

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/graduateprograms/>) of this *Catalog* for more information on Graduate programs offered at Mount Mercy.

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. ¹		9
Total Hours		30

¹ Chosen in consultation with the religious studies advisor

Religious Studies Minor

RS 110	Christian Moral Life	3
or PL 269	Introduction to Ethics	
RS 111	Introduction To The Bible: Old Testament	3
or RS 113	Introduction To The Bible: New Testament	
RS 370	Church in Contemporary Society	3
RS 284	Topics in Religious Studies	3
or PL 310	Special Topics: Applied Ethics	
Choose One:		3

RS 111	Introduction To The Bible: Old Testament	
RS 113	Introduction To The Bible: New Testament	
RS 114	Introduction to Christianity	
RS 115	Introduction To World Religions	
One course 200-level or above from student's major *		3
Total Hours		18

* Must be approved by Religious Studies advisor

The following is the typical sequence of courses required for the major*:

Freshman

Fall	Hours	Winter	Hours	Spring	Hours
RS 111		3 Domain		3 RS 113	3
Portal	3			Domain	3
Writing Competency	4			Domain	3
Elective	3			Elective	3
				Elective	3
	13		3		15

Sophomore

Fall	Hours	Winter	Hours	Spring	Hours
RS 114		3 Elective		3 RS 110 or PL 269	3
Domain	3			Elective	3
Domain	3			Domain	3
Elective	3			Domain	3
Elective	3				
	15		3		12

Junior

Fall	Hours	Winter	Hours	Spring	Hours
RS 370		3 Domain		3 PL 375	3
Religious Studies Elective	3			Religious Studies Elective	3
Domain	3			Elective	3
Domain	3			Domain	3
Elective	3				
	15		3		12

Senior

Fall	Hours	Winter	Hours	Spring	Hours
Religious Studies Elective	3	Elective		3 Capstone	1
Elective	3			RS 445 or 461	3
Elective	3			Elective	3
Elective	3			Elective	3
Elective	3			Elective	3
	15		3		13

Total Hours: 122

Note: Elective courses could be used for a second major, a minor, a course of interest, internship or study abroad experience. We strongly encourage Religious Studies majors to earn a second major. This 4-year plan assumes a second major with ten required courses.

Note: See the Curriculum section (<http://catalog.mtmercy.edu/curriculum/#corecurriculumtext>) for more information on Portal, Competency, Domain, and Capstone courses.

*Disclaimer

The course offerings, requirements, and policies of Mount Mercy University are under continual examination and revision. This *Catalog* presents the offerings, requirements, and policies in effect at the time of publication and in no way guarantees that the offerings, requirements, and policies will not change.

This plan of study represents a typical sequence of courses required for this major. It may not be applicable to every student. Students should contact a department faculty member to be sure of appropriate course sequence.

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 217 Catholic Biomedical Ethics: 3 semester hours

'Catholic Biomedical Ethics' will study biomedical and health care ethics in light of Catholic theology and the philosophical tradition of natural law. The course will cover basic principles of moral theology and ethics as tools for understanding the moral nature of health care itself. Flowing out of these principles, the course will investigate a series of particular biomedical issues including beginning-of-life and end-of-life questions in and through the foundational Christian claim of intrinsic human dignity. The course will provide students with both a speculative understanding of these issues and knowledge necessary to meet adequately the challenge of ethical questions for those pursuing employment in health care and related fields.

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 an 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.