

RELIGIOUS STUDIES

What can I do with this major?

AREAS

INTERNATIONAL AREAS

Humanitarian Services
Development:
 Economic
 Community
Disaster/Disease Relief
Policy Development
Program Administration
Volunteer Coordination
Peace Keeping or Peacebuilding
Conflict Resolution/Management
Diplomacy/Faith Based Diplomacy
Public Service:
 Foreign Affairs
 International Security
International Law

EMPLOYERS

International aid and relief organizations
NGO's (Non-governmental Organizations),
 e.g. Amnesty International
Nonprofit and not-for-profit organizations, e.g. Vital
 Voices or Habitat for Humanity
Federal government agencies with an international
 focus, e.g. Peace Corps, USAID and the
 Foreign Service (State Department)
Private voluntary organizations
Humanitarian organizations, e.g. International
 Red Cross and CARE
Religious organizations, e.g. World Vision
National Security Council
United Nations
Think tanks

STRATEGIES

Many international organizations value the historical and contemporary context of religions and cultures that one learns in religious studies.
Learn one or more foreign languages.
Plan to study, volunteer, or intern abroad more than one time if possible.
Seek cultural experiences on campus and get involved with the international student population.
Join relevant student organizations such as Amnesty International and gain leadership roles.
Develop excellent research, writing, communication, and organizational skills.
Participate in an international service learning experience or go on a mission trip.
Federal international jobs require careful observation of a formal hiring procedure. Apply for a federal government internship.
Government work in the foreign service requires passage of the Foreign Service Exam and adherence to a list of requirements.
Research the international organization/agency's structure and function.
Volunteer at relevant local social service agencies to gain experience and demonstrate interest.
Develop good working knowledge of international humanitarian law.
Demonstrate your depth of dedication, willingness to adapt, and coping mechanisms to combat stress and difficult situations.
Earn first aid certification to assist in disaster relief work with organizations such as the Red Cross.
Develop skills in the areas of organizing groups, efficiency, and the ability to calm people.
Earn a graduate degree in an area of interest to open more job opportunities. Religious studies provides a good background for a variety of graduate programs.

AREAS

EMPLOYERS

STRATEGIES

EDUCATION

Teaching
Research
Student Affairs Administration
Multicultural Programming
Programs/Study Abroad Administration
Library/Information Sciences
Religious Life Programming
Campus Ministry

Secondary schools
Private, public, or religiously affiliated colleges and universities
Schools of theology/seminaries
Organizations such as Fellowship of Christian Athletes, Campus Crusade for Christ, Muslim Student Association, Hillel
Buddhist Monasteries, e.g. Chuang Yen Monastery

Earn a doctorate degree for teaching and research in colleges and universities. Earn a master's degree in a relevant field for positions in student affairs administration or library/information sciences.
Earn certification/licensure to teach in public secondary schools. Choose a double major in an area such as history.
Complete Master of Divinity plus additional training for campus ministry.
Master of Divinity and Ph.D., D.Min. or Th.D. usually required for teaching, research and administration in seminaries and schools of theology.
Focus on a specialization such as Women's Studies in Religion during graduate school to further employability.
Seek campus leadership positions such as Peer Mentor, Resident Assistant, or Orientation Leader.
Volunteer to assist a faculty member with research.
Develop relationships with faculty to secure strong recommendations.
Maintain a strong grade point average to gain admittance into graduate school.
Learn to speak a second language if planning to pursue a graduate degree in religious studies. Choose a language that will be particularly relevant to your interests.

BUSINESS

Human Resources:
 Training and Development
 Recruitment
 Equity and Diversity Functions
Management
Sales
Marketing
Public Relations

Insurance firms
Retail stores
Banks and financial institutions
Staffing agencies
Service industries
Other large corporations

Learn how to sell your religious studies major to business employers that value employees who understand and appreciate cultural diversity.
Double major or minor in business.
Gain related experience through internships or summer and part-time jobs.
Get involved in relevant student organizations and seek leadership roles.
Develop the ability to write and speak persuasively, as well as adapt content for diverse populations.
Learn how to use relevant software including those for spreadsheets, presentations, and databases.

AREAS

EMPLOYERS

STRATEGIES

COMMUNICATIONS AND ARTS

Writing
Editing
Publishing
Television/Film
Radio
Advertising
Public Relations
Sales
Commercial Art
Website Design
Event Planning
Museum Work:
 Curatorship
 Exhibition Design

Secular publishing houses
Secular radio, television, and film producers
Newspapers
Websites
Denominational boards/agencies
Interdenominational organizations
Denominational publishing houses of books and magazines
Local churches, synagogues, and mosques
Advertising and public relation agencies
Museums
Galleries

Plan to complete one or more internships in this area to prepare for a professional job and to build a network of relevant professionals.
Take courses in English, journalism, art history, or photography depending upon interest area.
Develop excellent writing and editing skills.
Work for the campus newspaper, radio station, or tv station.
Submit articles for publication in religious and nonreligious papers and journals.
Learn web design and desktop publishing.
Obtain specialized technical training such as a double major or minor in broadcasting or graphic design for work in those fields.
Develop a portfolio of writing samples.
Display good planning, organizational, interpersonal, and public speaking skills, and learn to think creatively.
Move to larger metropolitan areas for more jobs and, be willing to relocate for promotions.
Consider freelance positions to work in journalism.
Earn a graduate degree for museum work.

SOCIAL SERVICES

Case Management
Counseling
Rehabilitation
Administration
Vocational Training
Volunteer Services
Programming
Advocacy
Crisis Services (pregnancy, housing, etc.)
Church-based Organizing/Community Development
Fundraising
Grant Writing
Law

Nonprofit and social services organizations including United Way, Red Cross, Goodwill Industries, Salvation Army, etc.
Immigrant and refugee service providers
Migrant service providers
Hospitals and hospices
Residential treatment facilities
Correctional institutions
Shelters
Nursing homes and assisted living facilities
Youth organizations and camps including YMCA, YWCA, Young Life, Campus Life, etc.
Churches, synagogues, and mosques
Lobby agencies

Volunteer with local organizations to gain experience working with a wide variety of people from various backgrounds. Develop multicultural competence.
Obtain excellent interpersonal and oral and written communication skills.
Plan to earn a graduate degree in counseling, social work, or psychology to provide therapy or counseling to clients.
Complete an internship or part-time job in an organization of interest to gain experience and develop contacts.
Find ways to develop fundraising and grant writing skills. These are valued by nonprofit agencies.
Learn a language such as Spanish to work with immigrant and migrant populations.
Earn a joint degree in divinity and law to work in legal fields related to religious freedom issues.

AREAS

RELIGIOUSLY AFFILIATED AREAS

Clergy and Other Religious Leaders Including:
Buddhist, Catholic, Jewish, Protestant, Islamic,
Hindu, Greek Orthodox
Vocation as Monk or Nun
Chaplaincy:
Military
Institutional
Mission Work:
Church Development
Community or Agricultural Development
Educational
Medical
Metropolitan
Evangelism
Local Ministries Including:
Youth Ministries
Adult Ministries
Leisure Ministries
Counseling/Recovery
Religious Education
Day Care, Children and Adult
Food Bank/Emergency Ministries
Family Life Center Management
Music-Oriented Ministries
Religious Camp Administration

EMPLOYERS

Local churches, synagogues, mosques
Religious organizations
Religious communities, e.g. convents and
monasteries
Religious retreat centers, Christian and Buddhist
Denominational boards and agencies
Monasteries
All branches of military service
Hospitals, hospices
Homes for children, youth, senior citizens
Correctional institutions
Police and fire departments
Missions boards
Local churches
Evangelical organizations, e.g. Billy Graham
Evangelistic Association, Operation Christmas
Child
Religious-based camps and youth programs, e.g.
Young Life

STRATEGIES

Obtain general knowledge of practices, procedures,
guidelines, and doctrine of one's faith.
Gain an understanding of human spiritual and
social needs. Demonstrate an openness to learn
about other people's faith and multiple perspec-
tives from different backgrounds.
Research requirements to enter leadership in the
faith you want to pursue. Master of Divinity and
denominational ordination are required for most
clergy positions, for example.
Possess high moral and ethical standards.
Develop leadership ability and self discipline.
Hone communication skills, both oral and written.
To become a chaplain, obtain ordination and two
years service in local church or after acceptance
into branch of military service, attend chaplaincy
school.
Earn any needed advanced degrees, certification,
or licensing in area of interest for missions.
Seek related experience by participating with
missions groups.
Gain travel and cultural experience with group of
interest. Foreign language skills are a plus.
Develop fundraising and budgeting skills.
People interested in religious vs. secular work
possess deep faith, want more than filling one's
own personal needs, and desire to make a
difference.
Often more opportunities for specific ministries exist
in urban areas and large religious institutions.
Obtain experience and contacts through extensive
involvement in campus organizations or local
religious institutions. Leadership on the local,
state, and regional level is crucial.
Seek camp experience to improve organization and
counseling skills as well as network within the
denominational/organizational structure.
Learn to work well with people of all different back-
grounds and socioeconomic status.
Earn dual degrees where appropriate, e.g. music.

GENERAL INFORMATION

- Religious studies equips students with an understanding of global issues and trends in both historical and contemporary contexts. This understanding of multiculturalism and interculturalism is valued by a wide variety of employers in many industries including education, government, and business.
- Student who seek international careers may find that religious studies provides a good background in global issues.
- Many transferable skills such as analyzing and synthesizing data, research, communication skills, and critical thinking are associated with the religious studies degree.
- People who major in religious studies may or may not consider themselves "religious." Expertise in religious ideas can be a plus for secular work environments as well as more traditional religious ones.
- An undergraduate degree prepares students for professional and graduate study in business, law, medicine, counseling, higher education, and other fields. Check for prerequisite classes needed to enter various graduate programs.
- Obtaining relevant experience through internships or volunteer experiences is critical to finding employment opportunities. Dual majors or minors can also help open the door in some fields.
- Join relevant organizations and seek leadership roles.