

RELIGIOUS STUDIES

What can I do with this major?

AREAS

INTERNATIONAL AREAS

Humanitarian Services

Development:

Economic

Community

Disaster/Disease Relief

Policy Development

Program Administration

Volunteer Coordination

Peace Keeping or Peacebuilding

Conflict Resolution/Management

Diplomacy/Faith Based Diplomacy

Public Service:

Foreign Affairs

International Security

International Law

EMPLOYERS

International aid and relief organizations

NGO's (Non-governmental Organizations),

e.g. Amnesty International

Nonprofit and not-for-profit organizations, .e.g Vital

Voices or Habitat for Humanity

Federal government agencies with an international

focus, e.g. Peace Corps, USAID and the Foreign

Service (State Department)

Private voluntary organizations

Humanitarian organizations, e.g. International

Red Cross and CARE

Religious organizations, e.g. World Vision

National Security Council

United Nations

Think tanks

STRATEGIES

Many international organizations value the historical and contemporary context of religions and cultures that one learns in religious studies.

Learn one or more foreign languages.

Plan to study, volunteer or intern abroad more than one time if possible.

Seek cultural experiences on campus and get involved with the international student population.

Join relevant student organizations such as Amnesty International and gain leadership roles.

Develop excellent research, writing, communication and organizational skills.

Participate in an international service learning experience or go on a mission trip.

Federal international jobs require careful observation of a formal hiring procedure. Apply for a federal government internship.

Government work in the foreign service requires passage of the Foreign Service Exam and adherence to a list of requirements.

Research the international organization/agency's structure and function.

Volunteer at relevant local social service agencies to gain experience and demonstrate interest.

Develop good working knowledge of international humanitarian law.

Demonstrate your depth of dedication, willingness to adapt, and coping mechanisms to combat stress and difficult situations.

Develop skills in the areas of organizing groups, efficiency and the ability to calm people.

Earn a graduate degree in an area of interest to open more job opportunities. Religious studies provides a good background for a variety of graduate programs.

AREAS

EMPLOYERS

STRATEGIES

EDUCATION

Teaching
Research
Student Affairs Administration
Multicultural Programming
Programs/Study Abroad Administration
Library/Information Sciences
Religious Life Programming
Campus Ministry

Secondary schools
Private, public or religiously affiliated colleges and universities
Schools of theology/seminaries
Organizations such as Fellowship of Christian Athletes, Campus Crusade for Christ, Muslim Student Association, Hillel
Buddhist Monasteries, e.g. Chuang Yen Monastery

Earn a doctorate degree for teaching and research in colleges and universities. Earn a master's degree in a relevant field for positions in student affairs administration or library/information sciences.

Earn certification/licensure to teach in public secondary schools. Choose a double major in an area such as history.

Complete Master of Divinity plus additional training for campus ministry.

Master of Divinity and Ph.D., D.Min. or Th.D. usually required for teaching, research and administration in seminaries and schools of theology.

Seek campus leadership positions such as Peer Mentor, Resident Assistant or Orientation Leader.

Volunteer to assist a faculty member with research.

Develop relationships with faculty to secure strong recommendations.

Maintain a strong grade point average to gain admittance into graduate school.

Learn to speak a second language if planning to pursue a graduate degree in religious studies. Choose a language that will be particularly relevant to your interests.

BUSINESS

Human Resources:
Training and Development
Recruitment
Equity and Diversity Functions
Sales
Management

Insurance firms
Retail stores
Banks
Staffing agencies
Service industries
Other large corporations

Learn how to sell your religious studies major to business employers that value employees who understand and tolerate cultural diversity.

Double major or minor in Business.

Gain related experience through internships or summer and part-time jobs.

Get involved in relevant student organizations and seek leadership roles.

Develop good computer skills and learn how to use spreadsheet, presentation and database software.

AREAS

EMPLOYERS

STRATEGIES

COMMUNICATIONS AND ARTS

Writing
Editing
Publishing
Television/Film
Radio
Advertising
Public Relations
Sales
Commercial Art
Website Design
Museum Work:
 Curatorship
 Exhibition Design

Secular publishing houses
Secular radio, television and film producers
Newspapers
Denominational boards/agencies
Interdenominational organizations
Denominational publishing houses of books and magazines
Local churches, synagogues and mosques
Advertising and public relation agencies
Museums
Galleries

Plan to complete one or more internships in this area to prepare for a professional job and to build a network.
Take courses in English, journalism, art history or photography depending upon interest area.
Develop excellent writing skills.
Work for the campus newspaper, radio station or tv station.
Submit articles for publication in religious and nonreligious papers and journals.
Learn desktop publishing techniques.
Obtain specialized technical training such as a double major or minor in Broadcasting or Graphic Design for work in those fields.
Develop a portfolio of writing samples.
Consider moving to larger metropolitan areas for more job opportunities and be willing to relocate often for promotions.
Consider freelance positions to work in journalism.
Earn a graduate degree to qualify for work in museums.

SOCIAL SERVICES

Case Management
Counseling
Rehabilitation
Administration
Vocational Training
Volunteer Services
Programming
Advocacy
Crisis Services (pregnancy, housing, etc.)
Church-based Organizing/Community Development
Fundraising
Grant Writing
Law

Nonprofit and social services organizations including United Way, Red Cross, Goodwill Industries, Salvation Army, etc.
Immigrant and refugee service providers
Migrant service providers
Hospitals and hospices
Residential treatment facilities
Correctional institutions
Shelters
Nursing homes
Youth organizations and camps including YMCA, YWCA, Young Life, etc.
Churches, synagogues and mosques
Lobby agencies

Volunteer with local organizations to gain experience working with a wide variety of people from various backgrounds.
Obtain excellent interpersonal and oral and written communication skills.
Plan to earn a graduate degree in counseling, social work or psychology to provide therapy or counseling to clients.
Complete an internship or part-time job in an organization of interest to gain experience and develop contacts.
Find ways to develop fundraising and grant writing skills. These are valued by nonprofit agencies.
Learn a language such as Spanish to work with immigrant and migrant populations.
Earn a joint degree in Divinity and Law to work in legal fields related to religious freedom issues.

AREAS

EMPLOYERS

STRATEGIES

RELIGIOUSLY AFFILIATED AREAS

Clergy and Other Religious Leaders Including:

Buddhist, Catholic, Jewish, Protestant, Islamic,
Hindu, Greek Orthodox

Vocation as Monk or Nun

Chaplaincy:

Military
Institutional

Mission Work:

Church Development
Community or Agricultural Development
Educational
Medical
Metropolitan
Evangelism

Local Ministries Including:

Youth Ministries
Adult Ministries
Leisure Ministries
Counseling/Recovery
Religious Education
Day Care, Children and Adult
Food Bank/Emergency Ministries
Family Life Center Management

Music-Oriented Ministries

Religious Camp Administration

Local churches, synagogues, mosques

Religious organizations

Religious communities, e.g. convents and
monasteries

Religious retreat centers, Christian and Buddhist

Denominational boards and agencies

Monasteries

All branches of military service

Hospitals, hospices

Homes for children, youth, senior citizens

Correctional institutions

Police and fire departments

Missions boards

Local churches

Evangelical organizations e.g. Billy Graham

Evangelistic Association

Religious-based camps and youth programs

Obtain general knowledge of practices, procedures,
guidelines and doctrine of one's faith.

Possess understanding of human spiritual and
social needs.

Research requirements to enter leadership in the
faith you want to pursue. Master of Divinity and
denominational ordination are required for most
clergy positions, for example.

Possess high moral and ethical standards.

Develop leadership ability and self discipline.

Obtain excellent written and verbal communication
skills.

To become a chaplain, obtain ordination and two
years' service in local church or after acceptance
into branch of military service, attend chaplaincy
school.

Obtain any needed advanced degrees, certification
or licensing in area of interest for missions.

Seek related experience by participating with
missions groups.

Obtain travel and cultural experience with group of
interest. Foreign language skills are a plus.

Develop fundraising skills and contacts.

People interested in religious vs. secular work
possess deep faith, want more than filling one's
own personal needs and desire to make a
difference.

May be more opportunities for specific ministries in
urban areas and large religious institutions.

Obtain experience and contacts through extensive
involvement in campus organizations or local
religious institutions. Leadership on the local,
state and regional level is crucial.

Seek camp experience to improve organization and
counseling skills as well as network within the
denominational/organizational structure.

Learn to work well with people of all different back-
grounds and socioeconomic status.

Earn dual degrees where appropriate, e.g. music.

GENERAL INFORMATION

- Religious studies equips students with an understanding of global issues and trends in both historical and contemporary contexts. This understanding of multiculturalism and interculturalism is valued by a wide variety of employers in many industries including education, government and business.
- Student who seek international careers may find that religious studies provides a good background in global issues.
- Many transferable skills such as analyzing and synthesizing data, research, communication skills and critical thinking are associated with the religious studies degree.
- People who major in religious studies may or may not consider themselves "religious." Expertise in religious ideas can be a plus for secular work environments as well as more traditional religious ones.
- An undergraduate degree prepares students for professional and graduate study in business, law, medicine, counseling, higher education and other fields. Be sure to check for prerequisite classes needed to enter various graduate programs.
- Obtaining relevant experience through internships or volunteer experiences is critical to finding employment opportunities. Dual majors or minors can also help open the door in some fields.