**Religious Studies program**

**Master of Arts (M.A.) Degree**

**DEGREE INFORMATION**

**Program Admission Deadlines:**

**Fall**: February 15

**Spring:** October 15

**Dept. Code:** REL

**CIP Code:** 38.0201

**Program Level:** Masters

**Minimum Total Hours:** 30

**Program (Major/College):** REL AS

**Approved:** 1980

**CONTACT INFORMATION**

**College:** Arts and Sciences

**Department:** Religious Studies

**Contact Information:** [www.grad.usf.edu](http://www.grad.usf.edu/)

**PROGRAM INFORMATION**

The M.A. degree in Religious Studies provides opportunities for students with backgrounds in the scholarly study of religion to expand their knowledge of the social, cultural, intellectual, and historical contexts of religion, to develop a greater in-depth knowledge of particular religious traditions, and to acquire proficiency with a variety of pertinent methodologies and theoretical perspectives. The degree serves the needs of students who pursue careers in health professions in education, journalism, law, business, politics, and social work. It will be of special value to those interested in pursuing a doctorate in religious studies.

**Accreditation:**

Accredited by the Commission on Colleges of the Southern Association of College and Schools.

**Major Research Areas**: Biblical Studies, Biblical Archaeology, Christianity, Judaism, Mysticism, Philosophy of Religion, Buddhism, Daoism, Confucianism, Hinduism, Chinese Medicine, Religion in Culture and Society, African Religion, African-American Religion, Afro-Caribbean Religion.

**ADMISSION INFORMATION**

Must meet University requirements (see Graduate Admissions) as well as requirements listed below.

**Program Admission Requirements**

Same as university plus:

* Three (3) letters of recommendation, and
* A writing sample
* A personal statement (1-3 pages, double-space)
* GRE required, but no minimum specified

**DEGREE PROGRAM REQUIREMENTS**

Students select a major professor and develop a plan for completing a **minimum of 30 credit hours**. The thesis track requires six (6) of these credits be devoted to a thesis project. The non-thesis track requires that all 30 credits come from graduate seminars. The plan of study is subject to approval of the Graduate Committee. A majority of these courses will be in religious studies, although the plan may include approved courses in other departments. No more than 6 credit hours of 4000-level courses may be counted for graduate credit. There is no uniform language requirement; however, language skills may be required for particular areas of study. All students are required to satisfactorily complete a written, comprehensive examination wherein they demonstrate competence in:

1. pertinent theoretical issues and research methodologies;
2. the analysis and interpretation of related texts, artifacts, and activities; and
3. social and historical contexts of the religions studied.

The Department of Religious Studies “Graduate Student Handbook” should be consulted for additional information about basic requirements and specific procedures.

**Total Minimum hours - 30 hours**

**Core Requirements - 15 hours**

RLG 6035 Theory and Methods in Religious Studies 3

Six (6) hours of courses in Western Religions (Christianity, Judaism, or Islam) 6

Six (6) hours of courses in Eastern Religions (Hinduism, Buddhism, Daoism, or Confucianism) 6

**Electives -15- minimum**

No more than six (6) hours may come from independent study/directed reading.

No more than six (6) hours may come from classes below 6000-level.

No more than six (6) hours may come from departments other than Religious Studies.

**Comprehensive Exam**

**Thesis/Non-Thesis**

**Thesis – 6 hours**

REL 6971 6 Thesis

The student wishing to receive an M.A. degree with a thesis is required to take a minimum of 30 credits. They will complete the core requirements and at least fifteen (15) hours of elective credits. They will also complete a minimum of six (6) credits of REL 6971. The student will pass a comprehensive exam prior to defending the master’s thesis. They will research, write, and successfully defend the master’s thesis before a committee of three professors.

**Non-Thesis**

The student wishing to receive an M.A. degree without a thesis is required to take a minimum of 30 credits. The student will complete the core requirements and at least fifteen (15) hours of elective credits. The student will also pass a comprehensive exam.

**Accelerated Degree Program**

BA in Religious Studies / MA in Religious Studies

This program allows B.A. majors in Religious Studies to take graduate courses in the MA degree in Religious Studies during their senior year. These shared credits will be applicable to the MA degree, thus accelerating the time to completion, with successful students able to earn the MA degree in two additional semesters beyond the completion of the BA degree.

This accelerated program shares 12 credits between already existing degrees:

BA in Religious Studies

MA in Religious Studies (non-Thesis)

**Admission Requirements**

For admission to the program, a student must:

* + have completed at least 15 hours in the Religious Studies undergraduate major;
  + have a minimum undergraduate 3.33 GPA overall; and
  + have a minimum undergraduate 3.5 GPA in the major.
  + Application to the Program may be made by any student who has satisfied the minimum requirements.

Applications should be addressed to the Religious Studies Graduate Program Director and should include a statement by the student affirming satisfaction of minimum requirements (with supporting documentation) and a letter of recommendation from a Religious Studies faculty member familiar with the student’s academic performance.

**Degree Requirements**

BA in Religious Studies – refer to Undergraduate Catalog for requirements

MA in Religious Studies – see requirements above

**Shared Requirements**

Twelve (12) hours of graduate credit may be shared as follows:

REL 4931 (Senior Seminar) is satisfied by FLG 6035 (Theory and Methods in Religious Studies)

9 elective hours at the 4000 level are satisfied by 9 elective hours at the 6000 level

**Other Information**

* + No grade lower than a B will be accepted in a graduate course in the BA/MA program. Students earning less than a B in a graduate course must retake the course and earn a B or higher to apply it to their graduate degree. Failure to earn at least a B in a graduate course will result in academic review by the graduate program. Failure to maintain a minimum 3.00 GPA will result in academic probation, according to the procedures of the USF Office of Graduate Studies.
  + To be considered for acceptance into the Accelerated BA/MA in Religious Studies, students must have completed minimum of 15 credits in the Religious Studies undergraduate major.
  + Students must have a minimum undergraduate GPA of 3.33 overall and a minimum GPA of 3.5 in the Major to be eligible for the accelerated degree program.
  + A comprehensive plan of study to complete the integrated BA/MA program will be developed with the guidance of an advisor and a faculty member.

**COURSES**

See <http://www.ugs.usf.edu/course-inventory/>