

# RELIGION DEPARTMENT

*Department Chair:* M. Poceski  
*Graduate Coordinator:* B. Taylor

The graduate program in the Department of Religion at the University of Florida is designed to prepare students for careers in academia, public service, non-governmental organizations, and various forms of advocacy work. Our five areas of study include Buddhist Traditions, Global Islam, Hindu Traditions, Religion in the Americas, and Religion and Nature. For additional information, please refer to the Graduate Student Manual.

## The M.A. Program

The M.A. degree provides a broad background in the study of religious traditions and theoretical orientations in the discipline. An M.A. student can choose whether they will concentrate in one of the five areas of study. If they choose to do so, they need to take the courses recommended for that field of specialization. If they choose not to, they can pick courses from across the fields. Coursework usually culminates in a thesis and an oral examination.

The department also offers a combination program designed for superior students who have the ability to pursue an accelerated program leading to the Bachelor of Arts and the Master of Arts degree in Religion.

## The Ph.D. Program

A student usually enters with a religion master's degree either from this or another institution. Those admitted with master's degrees in disciplines other than religion may petition to bypass the religion master's degree with additional religion coursework. All students are admitted into one of the areas of study and should fulfill the recommended coursework as outlined in the area descriptions. Students in all fields are encouraged to take courses in other departments to support work in their area of specialization.

## Coursework

Graduate students in religion ordinarily take courses of different kinds and for different purposes. One aim is to develop familiarity with leading traditions of research and analysis in religious studies. Another is to prepare for PhD examinations. A third is to pursue specific interests relevant to the student's scholarly development, especially in relation to the thesis or dissertation. A fourth is to prepare for careers outside of academia. Students are expected to consult their supervisory committee chair and the department's graduate coordinator in designing a course of study that satisfies these aims in the limited time available.

Every year, a Method and Theory departmental seminar is offered (Method & Theory I or II in alternate years). This course is required of all first and second-year graduate students. Its purpose is to help students develop awareness of various approaches to the study of religion, the history of these approaches, and their assumptions about understanding and explaining religious texts and behavior.

Every other year, an Interdisciplinary Seminar is offered. The purpose of this course is to bridge the department's separate areas of study through the examination of topics and themes broadly relevant to the field of religious studies. The content of this course changes each time it is offered, and all first and second-year graduate students are required to take this course when it is offered during their first two years of graduate study.

Specialized instruction within the areas of study is carried on primarily in courses detailed in the area descriptions. The department also offers graduate seminars in related areas outside the specific fields. In addition, students regularly participate in individual or small reading courses with a member of the faculty, the form and content of which are tailored to the student's particular needs and interests.

Almost all graduate students in religion take courses outside the department. Most students enroll in graduate seminars and reading courses in such departments and centers as African Studies, Anthropology, Botany, English, History, Jewish Studies, Latin American Studies, Philosophy, Political Science, Sociology, Women's Studies and Gender Research, Zoology, and from the interdisciplinary School of Natural Resources and the Environment.

While specific degree requirements and interests shape a candidate's program, most generally enroll in three courses, including both seminars and reading courses, during each of the semesters prior to the M.A. thesis or Ph.D. qualifying examinations.

## Mentoring

All students are assigned a faculty mentor upon admission to the program based on expressions of faculty interest and the student's intended area of study. The mentor and graduate coordinator answer questions and provide support for the student in choosing courses and planning a program. By the end of the second semester, all master's degree students must designate their supervisory committee chair and one additional department committee member. By the end of the second semester, all doctoral students must designate their committee chair. By no later than the end of the fourth semester of study, all doctoral students must designate a four-member supervisory committee, including the chairperson and one UF faculty member from outside the department.

## Majors

- Religion (<http://gradcatalog.ufl.edu/graduate/colleges-departments/liberal-arts-sciences/religion/religion/>)

## Faculty

### Professor

- Ostebo, Terje
- Peterson, Anna
- Poceski, Mario
- Taylor, Bron R.

### Associate Professor

- Caputo, Nina
- Kawashima, Robert Saiji
- Koppel, Anita Anantharam

### Assistant Professor

- Feller, Yaniv
- Gordan, Rachel
- Mian, Ali

### Distinguished Professor

- Narayanan, Vasudha R.

## **Affiliated Faculty**

- Wang, Richard G.  
Professor