Why GRADUATE STUDIES in RELIGIOUS STUDIES?

Religion plays a major role in shaping and influencing various cultures and historical and political movements around the world. Thus, understanding religious traditions and their impact on diverse modern issues is vital preparation for building a career in the global marketplace. Religious Studies involves, among other things, examining the history of religious traditions, comparing the ideas and values of different religious systems, and understanding the place and function of religion in society. Students of religion investigate why people are religious, where religion comes from, and how it should be defined and understood.

The program also places an emphasis on contemporary theories and methods in the study of religion. Developing excellent research and writing skills is one of our most important outcomes. These skills are further honed as students have the opportunity to write a research essay that focuses on a particular religious tradition or phenomenon.

Why QUEEN’S?

At Queen’s the approach to the study of religion is non-confessional, diverse, multidisciplinary and interdisciplinary. Students receive the information and tools they need to analyze religion critically, while gaining exposure to views from a variety of ways of being religious. Students learn how to investigate and assess the impact of religion, both historically and in today’s world, critically examine complex ideas, and express their own points of view clearly and effectively.

We offer an intellectually challenging twelve-month M.A. program, with generous financial assistance including the opportunity for every student to be a Teaching Assistant.

RESEARCH Areas

- Chinese religions
- Christian Origins
- Ethics
- Greek and Roman Religions
- Hinduism and Buddhism
- Islam, Modernity and Democracy
- Mysticism
- Religion, Sex and Gender
- Religion and Sport
- Religion and Nature
- Religion, Non-religion and Culture
- Violence, sacrifice and religion

We encourage you to identify an area of research interest and contact the Graduate Coordinator before applying.

Visit the School of Religion website to read faculty profiles and learn more about faculty members’ research areas.

Program STRUCTURE

The Master’s in Religious Studies is a 12-month program: students take one core course and two elective courses in each of the fall and winter terms, then write a Master’s Research Essay over the summer.

Before completing the MA degree, students are required to give evidence of a reading knowledge of at least one language, in addition to English, selected from the languages of modern scholarship and/or necessary source languages.
**GETTING STARTED**

- Start with key priorities like doing well in your coursework, developing a good relationship with your supervisor, and finalizing the topic for your Master’s Research Essay.
- Consider how your course papers can contribute to your research essay.
- Find your way through the academic process with help from departmental and Expanding Horizons professional development workshops, the department Grad Chat and the SGS Habitat.

**INTERMEDIATE STAGE**

- Complete your course requirements for your degree, and begin to research and write your research essay.
- Start regular meetings with your supervisor to ensure your research essay is on track.
- Consider volunteering with different community organizations, museums, and cultural studies groups.
- Serve on the departmental Graduate Committee or Committee on Religious Studies.
- Consider positions in student services, the SGS or media outlets like the Queen’s Journal, CFRC, and the SGS Blog. Look in the AMS Clubs Directory for more ideas.
- Start to think about the audiences for your research.
- If you will be continuing graduate studies, apply for SSHRC and OGS funding.
- Start keeping an eportfolio of your skills, experiences and competencies.
- Use a Research Assistant or Teaching Assistant position to develop your research or teaching skills.
- For help with teaching, get support from the Centre for Teaching and Learning, or the PUTL certificate for more professional development in teaching and learning.
- Submit an article to the Queen’s School of Religion Blog (Engaging Religion).
- Participate in your graduate and professional community through activities such as graduate student outreach programs, organizing conferences, and research groups.
- Prepare for work or studies in a multi-cultural environment by taking the QUIC and Four Directions Aboriginal Student Centre’s Training Certificate.
- If you are an international student interested in staying in Canada, consider speaking with an International Student Advisor.
- Explore different careers of interest by reading alumni profiles on the SGS website, and using Queen’sConnects on LinkedIn to connect with Queen’s alumni, or find alumni in various careers through “Ask an Alum.”
- If you are considering a PhD, explore programs of interest, reach out to faculty, and apply to PhD programs and external scholarships.

**WRAPPING UP**

- In consultation with your supervisor, submit your research essay to your Second Reader.
- Complete the necessary steps to degree completion.
- Consult with your supervisor about submitting a paper for a conference or for publication.
- Attend a major conference in your field, such as the Canadian Society for the Study of Religion, or the American Academy of Religion.
- Consider putting up an article in The Conversation.
- Practice articulating the skills you have been developing in settings outside the university, such as casual conversation, networking, and interviews. Get help from a Career Services workshop.
- Check out opportunities for extra training through CTL, Expanding Horizons, Mitacs, or other sources to boost your skills.
- Investigate internships from Mitacs and other sources.
- Do some targeted networking with people working in careers of interest, through Queen’sConnects on LinkedIn, the Queen’s Alumni Association, professional associations, and at conferences. Get help from a Career Services workshop.
- Consider joining professional associations like the Canadian Society for the Study of Religion, or the American Academy of Religion.
- Participate in hiring committees and attend job talks. Start focusing on areas of interest. Research organizations of interest and start putting together your CV or resume for potential positions of interest. Get help from Career Services with Job searching, resumes, or interviews.

**WHAT WILL I LEARN?**

- A graduate degree in Religious Studies can equip you with valuable and versatile skills, such as:
  - Knowledge and technical skills
  - Effective communication skills in multiple forms for diverse audiences
  - Information management: prioritize, organize and synthesize large amounts of information
  - Time management: Meet deadlines and manage responsibilities despite competing public policy research and analysis
  - Project management: develop ideas, gather information, analyze, critically appraise findings, draw and act on conclusions
  - Creativity and innovation
  - Perserverance
  - Independence and experience as a collaborative worker
  - Awareness, an understanding of sound ethical practices, social responsibility, responsible research and innovation.
  - Professionalism in all aspects of work, research, and interactions
  - Leadership initiative and vision leading people and discussion

**WHERE CAN I GO?**

- A Master’s degree in Religious Studies can take your career in many directions. Many of our MA students choose to continue their academic inquiry with a PhD. Our Master’s students are equipped with a strong foundation for careers in:
  - Academia and teaching
  - Public policy research and analysis
  - International development work
  - Immigration
  - Journalism
  - Any setting which values an understanding of multi-culturalism and diversity

- Taking time to explore career options, build experience, and network can help you have a smooth transition to the world of work after graduation.
Application FAQs

What do I need to know to APPLY?

ACADEMIC REQUIREMENTS
- 4-year Honours Bachelor’s degree in Religious Studies (or equivalent).
- Grade requirements: minimum B+ cumulative average.

ADDITIONAL REQUIREMENTS
- Writing sample of work completed for a previous course.
- If English is not a native language, prospective students must meet the English language proficiency requirements in writing, speaking, reading, and listening. The School of Graduate Studies requires the following minimum scores: TOEFL (paper-based): 550, (2) TOEFL iBT: Writing (24/30); Speaking (22/30); Reading (22/30); Listening (20/30), for a total of 88/120 (applicants must have the minimum score in each test as well as the minimum overall score), or (3) IELTS: 7.0 (academic module overall band score), or (4) PTE Academics: 65.

KEY DATES & DEADLINES
- Application due: February 1st.

Before you start your application, please review the Graduate studies application process.

What about FUNDING?

M.A. students in Religious Studies receive minimum funding of $15,000 per year. Our funding package includes internal and external awards, and teaching and research assistantships.

Apply for external funding from OGS, SSHRC and other sources. Queen’s will automatically issue a $5,000 top-up to Masters winners of federal government tri-council awards. For more information, see the School of Graduate Studies’ information on awards and scholarships, or see what awards are offered through the School of Religion.

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