

MASTER OF ARTS (MA) DEGREE IN THE FIELD OF RELIGION

Program Learning Outcomes for the MA Degree in the field of Religion

Upon completing the MA degree in the field of Religion, students will be able to:

1. Develop and apply critical toolkit to the study of religion and religious traditions, including (inter)disciplinary methodologies and theories at a level of mastery.
(Critical Skills for the Study of Religion: Theory, Method and (Inter)Disciplinarity)
2. Understand and interpret religious traditions by examining religion(s) as historical, social, and cultural phenomena. When appropriate, attention is given to the impact of globalism, immigration, colonialism, and other forms of transnational and multi-cultural (non)religious exchange at a level of mastery.
(Historical, Social, (Multi-)Cultural Dimensions of Religion)
3. Understand and interpret the subjective dimensions of religion(s) through analyses that explore the psychological, philosophical, and cognitive dynamics of religion and religious experience at a level of mastery.
(Psychological, Philosophical, and Cognitive Dimensions of Religion)
4. Understand and interpret religious traditions by examining the plurality of religious voices and expressions, including currents that have been marginalized, neglected, repressed, and censored in a variety of sociological, psychological, philosophical, and political ways at a level of mastery.
(Religious Plurality and Marginal Currents)
5. Develop the ability to read and understand relevant scholarly research/literature that has been published in foreign languages. Develop the ability to read religious texts in their original languages and perform translations of texts when appropriate to the student's course of study at a level of mastery.
(Foreign Language Skills)

Requirements for the MA Degree in the field of Religion

The MA degree is a thesis master's degree. For general university requirements, please see [Thesis Master's Degrees \(https://ga.rice.edu/graduate-students/academic-policies-procedures/regulations-procedures-thesis-masters-degrees/\)](https://ga.rice.edu/graduate-students/academic-policies-procedures/regulations-procedures-thesis-masters-degrees/). For additional requirements, regulations, and procedures for all graduate programs, please see [All Graduate Students \(https://ga.rice.edu/graduate-students/academic-policies-procedures/regulations-procedures-all-degrees/\)](https://ga.rice.edu/graduate-students/academic-policies-procedures/regulations-procedures-all-degrees/). Students pursuing the MA degree in the field of Religion must complete:

- A minimum of 10 courses (30 credit hours) to satisfy degree requirements.
- A minimum of 30 credit hours of graduate-level study (graduate semester credit hours, coursework at the 500-level or above).
- A minimum of 24 graduate semester credit hours must be taken at Rice University.

- A minimum residency enrollment of one fall or spring semester of full-time graduate study at Rice University.
- A maximum of 2 courses (6 graduate semester credit hours) from transfer credit. For additional departmental guidelines regarding transfer credit, see the [Policies](#) (p. 2) tab.
- A Graduate Methods Seminar.
- A secondary language reading exam (French or German).
- A comprehensive exam on Method and Theory in the study of religion.
- A master's thesis developed from a paper in a course that represents the student's interests in the study of religion.
- An oral defense of thesis with student and three faculty members who have worked with the student. Candidacy, defense, and thesis submission will follow the guidelines described [here \(https://ga.rice.edu/graduate-students/academic-policies-procedures/regulations-procedures-thesis-masters-degrees/\)](https://ga.rice.edu/graduate-students/academic-policies-procedures/regulations-procedures-thesis-masters-degrees/).
- A minimum overall GPA of 2.67 or higher in all Rice coursework.
- A minimum program GPA of 3.00 or higher in all Rice coursework that satisfies requirements for the thesis master's degree with a minimum grade of B- (2.67 grade points) in departmental (RELI) course offerings.

The courses listed below satisfy the requirements for this degree program. In certain instances, courses not on this official list may be substituted upon approval of the program's academic advisor or, where applicable, the department or program's Director of Graduate Studies. Course substitutions must be formally applied and entered into Degree Works by the department or program's Official Certifier (<https://registrar.rice.edu/facstaff/degreeworks/officialcertifier/>). Additionally, these course substitutions must be approved by the Office of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies. Students and their academic advisors should identify and clearly document the courses to be taken.

Summary

Code	Title	Credit Hours
Total Credit Hours Required for the MA Degree in the field of Religion		30

Degree Requirements

Code	Title	Credit Hours
Graduate Methods Seminar Requirement		
<i>Select 1 course from the following:</i>		3
RELI 610	CONCEPTS IN THE STUDY OF RELIGION	
RELI 650	I : METHODS IN THE STUDY OF RELIGION (DOCTORAL SEMINAR)	
RELI 651	II : METHODS IN THE STUDY OF RELIGION (DOCTORAL SEMINAR)	
Additional Coursework as Defined by Department ¹		27
Total Credit Hours		30

Footnotes and Additional Information

¹ Of the 27 additional credit hours of coursework as defined by the department, a minimum of 8 courses (24 credit hours) must be taken at the graduate-level with a minimum grade of B- (2.67). At least 12 credit hours must be seminars at the 500 or 600-level, where research papers are required. Students may take courses outside the Department of Religion with the advisor's permission.

Opportunities for the MA Degree in the field of Religion

Additional Information

For additional information, please see the Religion website: <https://reli.rice.edu/>.

Policies for the MA Degree in the field of Religion

Department of Religion Graduate Program Handbook

The General Announcements (GA) is the official Rice curriculum. As an additional resource for students, the Department of Religion publishes a graduate program handbook, which can be found here: https://gradhandbooks.rice.edu/2024_25/Religion_MA_Graduate_Handbook.pdf.

Admission

Students will apply for admission to the MA program online (see the *Graduate* tab on the [department website \(https://reli.rice.edu\)](https://reli.rice.edu) for details). Each January, the faculty in the Religion Department will evaluate the applications and select the MA students for the next academic year.

Application for Degree

The student must file a petition to receive the MA. This petition can be obtained from the Graduate Administrator and must be approved and signed by the Chair of the Department and submitted to the Office of Graduate Studies. In exceptional cases, when a student who has completed the terminal MA, applies to the PhD program, and is admitted, the coursework already completed by the student may be applied toward the PhD requirements.

Transfer Credit

For Rice University's policy regarding transfer credit, see [Transfer Credit \(https://ga.rice.edu/graduate-students/academic-policies-procedures/regulations-procedures-all-degrees/#transfer\)](https://ga.rice.edu/graduate-students/academic-policies-procedures/regulations-procedures-all-degrees/#transfer). Some departments and programs have additional restrictions on transfer credit. Requests for transfer credit must be approved for Rice equivalency by the appropriate academic department offering the Rice equivalent course (corresponding to the subject code of the course content) and by the Office of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies (GPS). Students are encouraged to meet with their academic program's advisor when considering transfer credit possibilities.

Departmental Transfer Credit Guidelines

Students pursuing the MA degree in the field of Religion should be aware of the following departmental transfer credit guideline:

- No more than 2 courses (6 credit hours) of transfer credit from U.S. or international universities of similar standing as Rice may apply towards the degree.

Additional Information

For additional information, please see the Religion website: <https://reli.rice.edu/>.