Learning Objectives

*General Skills*

- Work at the exciting intersections of the many disciplines used to study religion: history and art history; archaeology, literary and textual studies; religious law and theology; sociology, anthropology, and psychology; regional and international studies; gender, race and ethnicity; and philosophy.
- Think critically, write clearly, and argue effectively.
- Evaluate the arguments of others judiciously.
- Contribute to solutions of some of the most vexing problems facing human communities by analyzing complex social, historical, and textual phenomena thoughtfully and with nuance.
- Gain confidence in public speaking and communication.

*Research Skills*

- Practice designing research projects that synthesize evidence from a variety of disciplines and sources.
- Learn the bibliographical tradition in the study of particular religions. Draw on a variety of different perspectives, theories, methods, and technologies (including archival research online or in institutional settings) in constructing compelling and relevant research projects.

*Religious and Cultural Literacy*
• Develop a fluency in major world traditions, their core beliefs and practices, their primary spheres of influence, and their thematic and other continuities and discontinuities from the pre–modern past to the modern present.

• Explore themes and issues that cut across the world’s religious traditions, such as ritual, belief, pilgrimage, canon, sacred, and asceticism.

• Acquire insight into the ways in which studying religious thought and practice sheds light on broader cultural patterns in human societies. How can religion help us understand history, art, philosophy, literature, and film, alongside the events that pop up in the headlines each day?

• Analyze the roles that religious ideas and practices have played and continue to play in politics and law, race and gender relations, economics, international affairs, business, science, and medicine, and how those fields of human inquiry have shaped and continue to shape religious communities.

Ethics, Law, and Society

• Explore the blurred lines between religion and law, paying attention to how religions develop their own legal practices and how state laws are shaped by religion.

• Analyze the ways in which religious traditions have both contributed to ethical thought and introduced ethical problems.

• Delineate the issues surrounding religious accommodation in contemporary legal scenarios.

• Explain why awareness of and sensitivity to religious and cultural diversity is necessary in civic, legal, medical, and business situations, and take action to foster such awareness and sensitivity.

Career Preparation


University of Southern California Dana and David Dornsife College of Letters, Arts and Sciences
3454 Trousdale Parkway, CAS 200 Los Angeles, CA 90089-0153 US
• The Religion degree prepares students for careers in a broad range of fields. Many of our students go on to professional degree programs in law, medicine, business, public policy, international affairs, and journalism. Others work for non-profits, in education, or in the arts. Many others choose to continue their study of religion in divinity or theological school Master's programs, or to go on to doctoral work in religious studies, area studies (such as Middle Eastern Studies or Asian Studies), history, archaeology, classics, etc.