



RELIGION

The study of religion opens the door to investigating the central concerns of human cultures. All human communities have included elements of religion—even the earliest prehistoric human groups left evidence of ritual burial and the use of symbolic designs. Our own society is no less involved in religious matters: in the explorations of the New Age as in the resurgence of traditional denominations, Americans still consider spiritual reality and its meaning in everyday life to be of great import.

At Illinois Wesleyan University, the Department of Religion encourages students to learn more about their own religious heritage as well as to venture into new realms. In our classes, and especially through the minor or major in Religion, you can investigate the beliefs and practices of world religions such as Buddhism, Christianity, Hinduism, Islam and Judaism; analyze the texts of the Hebrew Bible and Christian New Testament; discover new religious movements in the U.S.; or reconsider questions of human and divine nature. We particularly emphasize comparative studies and dialogue on contrasting worldviews, and our curriculum is regularly reviewed and updated to reflect changing events—recent topics have included Hindu-Christian dialogue, New Religions, magic and religion, and religion and violence. In our courses you will read new texts, discuss challenging topics, write both short discursive essays and longer research papers, give presentations of your own ideas, and participate in other group projects in and out of the classroom.

Courses in the Religion Department contribute to the curriculum in liberal arts at Illinois Wesleyan. A major in Religion offers ideal preparation for a life of engagement in your community and the world; it also offers excellent preparation for entrance into graduate programs in religious studies or theology as well as for future work in a myriad of employment opportunities. Double majors, combining Religion with a second field such as Philosophy, Sociology, English, International Studies, or History are encouraged. A minor in Religion can also complement majors in these and other departments, allowing you the opportunity to diversify your studies at Illinois Wesleyan. In both the major and

the minor, you choose your primary courses from five different categories and add courses that appeal to your own interests. As a major you will conclude your study with a Senior Project on a topic of your choosing. These projects offer an ideal basis for a subsequent Research Honors Project. You will find that several of our courses are also cross-listed with the History Department, International Studies Program, Greek and Roman Studies Program, and Women's Studies Program.

EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES

Learning is enhanced at Illinois Wesleyan by the high quality of individualized instruction that students receive from our faculty. Religion classes typically have no more than 25 students, and upper-level seminars may have between 15 and 20 students. In these courses, discussion and active learning form the center of the interactions between faculty and students, and increased attention is paid to writing, analysis, and close reading of primary texts from religions around the world.

OTHER SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES INCLUDE:

Independent study:

In Religion 450: Independent Studies in Religion, students may undertake study on topics outside of the regular department curriculum. In recent years, Religion majors and minors have researched the resurgence of Native American Religions, the history of American feminist witchcraft, and philosophical problems of Jewish identity.

Study Abroad:

The Religion Department encourages majors to experience a semester's study abroad, either through the IWU London or Madrid Programs, or an independent study program, especially one connected with their areas of interest in religion. Recent graduates have studied in Australia, India, and Austria, pursuing both language and cultural studies during their travels.

Senior Project in Religion:

In the senior year, all majors work on a semester-long capstone experience, the Senior Project. Majors design an original research question and work closely with one faculty member to investigate the question, compile a research bibliography, and select and apply appropriate scholarly perspectives. In 2006-2007, for example, senior majors researched the emergence of a new religious movement in Puerto Rico, virtue ethics in the writings of Stanley Hauerwas and Alisdair MacIntyre, the history of Christianity in Australia, Tibetan religious symbolism, the origins of the Infancy Gospel of James, and the development of Sikh theology from its sacred texts.

Research Honors:

Following the Senior Project, majors in religion have the opportunity to pursue a project of original research in religion. Building on their previous research, students further pursue their topic interests, delving deeper into religious thought, rituals, teachings, and history, to produce an original Research Thesis.

THE RELIGION DEPARTMENT FACULTY

All faculty in the Religion Department hold advanced degrees from renowned universities and are active scholars with a commitment to teaching, research, and publication. All have undertaken research or advanced studies in religion abroad — in such countries as the United Kingdom, Greece, Brazil, Japan, and India. Our faculty will work closely with you, answering your questions in and out of class; they will invite you to a department colloquia and formal gatherings, and broaden your horizons with films, performances, and visiting speakers.

Our faculty members include:

- ▶ **Robert Erlewine** (Ph.D., Rice University), a scholar of modern and post-modern religious thought, especially its Jewish, Christian and post-Christian varieties, whose courses investigate the Jewish religious tradition, religious responses to the Holocaust, and philosophical and theological accounts of tolerance and pluralism.
- ▶ **Brian Hatcher** (Ph.D., Harvard University), chair of the department, a scholar of classical and modern Hinduism, with a special interest in colonial India, who teaches courses on Asian Religions, Hinduism, Buddhism, and the interpretation of religious experience.
- ▶ **Tao Jin** (Ph.D., University of Illinois), a scholar of East Asian Buddhism, with a special interest in Buddhist commentary and exegesis who teaches courses on Asian Religious Literature, Buddhism in East Asia, Zen, and Chinese Religions.
- ▶ **Carole Myscofski** (Ph.D., University of Chicago), a historian of religions whose classes include the study of myths, women and religion, the religions of Native America and Africa, with special interests in colonial Brazil, magic, and new religious movements.
- ▶ **Kevin Sullivan** (D.Phil., The University of Oxford), a scholar of the New Testament and Christian origins, whose classes focus on the study of early Jewish and Christian literatures in

SAMPLE FOUR YEAR CURRICULUM IN RELIGION

The Major in Religion

The major requires a minimum of nine course units in religion. One course unit must be taken from each of the following four categories: 1) textual studies; 2) history of religions; 3) critical-constructive studies; and 4) methodological studies. Four course units may be chosen in consultation with an advisor. All majors must complete a Senior Research Project.

FRESHMAN YEAR

Fall Semester	Spring Semester	May Term
Gateway Colloquium Religion: 102, 104, 110, 120 Mathematics Foreign Language Physical Education	Contemporary Social Institutions Religion: 130, 132, 220, 221, 222, 223 Intellectual Traditions Foreign Language Physical Education	Elective

SOPHOMORE YEAR

Fall Semester	Spring Semester	May Term
Religion, 204, 209, 232 The Natural Sciences Foreign Language Literature	Religion 241, 246, 290, 292 The Natural Sciences Anthropology Analysis of Values	Elective

JUNIOR YEAR

Fall Semester	Spring Semester	May Term
Religion 304, 310, 325 Cultural and Historical Change Elective Elective	Religion 291, 323, 330 Elective Elective Elective	Travel Course

SENIOR YEAR

Fall Semester	Spring Semester	May Term
Religion 307, 332 Religion 460 Elective Elective	Religion 461 Elective Elective Elective	Elective

their historical contexts, with special research interests in early Jewish and Christian Mysticism.

YOUR PROFESSIONAL FUTURE

As a student in the religion department, you may prepare for a variety of careers in academia, counseling, law, social work, business, or ministry. Many graduates of our department have continued their education at major graduate institutions, including Oxford University, Columbia University, and the University of Chicago, on their way to careers in college or university teaching. Others have pursued ministry degrees at seminaries such as Harvard Divinity School, Garrett-Evangelical Theological Seminary, and Lutheran School of Theology in Chicago. Recent graduates have joined Teach For America, the national corps of college graduates who commit to teaching low-income students for two years. A degree in religion from Illinois Wesleyan University can be your gateway to a wide variety of challenging and satisfying professional opportunities.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION

For more information about the academic program and the faculty visit our website at: www2.iwu.edu/religion/index.shtml