of enormous importance to us all. The Center also offers undergraduate fellowships and internships. www.asu.edu/csrf/

Community Service Program

The ASU Community Service Program strives to engage students, faculty, and staff in meaningful co-curricular service. The program's goals include providing the campus community avenues to serve the Valley, increasing awareness of needs in the Valley, and engaging students in worthwhile service while promoting a lifelong commitment to citizenship and social justice. <http://community.uui.asu.edu/volunteer.asp>

Barrett, the Honors College

Barrett, The Honors College provides students with an educational context emphasizing academic achievement and social commitment, a sense of collegiality among students, Barrett College faculty, and the Religious Studies faculty as well. For more information contact the Honors Disciplinary Advisor in Religious Studies (Professor Ken Morrison). Barrett Honors College also fosters access to the best and brightest students at ASU, enhanced opportunity to work closely with faculty in research, service and teaching, and a unique opportunity to research and write an Honors Thesis or other creative capstone project. Along with a major in Religious Studies, membership in the Barrett Honors College ensures student success. <http://honors.asu.edu>

Hispanic Research Center

The Hispanic Research Center (HRC) at ASU is an interdisciplinary unit dedicated to research and creative activities that is university wide but administered through the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences. The HRC performs basic and applied research on a broad range of topics related to Hispanic populations, disseminates research findings to the academic community and the public, engages in creative activities and makes them available generally, and provides public service in areas of importance to Hispanics. <http://www.asu.edu/clas/hrc/>

Center for Asian Research

The Center promotes Asian Studies at ASU and fosters greater understanding of Asia through a wide variety of research and outreach activities including teacher training, curriculum development, scholarly conferences, public symposia, film series, and exhibitions.

<http://www.asu.edu/asian/>

International Programs Office

The International Programs Office (IPO) offers ASU students the experience of a lifetime with study abroad and international exchange programs. IPO administers over 220 study abroad and exchange programs in over 40 countries around the world. IPO programs are available during the summer, fall semester, spring semester or full academic year. Participants in IPO programs earn ASU resident credit for their studies, so that they are not taking any time away from their normal degree progress. <http://ipo.asu.edu/>

School of International Letters & Cultures

Language Study is a crucial textual and social skill that can make possible multi-cultural and international careers. Arizona State University's Department of Language and Literatures provides introductory and advanced courses in twenty languages and cultures... In addition, the Department's study abroad programs can provide language study and practice of oral skills.

www.asu.edu/clas.dli

Joan and David Lincoln Center for Applied Ethics

The Lincoln Center is a unique resource that supports ethics and encourages the practice of ethical behavior. The Center is dedicated to emphasizing the essential role that morals and values play in the achievements and successes of individuals and organizations.

www.asu.edu/clas/lincolncenter/

North American Center for Transborder Studies

NACTS brings together research faculty from Canada, the United States and Mexico, to collaborate with local communities, governmental officials and public service agencies to provide quantitative and qualitative data and multiple perspectives for greater understanding of border issues in North America. www.asu.edu/clas/nacts

Office of National Scholarship Advisement

The Lorraine W. Frank Office of National Scholarship Advisement helps students from all ASU's campuses prepare to compete for national and international awards of merit: Rhodes, Marshall, Fulbright, Truman, Goldwater, Mellon, NSF, Udall, National Security Education Program, Gilman,

Freeman Asia, Hon Kachina, Javits, Woodrow Wilson, USA Today, and others.
<http://www.asu.edu/graduate/events/GradFellowships/2006LVFPMSA.DOC>

School of Global Studies

A major initiative at Arizona State University, the School provides innovative approaches to global challenges, and develops transdisciplinary perspectives across the social sciences, natural sciences, and humanities in both research and teaching. The School does not so much emulate other such programs across the country and around the world, but provides a unique approach and setting across a range of thematic areas: governance; migration; urban studies; environmental studies; and violence. Several of the School's faculty also have appointments in Religious Studies. www.asu.edu/clas/globalstudies

Service Learning Program

Academic Success and Engagement Programs offers experiential learning and academic success coursework. Programs include service learning, America Reads, Campus Match, Summer Bridge, UNI 100, Writing across the Curriculum, and the Writing Center.
<http://uc.asu.edu/servicelearning/>

VI. Religious Studies Advisement

Prospective and enrolled majors are strongly encouraged to seek the advice and guidance of the Religious Studies Undergraduate Advisor and the Director of Undergraduate Studies, and the support of like-minded students in the Religious Studies Society. Please understand that your success is our success. We can help you think about your undergraduate career, assist you in moving forward, and support you in preparing the crucial documents—resumes and personal statements—that will empower your next stage of personal and professional development.

Undergraduate Advisor:
Patricia Power
Engineering "A" wing, Room
(480) 965-0642
patricia.power@asu.edu

Director of Undergraduate Studies
Professor Kenneth Morrison
Engineering "A" wing, Room
(480) 965-7148
ken.morrison@asu.edu

ASU Career Services
<http://www.asu.edu/studentaffairs/career/>

Religious Studies Society
"We are dedicated to the empowerment of students involved with, and interested in, the academic and comparative study of religious topics." <http://www.asu.edu/clubs/religiousstudies>