RELIGION
Philosophy/Religion Department

Faculty
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Statement of philosophy
The educational mission of the religion program is to serve both the Central Core and religion majors and minors. The department takes seriously its obligation to introduce to all students religion as humanities. All courses at the 100- and 200-level are open to non-majors at different stages of their education. The department also seeks to offer a balanced array of courses for majors and minors.

Course offerings in religion cover four focus areas: Biblical Studies (Old Testament and New Testament), History of Christianity (Western, Eastern, American), Comparative Religious Traditions (Judaism, Islam, and Asian religions), and Modern Religions Thought (theology, ethics, and culture). In addition, the department offers courses in Christian Worship, Spirituality, and Ministry. Nearly all courses contain a strong emphasis on the historical development of religious ideas and practices. Students are taught to interpret texts rather than to amass pre-interpreted information. In addition to the standard religion major, a major with a Christian Ministries Emphasis is offered.

Major Communication Skills
A major in either philosophy or religion can verbally communicate at the high level appropriate for the recipient of a bachelor of arts degree in core areas of a liberal-arts curriculum.

To ensure achievement at the required level, the communication performance of philosophy and religion majors will be monitored from the time of major declaration. An evaluation of the student’s abilities will be made in the earliest class possible and assessments and recommendations deriving from this evaluation will be discussed with the student and the student’s advisor. Where appropriate, evaluation and recommendation will continue through the course work in the major until such time as the appropriate faculty (philosophy or religion) are satisfied that the student is consistently performing at the desired level.

Religion Major Requirements (33 credits)

33 credits of REL courses or other approved courses, with at least 3 credits in each of the focus areas (see below, 1-4), and at least 8 hours in the focus areas at the 300-level. No more than 3 credits of internship and 3 credits of independent study (excluding REL 499, senior independent study) may be counted toward the 33 credits.

1. Biblical Studies—Complete at least one of the following:
   REL 110 Old Testament History and Religion (3)
   REL 111 Introduction to the New Testament (3)
   REL 210 The Prophets (3)
   REL 211 The Writings (3)
   REL 216 Jesus and the Gospels (3)
   REL 217 Revelation and the General Epistles (3)
   REL 218 Pauline Epistles (3)
   REL 310 Readings in The Prophets (4)
   REL 311 Readings in The Writings (4)
   REL 316 Readings in Jesus and the Gospels (4)
   REL 317 Readings in Revelation and the General Epistles (4)

2. History of Christianity—Complete at least one of the following:
   REL 150 The Christian Heritage (3)
   REL 222 Spirituality in the Christian Tradition (3)
   REL 250 American Religious Thought (3)
   REL 252 The Reformation (3)
   REL 253 Medieval Christendom (3)
   REL 254 The Early Church (3)
   REL 256 Eastern Christianity (3)

3. Comparative Religious Traditions—Complete at least one of the following:
   PHIL 228 Confucianism and Daoism (3)
   REL 230 Asian Religions (3)
   REL 232 Buddhism (3)
   REL 233 The Jewish Experience (3)
   REL 235 Islam (3)
REL 236 Islam in North Africa and Spain (3)
REL 330 Readings in Asian Religions (4)
REL 335 Readings in Islam (4)
REL 336 Readings in Islam in North Africa and Spain (4)

4. Modern Religious Thought—Complete at least one of the following:
   REL 270 Christianity and Culture (3)
   REL 272 Modern Christian Thought (3)
   REL 274 World Christianity (3)
   REL 276 Christian Ethics (3)
   REL 370 Readings in Christianity and Culture (4)
   REL 372 Readings in Modern Christian Thought (4)
   REL 374 Readings in World Christianity (4)
   REL 376 Readings in Christianity Ethics (4)

5. Complete the following:
   REL 499 Senior Independent Study (3-4)

6. Complete REL electives (as necessary to earn a total of 33 credits of major courses)
   Note: One course (3 credits) of the following may also be counted as religion major electives. Other courses on the list may be counted as hours in the major beyond the 33 credit minimum. Check with the department for more details.)
   HIST 220 Middle Eastern Civilization (3)
   HIST 221 Biblical Archaeology (3)
   SOC 242 Sociology of Religion (3)
   Any PHIL course except PHIL 125
   Liberal Arts Seminars (LAS 410) taught by departmental faculty

Pre-Ministry Program
   Central College continues the emphasis of the ecumenical Christian tradition in general, and the Reformed tradition in particular, to prepare students for a life of service to God and community, as well as to prepare some students for a professional vocation in the ministry.

   The chaplaincy and the religion faculty work together to provide a period of reflection and discernment for students who are considering ministry, whether this be lay ministry (such as missions, church-related teaching, or para-church service) or ordained ministry that requires further graduate or seminary study. Pastoral and vocational counseling is offered by the chaplain, the director of the Christian ministries emphasis of the religion major, and other faculty members. In addition, pre-ministerial students usually complete either a major or a minor in religion in order to give them adequate grounding in scriptural studies, in church history, theology, and ethics, and in at least one world religion other than Christianity. The students also have an opportunity to complete ministry internships in churches and church-related organizations either locally or through Central’s off-campus programs. Students may also choose to receive spiritual formation from a designated mentor.

   The variety of denominations represented by the faculty, students, and staff at Central College provides student with a rich exposure to various formulations of Christian teachings and practices. Although our aim is to provide students with an opportunity to study various church teachings besides their own, we also focus a particular student’s study on the Church teaching to which he or she is most accustomed. As parts of an educational institution, the chaplaincy, the Christian ministries emphasis, and the religion major encourage students to develop a strong sense of the centrality of education to ministry. We foster an integration of faith with training of intellectual qualities of mind in order to establish a student’s vocation on the best that is thought and known in Christian teaching and ministry.

Christian Ministries Emphasis
   Students may choose to earn a Christian ministries emphasis within the Religion major. To earn this emphasis, students must complete all of the following courses in the process of meeting the requirements of the religion major (as detailed above):
   REL 220 Christian Worship (3)
   REL 272 Modern Christian Thought (3)
   REL 372 Readings in Modern Christian Thought (4)
   REL 285 Pre-Ministerial Seminar (Arr)
   REL 397 The Ministry Internship (Arr)
   or REL 398 Cross-Cultural Ministry Internship (2)

   Contact the Christian ministries emphasis director for more details.
Religion Minor Requirements (18 credits)
Complete 18 credits of REL courses with at least 12 credits of those at the 200-300 level, including: at least 3 hours in each of three of the four focus areas specified for the major: biblical studies; history of Christianity; comparative religious traditions; and modern religious thought.