

# Philosophy and Religion Program

## Purpose Statement

The Philosophy and Religion department offers courses designed to help students critically reflect upon religious and philosophical traditions that for millennia have deeply shaped how human beings have understood their lives as a whole in relationship to all that exists. In so doing, students will critically consider their own worldview, while at the same time understanding more deeply and with greater empathy the worldviews of others. Travel courses offered through the program superbly complement the rest of the curriculum for this purpose. The department offers a major in philosophy and religion and a major in religion, politics, and law. It also offers a minor in philosophy and religion and a minor in peace studies.

## Philosophy and Religion Major

The practical benefits of the Philosophy and Religion major are many. It provides excellent background for professions such as business, education, social work, and humanitarian assistance to name just a few that require understanding and empathy across widely diverse cultures. The major develops critical thinking skills essential to success in these and other professions. In addition, given the possibility the major offers for focusing specifically on the Christian tradition, it can assist students who seek to understand their chosen profession, whatever it may be, as Christian ministry, or who want preparation for entering seminary upon graduation. Whatever their career path, students will find their study of philosophy and religion empowering them to live with a deeper sense of purpose, a surer sense of their vocation, and greater appreciation for values such as peacemaking, stewardship, and service that contribute to the well-being of the world.

Students who complete the major in Philosophy and Religion should be able to:

- Demonstrate an understanding of the world's major religious traditions and the diverse ways each is interpreted, with a special emphasis on how these traditions help shape both the human experience of the world around us and our response to it.
- Demonstrate the ability to critically engage the Western philosophical tradition as it addresses fundamental questions about the nature of reality, the meaning of our experience, and the purpose of life.
- Demonstrate the ability to critically evaluate and improve their own thinking.
- Demonstrate the ability to bring the study of religion and philosophy to bear on their quest to understand the meaning and purpose of their own lives.

The major comprises 42 hours of required courses.

## Requirements

### Core Courses (18 hours):

**G-PR 106L** Spiritual Pathways: Transformation, Compassion, and Vocation (3 hours)

**G-PR 107** Critical Thinking (3 hours)

**G-PR 201** Introduction to Philosophy (3 hours)

**G-PR 306** World Religions (3 hours)

**PR 375** Junior Seminar (1 hour)

**PR 431** Topics in Religious or Theological Studies (3 hours) OR

**PR 432** Topics in Philosophy (3 hours)

**PR 475** Senior Seminar/Thesis (2 hours)

### Electives (12 hours from the following):

**G-PR 101** God and People in Ancient Israel: Hebrew Bible Foundations (3 hours)

**G-PR 102** Jesus: New Testament Foundations (3 hours)

**G-PR 104** or **G-PR 104L** Ethics (3 hours if **G-PR 104**; 4 hours if **G-PR 104L**)

**G-PR 202** Christian Traditions (3 hours)

**G-PR 203** Science and Religion (3 hours)

**G-PR 204** Peacemaking: Religious Perspectives (3 hours)

**G-PR 302** Religion and Politics (3 hours)

**PR 303** Readings in Theology/Philosophy (2 or 3 hours, depending on the semester)

**PR411** Travel (3 or 4 hours, depending on the semester)

### Supporting Courses (12 hours from the following)\*:

**G-ET 201** Social Entrepreneurship (3 hours)

**EN 230** Linguistics (2 hours)

**G-CM 130** Interpersonal Communication (3 hours)

**G-CM 221** Intercultural Communication (3 hours)

**CM 240** Gender Communication (3 hours)

**CM 325** Conflict Communication (3 hours)  
**BI 404** Biomedical Ethics (2 hours)  
**NS 404** Environmental Ethics (2 hours)  
**G-HI/PS 101** Historical Introduction to Politics (3 hours)  
**G-PS 215** Global Peace Studies (3 hours)  
**HI 313** Medieval Europe (3 hours)  
**PY/SO 210** Human Sexuality (3 hours)  
**PY/SO 308** Counseling (3 hours)  
**PY 405** Personality Theories (3 hours)

\*Note: alternative courses will be considered and can be approved by the department chair on a case-by-case basis.

## Religion, Politics, and Law Major

Data indicate that students of philosophy and religion consistently score highly on the LSAT (Law School Admissions Test) and possess high rates of admission to law school. By combining the study of religion, politics, and law, this unique major furnishes students with excellent preparation for law school. The major explores highly provocative hot-button issues at the heart of current religious, political, and legal discourse in the United States. The major teaches skills in logical reasoning, analysis and synthesis of texts, inference to the best explanation from a set of data, persuasive public speaking, and constructive writing—skills whose practice constitute the core of what lawyers do.

Students who complete the major in Religion, Politics, and Law should be able to:

- Articulate how the American legal system works.
- Engage in logical reasoning.
- Infer to the best explanation from a complex set of data.
- Score well on the LSAT (Law School Admissions Test).
- Carry out individual research on a legal issue of particular interest to them and applicable to their future career aspirations in law.

The major comprises 48-49 hours of required courses.

### Required Courses in Philosophy/Religion (24-25 hours)

**G-PR104L** Ethics  
**G-PR 107** Critical Thinking (3 hours)  
**G-PR 201** Introduction to Philosophy (3 hours)  
**G-PR 203** Science and Religion (3 hours)  
**G-PR 204** Peacemaking: Religious Perspectives (3 hours)  
**G-PR 302** Religion and Politics (3 hours)  
**PR 375** Junior Seminar (1 hour)  
**PR 432** Topics in Philosophy: Philosophy of Law (3 hours)  
**PR 475** Senior Seminar/Thesis (2 hours)

### Required Supporting Courses (24 hours)

**G-PS 101** Historical Introduction to Politics (3 hours)  
**G-PS 102** United States Government (3 hours)  
**G-CM 140** Public Speaking (3 hours)  
**G-HI 237** Topics in Political History (3 hours)  
**BA 315** Business Law (3 hours)  
**CM 325** Conflict Communication (3 hours)  
**CM 330** Persuasion and Social Influence (3 hours)  
**PS 356** American Diplomacy (3 hours)

## Philosophy and Religion Minor

The minor comprises 18 hours of required courses.

### Requirements

**G-PR 106L** Spiritual Pathways: Transformation, Compassion, and Vocation (3 hours)  
**G-PR 201** Introduction to Philosophy (3 hours)  
plus a minimum of 12 more hours of any courses with a PR prefix.

## Peace Studies Minor

Peace Studies is an interdisciplinary field of study that seeks understanding of the causes of human conflict and violence. It then strives to develop

methods for resolving conflicts nonviolently and for promoting peace through justice at all levels of human society and in human relationships with the natural environment. The minor can complement any number of majors, for example, Political Science, History, or Environmental Stewardship, especially for those students seeking to couple their major field and professional training to values of social justice and peacemaking.

Students who complete a minor in Peace Studies will be able to:

- Demonstrate that they understand some of the most important causes and consequences of interpersonal, societal, and international conflict and violence.
- Demonstrate that they understand a variety of methods for conflict resolution and peacemaking that address these causes and promote the well-being of human communities and of the planet on which we live.

The minor comprises a minimum of 18 hours of required courses.

## Requirements

### Core Courses (12 hours)

**G-PS 125** International Relations (3 hours)

**G-PR 204** Peacemaking: Religious Perspectives (3 hours)

**G-PS 215** Global Peace Studies (3 hours)

**CM 325** Conflict Communication (3 hours)

### Electives (at least 6 hours from the following)

**G-PR 104** Ethics or **G-PR104L** Ethics (3 hours if **G-PR104**; 4 hours if **G-PR104L**)

**G-NS 141** Environmental Science (4 hours)

**G-ET 201** Social Entrepreneurship

**G-SO 202** Minorities in the US (3-4 hours)

**SO 206** Social Problems (3-4 hours)

**G-CM 221** Intercultural Communication

**CM 240** Gender Communication

**G-PR 302** Religion and Politics

**NS 404** Environmental Ethics (2 hours)