Students planning on entering professions such as education, social work, law, theatre, music, business, etc. may pursue courses in Religion, Society and Culture in order to enhance their vocational and personal lives. (The study of religion may also, of course, be in preparation for some form of ministry.)

**Programs**

**Honours in Religion, Society and Culture (60 credits)**

Students must keep an average of at least 70% as calculated from the best 60 credits in the program (including cognates). Students have the option of writing an Honours thesis in their final year. Students usually take the Honours program if they plan to pursue graduate work. See the Major in Religion, Society and Culture below.

**Major in Religion, Society and Culture (42 credits)**

Honours and Majors are also required to fulfill the following minimum distribution requirements (30 credits; see the course lists for course descriptions):

- **Biblical Studies**: 6 credits from: RSC 112, RSC 114, RSC 115, RSC 135, RSC 214, RSC 215, RSC 328
- **World Religions**: 12 credits, including RSC 100 and RSC 101, plus 6 credits from: RSC 124, RSC 125, RSC 126, RSC 127
- **Approaches, Perspectives and Expressions**: Any 12 credits

**Minor in Religion, Society and Culture (24 credits)**

Any 24 credits in Religion, Society and Culture

**List of Courses**

### Biblical Studies

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Course</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Credits</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>RSC 112</td>
<td>The Traditions of Ancient Israel</td>
<td>3-3-0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RSC 114</td>
<td>Biblical Hebrew I</td>
<td>3-3-0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RSC 115</td>
<td>Biblical Hebrew II</td>
<td>3-3-0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RSC 135</td>
<td>The World of the New Testament</td>
<td>3-3-0</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

An exploration of the world of the ancient Israelites, the forerunners of the Jewish people. Material from selected books of the Hebrew Bible (also called the Old Testament) will be combined with archaeological data and evidence from inscriptions to situate Israelite civilization within the socio-cultural context of the wider ancient Middle Eastern and Mediterranean worlds.

Introduction to biblical Hebrew grammar, and reading of simple texts.

More advanced biblical Hebrew grammatical concepts, and study of more challenging texts.

How did Jesus the Jew come to be known as Jesus Christ? What was the Graeco-Roman world that birthed the first-century Jewish sect that became Christianity like? Through an analysis of various New Testament documents and other early Christian writings, this course will focus on the social, historical and political context of the Graeco-Roman world that gave rise to Christianity.
World Religions

RSC 100 Western Religions 3-3-0
An introduction to Western religious traditions (Zoroastrianism, Judaism, Christianity and Islam). In addition to addressing the historical evolution, religious practices, writings, fundamental concepts, beliefs and cultural expressions of each of these traditions, the course will also consider methodological issues pertaining to the study of religion as an academic discipline.

RSC 101 Eastern Religions 3-3-0
An introduction to Eastern religious traditions (Hinduism, Buddhism, Jainism, Sikhism and Shinto). In addition to addressing the historical evolution, religious practices, writings, fundamental concepts, beliefs and cultural expressions of each of these traditions, the course will also consider methodological issues pertaining to the study of religion as an academic discipline.

RSC 120 / CLA 112 Ancient Greek Mythology 3-3-0
The origin and development of Greek mythology, and the importance of myths in understanding ancient literature and religion: theories of myth, cult and ritual, mystery religions, the epic tradition. Greek sources are read in translation.

RSC 124 Hinduism: The Many Faces of the Divine 3-3-0
A study of Hinduism in its infinite variety from earliest times to the present. Topics include: the Indus Valley Civilization; early Vedic religion, its myths and gods; the Upanishads; Brahmanism; the Ramayana and the Mahabharata; the caste system; Vaishnavism, Saivism and goddess worship.

RSC 125 Buddhism: The Middle Way 3-3-0
The origins of Buddhism in its native India and its spread throughout many countries of the East. Topics include: the relationship of Buddhism to Hinduism and Jainism; the development of the monastic order, principal teachings and practices; meditation; ritual; study of major writings and modern developments.

RSC 126 Judaism: A Covenant with God 3-3-0
An introduction to the history, literature, ideas and practices of Judaism from its biblical origins to the present. Topics include: the major festivals and High Holidays; Torah and Talmud, mitzvah and midrash; philosophers of Judaism; Kabbalah and the mystical tradition; temples and synagogues; Rabbinic Judaism; Orthodox, Conservative and Reform; dietary and religious practices; women and the rabbinate; rites of passage; the Holocaust; the modern state of Israel and messianism.

RSC 127 Islam: Submission to Allah 3-3-0
The history, literature, ideas and practices of Islam from its origins to the present. Topics include: pre-Islamic Arabia; the life, example and practices of the Prophet Muhammad; the Qur'an; the caliphate and the ummah; sunnah and Hadith; the Five Pillars and worship; shari'ah; Sufism and the mystical tradition; Sunni and Shiite; women in Islam; art and architecture in Islam; Islam and modernity.

RSC 128 Christianity: A New Covenant with God 3-3-0
The history, literature, ideas and practices of Christianity from its origins to the present. Topics include: the relationship of Christianity to Judaism; Jesus' message and his ministry; the apostles and the early church; the gospels and Acts; salvation; spiritual growth and practices; the liturgy and sacraments; the sevenfold gifts of the Holy Spirit; the Trinity; the church, the sacraments, and the sevenfold gifts of the Holy Spirit.

RSC 129 Religion and Speculative Thought 3-3-0
An introduction to major theoretical approaches to the psychological understanding of religion: pragmatism (William James), Psychoanalysis (Sigmund Freud, Carl Jung, Erik Erikson) and Humanism (Gordon Allport, Abraham Maslow).

RSC 140 Sociology of Religion 3-3-0
An introduction to major theoretical approaches to the psychological understanding of religion: pragmatism (William James), Psychoanalysis (Sigmund Freud, Carl Jung, Erik Erikson) and Humanism (Gordon Allport, Abraham Maslow).

RSC 141 Approaches, Perspectives and Expressions 3-3-0
An introduction to major theoretical approaches to the psychological understanding of religion: pragmatism (William James), Psychoanalysis (Sigmund Freud, Carl Jung, Erik Erikson) and Humanism (Gordon Allport, Abraham Maslow).

RSC 142 Christianity: A New Covenant with God 3-3-0
The history, literature, ideas and practices of Christianity from its origins to the present. Topics include: the relationship of Christianity to Judaism; Jesus' message and his ministry; the apostles and the early church; the gospels and Acts; salvation; spiritual growth and practices; the liturgy and sacraments; the sevenfold gifts of the Holy Spirit; the Trinity; the church, the sacraments, and the sevenfold gifts of the Holy Spirit.

RSC 143 Judaism: A Covenant with God 3-3-0
An introduction to the history, literature, ideas and practices of Judaism from its biblical origins to the present. Topics include: the major festivals and High Holidays; Torah and Talmud, mitzvah and midrash; philosophers of Judaism; Kabbalah and the mystical tradition; temples and synagogues; Rabbinic Judaism; Orthodox, Conservative and Reform; dietary and religious practices; women and the rabbinate; rites of passage; the Holocaust; the modern state of Israel and messianism.

RSC 144 Buddhism: The Middle Way 3-3-0
The origins of Buddhism in its native India and its spread throughout many countries of the East. Topics include: the relationship of Buddhism to Hinduism and Jainism; the development of the monastic order, principal teachings and practices; meditation; ritual; study of major writings and modern developments.

RSC 145 Hinduism: The Many Faces of the Divine 3-3-0
A study of Hinduism in its infinite variety from earliest times to the present. Topics include: the Indus Valley Civilization; early Vedic religion, its myths and gods; the Upanishads; Brahmanism; the Ramayana and the Mahabharata; the caste system; Vaishnavism, Saivism and goddess worship.

RSC 146 Sociology of Religion 3-3-0
An introduction to major theoretical approaches to the psychological understanding of religion: pragmatism (William James), Psychoanalysis (Sigmund Freud, Carl Jung, Erik Erikson) and Humanism (Gordon Allport, Abraham Maslow).

RSC 147 Approaches, Perspectives and Expressions 3-3-0
An introduction to major theoretical approaches to the psychological understanding of religion: pragmatism (William James), Psychoanalysis (Sigmund Freud, Carl Jung, Erik Erikson) and Humanism (Gordon Allport, Abraham Maslow).

RSC 148 Psychology of Religion 3-3-0
An introduction to major theoretical approaches to the psychological understanding of religion: pragmatism (William James), Psychoanalysis (Sigmund Freud, Carl Jung, Erik Erikson) and Humanism (Gordon Allport, Abraham Maslow).

RSC 149 Approaches, Perspectives and Expressions 3-3-0
An introduction to major theoretical approaches to the psychological understanding of religion: pragmatism (William James), Psychoanalysis (Sigmund Freud, Carl Jung, Erik Erikson) and Humanism (Gordon Allport, Abraham Maslow).

RSC 150 Sociology of Religion 3-3-0
An introduction to major theoretical approaches to the psychological understanding of religion: pragmatism (William James), Psychoanalysis (Sigmund Freud, Carl Jung, Erik Erikson) and Humanism (Gordon Allport, Abraham Maslow).

RSC 151 Approaches, Perspectives and Expressions 3-3-0
An introduction to major theoretical approaches to the psychological understanding of religion: pragmatism (William James), Psychoanalysis (Sigmund Freud, Carl Jung, Erik Erikson) and Humanism (Gordon Allport, Abraham Maslow).
RSC 206 Apocalypse 3-3-0
It's the End of the World as We Know It... Whereas cosmic time in Eastern religious traditions is generally seen as cyclical, with recurring phases of creation and destruction, in Western-based religions such as Judaism, Christianity and Islam it is viewed as linear, with a single creation and a final destruction of this present world – the apocalypse. This course will look at the sacred texts that underpin apocalyptic concepts in established Western religions (e.g., the biblical books of Daniel and Revelation), and examine how apocalyptic beliefs have been given expression in these traditions. Consideration will also be given to End Time beliefs in more recent “apocalyptic” movements (e.g., Heaven’s Gate and the Branch Davidians).

RSC 207 Sex and Religion 3-3-0
This course provides an overview of topics in which issues of sex and sexuality intersect with particular Eastern and Western religious traditions. The course is selective rather than comprehensive. Topics that could be covered include: menstruation and early sexuality; homosexuality; masturbation; same-sex marriage; celibacy; asecuality; and the sacred. Attitudes, traditions and regulations pertaining to these topics will be explored from various religious perspectives through readings and films.

RSC 208 / LIB 216 The Divine and Ultimate Concern 3-3-0
The divine is that about which we are “ultimately concerned”—so said theologian Paul Tillich of Union Seminary in New York. Is this just a last-ditch attempt to salvage faith and spirituality in the midst of charges that religion is, at best, an “opiate of the masses” (Marx) and, at worst, “patently infantile” (Freud)? Or again, is the role of religion being taken over by its longtime sister in spirit—art? This course will explore the troubled and passionate place of religious experience and the aesthetic in Western civilization.

RSC 209 Sports and Religion 3-3-0
This course examines the intersection between sports and religious mentality and expression. Topics will include the rituals associated with athletics, supposed sports curses, prayer in sports, the possible transcendent experience of the athlete (“flow”) and the euphoria of fandom (“collective effervescence”).

RSC 232 Philosophy of Religion 3-3-0
The subject matter of this course consists of philosophical arguments for the existence of God. Lectures and discussions will be based on original texts (in translation): Thomas Aquinas’s five proofs and the ontological argument in its classical (Anselm) and modern formulations. The modern and much debated argument from design will also be discussed. The class will also learn the standard critiques of those arguments by David Hume, Immanuel Kant and others. If time allows, this will be followed by an analysis of the problem of evil as counting against belief in the existence of God.

RSC 234 / POL 236 Introduction to Middle Eastern Politics 3-3-0
The course will focus on the forces that have shaped current Middle Eastern politics: particularly the growing influence of Islam and Islamic fundamentalism on political life and thought; the enduring legacies of westernization, colonialism and secular nationalism; and the Arab-Israeli conflict. Arriving at an understanding of Middle Eastern politics in this course will also entail study of the challenges modernizing states, parties and leaders are confronting today, and the profound impact of Western interests and policies on the region.

RSC 236 / CLA 326 Death and Dying in the Ancient World 3-3-0
This course explores the myths, rituals and beliefs associated with death and dying in antiquity. Topics include: myths associated with the afterlife; books of the dead; magic and death rituals; understandings of heaven and hell; final judgment. Prerequisite: RSC 100 or RSC 101 or permission of the instructor.

RSC 237 Film and Religion 3-3-0
This course employs film to study religion, and religion to study film. Different genres of film will be used to explore various issues, dimensions and expressions of religion, while images, metaphors and teachings found in religion will be employed to illuminate the material portrayed in film.

RSC 248 Death and Dying in the Modern World 3-3-0
This course explores the myths, rituals and beliefs associated with death and dying in the modern world. Topics include how death and dying are dealt with by contemporary cultures and societies, in particular within the contexts of various religious traditions.
Independent Studies

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<tr>
<th>Course Code</th>
<th>Course Title</th>
<th>Credits</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>RSC 300</td>
<td>Independent Studies I</td>
<td>3-3-0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RSC 301</td>
<td>Independent Studies II</td>
<td>3-3-0</td>
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<tr>
<td>RSC 402F</td>
<td>Honours Thesis</td>
<td>6-3-0</td>
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A full-year (two-semester) course in which the student does guided research into a subject, produces a written thesis and, ultimately, gives an oral defence of the thesis.

Prerequisite: departmental acceptance of the thesis proposal

Cognate Courses

The following courses in other departments are recognized as Religion, Society and Culture cognates:

- **CLA 110** The Art and Archaeology of Ancient Egypt
- **CLA 113** Classical Mythology: The Greek Influence on Rome
- **DRA 211** Ritual and Theatre
- **EDU 313** Teaching Ethics and Religious Culture (Elementary & Secondary)
- **HIS 253** A History of Medieval Europe
- **HIS 279** The Middle East in the Twentieth Century
- **HIS 291** Women in the Islamic World
- **HIS 393** Inquisitions, Law and Society
- **LIB 384** Dante’s Divine Comedy

Some courses offered in the College of Liberal Arts

Some courses offered in the Philosophy Department

**PSY 298** Zen and the Brain

This is not an exhaustive list. Religion, Society and Culture students should consult the chair of the Department regarding any other courses offered by other departments or programs that they wish to take for Religion, Society and Culture credit.