The Department of Religious Studies is committed to the open, plural, intercultural, non-confessional and interdisciplinary study of religion and religions in South Africa and the world.

We offer an approach that recognises the importance of creative and critical thinking about religion in a changing and culturally diverse South Africa. Most importantly, we aim to provide an understanding of religion that challenges and stimulates our students. To achieve these goals we offer excellent courses, a focused and flexible undergraduate major, and a substantial postgraduate programme leading to Honours, Masters and Doctoral degrees in Religious Studies.

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Why study Religion?
In a religiously and culturally diverse world the academic study of religion is relevant for you whatever your field of study. Our courses attract students from diverse backgrounds and academic areas, ranging from Economics, Engineering, Politics, Psychology to Sociology, Anthropology and Media Studies. Our undergraduate major looks at both mainstream religious traditions and new religious movements and examines the relationship between religion and modern society. The degree allows you to explore religious aspects of media, politics, literature and art, as well as the significance of the body, sexuality and gender in religion. It will offer insight into some of the most relevant issues concerning contemporary society such as violence, conflict and social cohesion.

What can I do with Religious Studies?
Our graduates from the Department of Religious Studies have gone on to pursue careers in fields such as education, government, community work, journalism and market research.

Insight in topical contemporary issues such as social conflict, cohesion, justice, and ethics.
REligious Studies

Core courses for the major in Religious Studies include the following fields of study:

- Religion and Society
- Psychology and Religion
- Religion, Sexuality and Gender
- Religion and Politics
- Religions Past and Present
- Judaism, Christianity and Islam
- African Religious Traditions
- Religion and Media
- Religion in Africa

What students say about Religious Studies?

“Choosing the Religious Studies Department was the happiest accident. From focussing on popular televisions shows like Supernatural and researching how a religion adapted to a new environment, showed me the various ways in which you can study religions and religious experiences. This is definitely the department for you if you want to see the world in a new way.”
(Caryn van Rooyen, Masters student)

“At home and madressa I was told to stop thinking so much. Here I am encouraged to read, think and discuss.”
(Rifqah van Schalkwyk, Masters student)

“I chose religious studies because I had an interest in learning more about the relationship between religion and the dynamics of a society, particularly in African societies. Since joining the Department I have learned about how religion can affect the economic, political, and social aspects of a community, not to mention the deeply rooted philosophical elements of our understanding of religion in the world today.”
( Ellen Lweya, Honors Student)

“My affection with the Department of Religious Studies started from the elective course on Religion, Sexuality and Gender, which I took as an addition to my Psychology major…. Unlike other disciplines in the Humanities, Religious Studies offers inter-disciplinary opportunities for research into human experience, which could be studied in connection with psychology, philosophy, gender studies, or even dance. These creative possibilities, together with the wonderfully friendly department, defined my choice to apply for a Master in Religious Studies.”
(Nadia Kukavko, Masters Student)

“... the department is a space of great scholarly diversity. Religion has had a profound effect on society and the world, which makes studying it absolutely fascinating.”
(Hayden Weaver, Masters Student)

“As an interdisciplinarity field, Religious Studies offers a uniquely collaborative and productive space to creatively engage a wide range of social complexities in an intellectually rigorous yet supportive environment. My research interests include understanding contemporary childhood religious and gendered pedagogies within a post-Anthropocene context, and a religious studies framework allows me to thread and cohere these multiple perspectives in interesting and creative ways.”
(Nafisa Patel, PhD Candidate)

For further information

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