

# Religious Studies

The Religious Studies major is grounded in the rich Catholic intellectual and Mercy heritages of Mount Mercy University, and explores them in the context of the biblical traditions, social thought, the sacramental and liturgical life of the Church, and inter-religious understanding and respect. The major includes the following objectives:

- \* to understand central theological themes of Catholicism and other Christian traditions.
- \* to appreciate scriptural texts and employ the basic principles of Catholic and other Christian biblical interpretations.
- \* to employ social teaching and moral theology in the creation of a more just and peaceful world.
- \* to recognize the significance of openness to ecumenical and inter-religious dialogue.
- \* to engage with and theologically reflect on the lived faith experiences of people and communities.

## Career Opportunities

The Religious Studies major's flexibility meets the specific needs of individual students and functions well as a second major option. Students majoring in the program are well prepared to pursue many career opportunities inside or outside of the church, or pursue graduate study in a variety of disciplines. Religious Studies majors find church-related careers as teachers of religion, directors of religious education programs, youth or family-life ministers, directors of volunteers or of social justice activities, liturgical ministers and pastoral associates. They also may enter law school, study politics, or become journalists or chaplains in campus or hospital settings. See the Graduate section (<http://catalog.mtmercy.edu/archives/2018-19/graduateprograms>) of this *Catalog* for more information on Graduate programs offered at Mount Mercy.

## Religious Studies Major

RS 110	Christian Moral Life	3
or PL 269	Introduction to Ethics	
RS 111	Introduction To The Bible: Old Testament	3
RS 113	Introduction To The Bible: New Testament	3
RS 114	Introduction to Christianity	3
RS 370	Church in Contemporary Society	3
PL 375	Faith and Reason	3
RS 445	Independent Study	3
or RS 461	Senior Field Instruction	
Choice of three electives. <sup>1</sup>		9

<sup>1</sup> Chosen in consultation with the religious studies advisor.

## Courses

### RS 110 Christian Moral Life: 3 semester hours

Christian Moral Life" will enable students to think systematically about the Christian (including Catholic) moral life, while more broadly engaging current issues concerning Christian ethics and morality. This introductory course will explore the foundational sources of ethics (Scripture and Tradition), as well as theology, philosophy, and ecumenical conversations. It will show how these foundational sources guide ethical understanding concretely by examining pressing issues of the day. A service learning component will be required. Fulfills the Religious Studies requirement in the Core Curriculum.

### RS 111 Introduction To The Bible: Old Testament: 3 semester hours

This course provides a survey of the origin, development, and principal themes of the Old Testament to gain a basic understanding of the foundations of Israelite faith. Methods of contemporary biblical interpretation will be explored and applied in the process of analyzing various types of Old Testament writings.

### RS 113 Introduction To The Bible: New Testament: 3 semester hours

A survey of the New Testament, presented within the historical and cultural perspectives of the first-century Christian communities. Methods of contemporary biblical interpretation will be explored and applied in the process of analyzing Paul's letters and the gospels.

### RS 114 Introduction to Christianity: 3 semester hours

This course provides an analysis of the phenomenon of Christianity in both its Roman Catholic and Protestant forms in terms of history, major doctrines, rituals and the contributions of seminal theologians.

### RS 115 Introduction To World Religions: 3 semester hours

This course provides a consideration of each of the great religions in the context of contemporary society. Variations in the structure, organization, and function of the religions are systematically examined.

### RS 211 Who Is Jesus?: 3 semester hours

An exploration of results of modern historical study of the gospels, which provide a better picture of the facts of Jesus' life that Christians have had for the past 19 centuries. This course also analyzes the significance of such historical information for evaluation past and present expressions of Christian belief in Jesus as Lord and Savior. Prerequisite: Fulfillment of core curriculum requirement in Religious Studies.

### RS 284 Topics in Religious Studies: 3 semester hours

Students will explore a particular topic in the western religious tradition. The topics can be in areas such as the following: the writings of an important thinker (e.g. Thomas Aquinas or Martin Luther), or the religious dynamics of a historical period (e.g. the impact of the reformation or Vatican II on Christian doctrine, practice and organization), or the development of theological or moral doctrines or religious practices (e.g. Women in the Church), or a particular topic in the academic study of the Bible using modern methods of interpretation (e.g. a single book like Genesis, a set of books like the letters of Paul, or a biblical theme like "Covenant" or "Prophecy". This course may be taken a second time with a different topic. Prerequisites: Fulfillment of core curriculum requirement in Religious Studies.

### RS 312 Modern Christian Thought: 3 semester hours

An examination of how Roman Catholic and Protestant Christian theologians have responded to the many challenges presented by the modern world. Such challenges include those posed by the Enlightenment, historical consciousness, modernism, the Industrial Revolution, totalitarian regimes, and socio-economic disparity. The course will also consider theological responses to modern forms of atheism, socio-economic criticisms (Marx), psychological criticisms (Freud), gender inequality, ethnic and racial injustices and the awareness of other religious traditions. Prerequisite: fulfillment of core curriculum requirement in Religious Studies and Philosophy.

***RS 370 Church in Contemporary Society: 3 semester hours***

Church in Contemporary Society" critically examines how the Church engages different cultures through sacramental life and social mission for the spiritual and material wellbeing of all persons. Key understandings to be explored include the Church's role in public life in general, the Church as a Eucharistic community, the Church as the people of God, the Church as one, holy, catholic and apostolic, the Church as sacrament, and the Church in solidarity with the poor. Prerequisite: fulfillment of the core curriculum requirement for religious studies.

***RS 445 Independent Study: 3 semester hours***

Directed readings and research; topics determined by the student and faculty member.

***RS 461 Senior Field Instruction: 0 semester hours***

Field instruction includes educationally directed practical experiences. Guidance by and experienced catechist or pastoral leader will be arranged and supplemented by weekly individual and group conferences with a faculty member. Students will be expected to do related readings and recording of field experiences. Students will spend eight hours a week in their field placement. The course will be graded pass/fail and must be taken concurrently or subsequent to RS 370. Prerequisite: Permission for the department chairperson.