

Religion

Learning Goals

1. To be exposed to a variety of the world's religious traditions in historical and geographical context.
2. To gain deep knowledge of at least one major world religion.
3. To be exposed to the comparative study of religions over a common topic or theme (e.g., textual analysis, moral questions).
4. To gain familiarity with different methodological approaches to religious studies, including both descriptive and normative approaches.
5. To gain experience in independent research.
6. To develop analytical skills, including facility with logical argumentation.
7. To develop critical reading skills and engage with both primary and secondary texts.
8. To develop skills in written communication.

About the major

The Religion Department seeks to acquaint students with the world's major religious traditions, with varieties of global religious experience, and with religious approaches to a broad range of topics and questions. We emphasize the study of individual religious traditions, because we hold that a solid understanding of one is crucial for developing an appreciation for other traditions and for religion as a fundamental human experience. We also maintain, however, that it is important for students to have experience with comparative approaches to the study of religion. Our curriculum strives to balance, then, intellectual immersion in the thought and history of distinct traditions with comparative analysis across multiple religions.

A major in religion is an excellent foundation from which to pursue training and careers in medicine, law, education, business, religious leadership, and journalism. Middlebury alumni who majored in religion have been accepted into prestigious schools in each of these fields, as well as into the best programs in religious studies in the U.S. and Europe.

Because of its interdisciplinary nature, as well as its focus on critical reading and thinking, a religion major is quintessential liberal arts education—superb intellectual preparation for an endless variety of career and life pursuits.

“I meet people every day with extremely varied backgrounds, and being able to relate to, or even simply to respect, their differences is the most useful thing I have gained from being a religion major. Having an understanding of the complex ways in which people interact helps me to be a more respectful and compassionate practitioner.”

—Adam Fasoli '01
Dentist, Middlebury Dental Group

Reasons you might choose this major

- You are interested in one of the most basic and ancient concepts to human life—that is, the quest for answers.
- You want to find out more about how religious traditions have shaped, enhanced, hindered, and otherwise influenced human civilizations and cultures.
- You have a deep appreciation for original texts and works of art central to so many people's worldviews.
- You want a better understanding of the differences and similarities in religious traditions and how these different traditions reflect the worldviews and life experiences of people in their own time and context.
- You want to explore the social, cultural, and psychological functions of religion.



Translating Learning into Professional Competencies

Throughout your time at Middlebury, you will develop and enhance the following core professional competencies, skills, and dispositions highly valued by employers that will prepare you for leadership and success in any given field:

Critical Thinking: Exercise sound reasoning to analyze issues, make decisions, and overcome problems.

Oral/Written Communications: Articulate thoughts and ideas clearly and effectively in written and oral forms.

Teamwork/Collaboration: Build collaborative relationships with colleagues and customers from diverse backgrounds.

Leadership: Leverage the strengths of others to achieve common goals, and use interpersonal skills to coach and develop others.

Professionalism/Work Ethic: Demonstrate personal accountability and effective work habits.

Global/Intercultural Fluency: Value, respect, and learn from diverse cultures, races, ages, genders, sexual orientations, and religions.

Digital Technology: Leverage existing digital technologies ethically and efficiently to solve problems, complete tasks, and accomplish goals.

Career Management: Identify and articulate one's skills, strengths, knowledge, and experiences relevant to career goals, and identify areas necessary for professional development.

Where religion majors go

Applying your learning through internships . . .

Students pursue internships and research in a variety of fields, enabling them to apply their liberal arts learning in real-world settings. Internships, research, and self-directed projects enrich your academic experience and help prepare you for life after Middlebury. Students have interned or done research at the following:

New York Press

Corporate Accountability International

Catholic Charities

John Graham Emergency Shelter

Buddhist Peace Fellowship

The United States Senate

Gardens for Health International

The White House

University of Virginia Child Language and Learning Laboratory

Climate Justice Alliance

U.S. Mission to Guatemala

GNH Centre Bhutan

Smithsonian National Museum of American History

Religious Action Center for Reform Judaism

Yayasan Bumi Sehat

Karamah: Muslim Women Lawyers for Human Rights

The Fresh Air Fund

EduCare India

Department of Homeland Security

Francis and Ann Curran Center for American Catholic Studies

. . . leading to meaningful, dynamic, and engaging career paths.

See just some of the many interesting ways our graduates have applied their liberal arts learning to engage the world. If you want to see what other Middlebury alumni are doing now, log into Midd2Midd and search by major. [go/midd2midd](#)

Life is Good Inc., *Partner and Chief Operating Optimist*

Office of the Secretary of Defense, *Chief Strategy Officer, Officer of Cyber Policy*

Google, *Senior Operations Specialist*

Nonprofit Finance Fund, *Advisory Services*

McLean Hospital, *Mental Health Specialist*

TELUS International, *Director, Marketing and Communications*

BankNorth Investment Management Group *SVP, Retirement Plans*

Shacksbury Cider/Lost Apple Project, *Cofounder*

Center for Medicare Advocacy Inc., *Staff Attorney*

The Centre for Faith, Art & Justice, *Director of Development*

Habitat for Humanity East Bay/Silicon Valley, *Faith and Community Partnerships*

Manager

Community Medical Center, *Pulmonologist*

NARAL, *Executive Director*

Foundation for International Relief of Children, *Field Operations Manager*

Ocean Conservancy, *Vice President, Resource Development*

Mind Well Foundation, *Managing Director, Mindfulness in Schools Project*

Miller Media Consultants Inc., *President*

Microsoft, *Senior Manager Corporate Strategy*

The Mountain Times, *Editor, Copublisher*

ConnectHealth, *Founder and CEO*

MKG, *Creative Director*

U.S. Department of Commerce, *Librarian*