

Memorandum

TO: Arts & Sciences Curriculum Committee

FROM: Sean McAleer
Chair, Philosophy and Religious Studies

RE: Changes to the Major in Religious Studies (411-201)

DATE: February 10, 2020

The current structure of the Religious Studies major (<https://catalog.uwec.edu/undergraduate/arts-sciences/philosophy-religious-studies/religious-studies-major-ba-bs/>) has proven rather cumbersome for students in light of current staffing. On February 10, 2020, by a vote of 4 – 0 the Department approved the following four changes (plus a minor stylistic change to the wording of the Capstone Requirement), which will give students greater flexibility while maintaining the breadth necessary for the major:

1. **Monotheistic Religions**

Current Requirement: A minimum of nine credits from

RELS 303 (Early Christianity)
RELS 304 (Modern Christianity)
RELS 307 (Judaism)
RELS 309 (Islam)

Proposed Requirement: A minimum of six credits from

RELS 303 (Early Christianity) or RELS 304 (Modern Christianity)
RELS 307 (Judaism)
RELS 309 (Islam)

Rationale: This ensures that majors will study at least one monotheistic religion other than Christianity, thus maintaining the breadth of the requirement while making it easier for majors to satisfy it.

2. **Asian Religions**

Current Requirement: A minimum of nine credits from:

RELS 312 (Buddhism: Past and Present)
RELS 314 (Hinduism)
RELS 323 (Chinese and Japanese Religions)

RELS 326 (Asian Religious Philosophies)

Proposed Requirement: A minimum of six credits from

RELS 312 (Buddhism: Past and Present)

RELS 313 (Tibetan Buddhism)

RELS 314 (Hinduism)

RELS 323 (Chinese and Japanese Religions)

RELS 326 (Asian Religious Philosophies)

PHIL 234 (Classical Chinese Philosophy)

Rationale: Reducing the number of credits alleviates pressure on this part of the major, which has proven difficult to offer students in recent years. PHIL 234 is included in this spirit as well, since it addresses relevant matters and is likely to be offered more often than RELS 313, 323, and 326.

3. Methodological Approaches:

Proposed change: deleting this as a separate major requirement.

Rationale: students will gain mastery of methodological approaches by their other coursework.

4. Remaining Coursework:

Proposed change: no longer list such courses individually.

Rationale: reduces verbiage and brings the presentation of the RELS major requirements in line with those of the PHIL major, the department's other major program.

Here is a summary of the current requirements contrasted with the proposed requirements:

CURRENT REQUIREMENTS

REQUIRED COURSES: [3]
Three credits from core courses (to be taken by all majors before the completion of six credits of Religious Studies coursework:
RELS 100 (World Religions)
RELS 110 (Basic Issues in Religions)
RELS 210 (Religion and Morality)

PROPOSED REQUIREMENTS

REQUIRED COURSES: [3]
Three credits from core courses (to be taken by all majors before the completion of six credits of Religious Studies coursework:
RELS 100 (World Religions)
RELS 110 (Basic Issues in Religions)
RELS 210 (Religion and Morality)

<p>CAPSTONE: [3] All Religious Studies majors must complete the following capstone requirements. Three credits to be taken in junior or senior year of the following:¹</p> <p>RELS 470 (The Problem of Evil) RELS 490 (Seminar in Religious Studies) RELS 491 (Special Topics) RELS 499 (Independent Study - Seniors)</p> <p>ELECTIVE COURSES:</p> <p>Monotheistic Religions [9] A minimum of nine credits from: RELS 303 (Early Christianity) RELS 304 (Modern Christianity) RELS 307 (Judaism) RELS 309 (Islam)</p> <p>Asian Religions [9] A minimum of nine credits from: RELS 312 (Buddhism: Past and Present) RELS 314 (Hinduism) RELS 323 (Chinese and Japanese Religions) RELS 326 (Asian Religious Philosophies)</p> <p>Methodological Approaches [3] A minimum of three credits from: RELS 230 (Old Testament/Hebrew Bible) RELS 240 (New Testament) RELS 315 (Psychology of Religion) RELS/PHIL 345 (Philosophy of Religion) ANTH 463 (Religion and Culture)</p> <p>The remaining coursework may be [9] taken from the three previous categories and any of the courses listed below: RELS/WGSS 203 (Women and World Religions) RELS 210 (Religion and Morality)</p>	<p>CAPSTONE: [3] All Religious Studies majors must complete the following capstone requirements. Three credits to be taken in junior or senior year from the following:¹</p> <p>RELS 470 (The Problem of Evil) RELS 490 (Seminar in Religious Studies) RELS 491 (Special Topics) RELS 499 (Independent Study - Seniors)</p> <p>ELECTIVE COURSES:</p> <p>Monotheistic Religions [6] A minimum of six credits from: RELS 303 (Early Christianity) <i>or</i> RELS 304 (Modern Christianity) RELS 307 (Judaism) RELS 309 (Islam)</p> <p>Asian Religions [6] A minimum of six credits from: RELS 312 (Buddhism: Past and Present) RELS 313 (Tibetan Buddhism) RELS 314 (Hinduism) RELS 323 (Chinese and Japanese Religions) RELS 326 (Asian Religious Philosophies) PHIL 234 (Classical Chinese Philosophy)</p> <p>Requirement removed</p> <p>The remaining credits to be earned [18] from Religious Studies courses, subject to the following restrictions: RELS 100 and RELS 110 are disallowed for major credit if taken after the student has earned nine credits toward the major.</p>
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¹ Plus completion of the capstone essay for that course. The essay must be approved for capstone credit by the faculty teaching the course. Other upper-level courses also may be considered (prior approval by faculty required). Students must submit a major research paper produced for the course in order to fulfill the capstone requirement. **(Footnote 1 to be included in 2020-21 catalog)**

RELS 290 (Sacred Earth: Religion and Nature)
RELS/AIS 330 (Indigenous Religions of the Americas)
RELS 333 (New Religious Movements)
RELS 334 (Music in Judaism, Christianity, and Islam)
RELS 342 (African American Religion)
RELS 348 (Religious Themes in Literature)
RELS 350 (Modern Religious Thought)
RELS 378 (The Holocaust, 1933-45)
RELS 390 (Religion in America)
RELS 470 (The Problem of Evil)
RELS 490 (Seminar in Religious Studies)

A maximum of three credits from any combination of RELS 395, RELS 399, RELS 498, and RELS 499 may be counted toward the major.

A maximum of three credits from any combination of RELS 396 and RELS 397 may be counted toward the major.

Other:

RELS 291 (Special Topics)
RELS 395 (Directed Studies)²
RELS 396 (Research Apprenticeship in Religious Studies)²
RELS 397 (Student Academic Apprenticeship in Religious Studies)²
RELS 399 (Independent Study – Juniors)²
RELS 491 (Special Topics)
RELS 498 (Internship in Religious Studies)²
RELS 499 (Independent Study – Seniors)²

² A maximum of three credits may be counted toward the major from any combination of RELS 395, RELS 399, RELS 498, and RELS 499, and a maximum of three credits may be counted toward the major from the combination of RELS 396 and RELS 397. **(Footnote 2 no longer needed—requirements incorporated above for 2020-21 catalog)**