

RELIGION

Departmental Guidelines & Mission

The academic study of religion is a multi-disciplinary exploration of how religion functions in the lives of individuals, American society, and the global community. It critically examines the role of religion as an active force that has social, ethical, and ideological consequences. Students learn to assess how religion has shaped their cultures, their family lives, their suppositions of what matters and what is ethical, and their sense of who they are. By studying religion, students gain the analytical, relational, and expressive skills essential to a liberal arts education.

One does not need to be religious to study religion. The academic study is a lens through which the persistence of religion in the social sphere becomes evident, and the personal sphere is enriched. This academic exercise confirms and contests the prevailing understanding of reality. In the process the study of religion enhances skill-sets with transfer value in the vocational sphere as well as deepened awareness of what defines us as individuals, communities, societies, and nations. Critical consciousness on moral issues, global relationships, and the existence of community is a result of this academic exercise. Therefore, the questions we pose concerning various social relations may be more important than the answers constructed. In Religion classrooms, students learn how to ask these critical questions.