

Religion PhD

COLLEGE OF LIBERAL ARTS

Learn more about the Doctor of Philosophy in Religion.

About the Program

The Temple University Department of Religion began shortly after the Supreme Court declared that the study of religion (not to be confused with its practice) in state-supported public education was commended. Temple's department broke from the "seminary model" of traditional fields, such as church history and theology, and instead committed to the multi-traditional and multi-disciplinary study of global religious traditions. This gives our program an outstanding breadth and cross-cultural diversity. We have a long history of attracting students from all over the world, and our graduates now work in universities not just in North America, but also in places such as Germany, Japan, Korea and Malaysia.

Time Limit for Degree Completion: 7 years

Campus Location: Main chiefly for day classes, with an increasing number of evening courses offered at TUCC in Center City

Full-Time/Part-Time Status: The degree program can be completed on a full- or part-time basis.

Interdisciplinary Study: Students are given a broad, interdisciplinary introduction to Religion in Unit I study and take courses in other departments and institutions in Unit II study. For details, see the Program Requirements.

Affiliation(s): Graduate student exchange agreements exist with the University of Pennsylvania's Department of Religious Studies; the Reconstructionist Rabbinical College; Palmer Theological Seminary, formerly the Eastern Baptist Theological Seminary; and the Lutheran Theological Seminary in Philadelphia. In addition, a coordinated MA/PhD program in Islamic-Christian Relations is conducted with Hartford International University for Religion and Peace, formerly the Hartford Theological Seminary, while a graduate certificate in Gender, Sexuality and Women's Studies is offered in cooperation with Temple's Women's Studies Program.

Areas of Specialization: The Department of Religion offers graduate programs leading to the MA and PhD degrees. Students are introduced to the major methods of study in Religion, with stress on the critical analysis of religions by the methods of the humanities and the social sciences, including textual and historical analysis, philosophical and hermeneutical studies, and social and cultural analysis. The program thus ensures that a well-rounded course of study is achieved. The two basic concentrations are:

- Global Religious Traditions, with emphasis in Asian Philosophy/Religious Thought, Biblical Studies, and Islam
- Religion and Society

Job Prospects: The kind of education we offer has enabled our graduates to find jobs in a very competitive job market. For example, some of our graduates in the area of Bible study were hired explicitly because they had received some instruction in Islam and could serve as a resource about that tradition. Breadth and diversity constitute one of the strengths of our program, and we continue to offer coursework in global religious traditions and the roles of religions in society and culture so as to maintain this strength. Graduates of our doctoral program are employed in colleges and universities in North America, Europe, Africa and Asia. The most common positions are as faculty in religion studies, although some are administrators in educational governmental administrations and academic administrations.

Non-Matriculated Student Policy: Persons not enrolled in a degree program may register for courses as non-matriculated students. Transcripts of undergraduate work should indicate some background in Religion Studies and a GPA sufficient to maintain graduate work, normally 3.5 or above. Non-matriculated students may register for courses after an interview with the Director of Graduate Religion Studies, at which time they should present academic transcripts. Credit earned toward a subsequent degree program at Temple University is limited to 9 credits.

Financing Opportunities: Teaching Assistants teach sections independently in the Department of Religion.

Admission Requirements and Deadlines

Application Deadline:

June 1

Letters of Reference:

Number Required: 3

From Whom: Recommendations should be obtained from former faculty who know the applicant best.

Coursework Required for Admission Consideration: It is suggested that applicants have taken at least 18 credits of Religion coursework.

Master's Degree in Discipline/Related Discipline: A master's degree is not required.

Bachelor's Degree in Discipline/Related Discipline: All applicants must present credentials that are the equivalent of the appropriate baccalaureate degree at Temple University.

Statement of Goals: In 2 to 3 pages, address your background that prepares you for graduate studies in Religion, including previous successes in academic study and research in the field; area of interest within the field of Religion and how that interest coincides with offerings in Temple's Department of Religion; and teaching and research goals and how you foresee study at Temple furthering those goals.

Standardized Test Scores:

GRE: Optional. Scores may be submitted if available.

Applicants who earned their baccalaureate degree from an institution where the language of instruction was other than English, with the exception of those who subsequently earned a master's degree at a U.S. institution, must report scores for a standardized test of English that meet these minimums:

- TOEFL iBT: 100
- IELTS Academic: 7.0
- PTE Academic: 68

Resume: Current resume required.

Writing Sample: The writing sample should demonstrate your ability to research and write a scholarly paper. The paper should be no more than 10 pages in length and fully referenced according to a professional, scholarly style manual. It should be in the field of Religious Studies or a closely related area.

Advanced Standing: With the approval of the Director of Graduate Studies, students who have earned graduate credit at another institution can transfer up to 24 credits toward the coursework required for the PhD. A grade of "B" or higher must have been earned.

Program Requirements

General Program Requirements:

Number of Credits Required to Earn the PhD: 51, including 30 credits at the master's level and 21 at the doctoral level

Required Courses:

Code	Title	Credit Hours
Didactic Courses ¹		
5000-, 8000-, and/or a maximum of 12 credits of 9000-level courses in the student's area of concentration		45
Research Courses ²		
REL 9994	Preliminary Examination Preparation	
REL 9998	Pre-Dissertation Research	
REL 9999	Dissertation Research	
Total Credit Hours		51

¹ Six credits of coursework are taken outside of one's primary research area and may, optionally, be taken outside of the Department of Religion.

² Of the 6 required research credits, a minimum of 2 credits of REL 9999 must be taken. The other 4 credits may be taken in any combination of REL 9994, REL 9998, and REL 9999.

Language Examination: Competence in all languages necessary to perform graduate-level scholarly research in the student's area of concentration must be demonstrated. Reading knowledge of a minimum of two foreign languages is required. Prior to taking the preliminary exam, students must successfully pass two research language examinations determined by their primary advisor or the Director of Graduate Studies.

Culminating Events:

Preliminary Examination:

The purpose of the preliminary examination is to demonstrate critical and interpretive knowledge in specialized areas of Religion. Students are examined in all areas of scholarship and research necessary for their area of study. They must have demonstrated reading knowledge of two foreign languages. They prepare a dissertation proposal and an outline of their areas of examination. The preliminary examination is taken once all coursework is complete.

All students may petition for and take their preliminary examination in four areas as early as the second term of their third year but must petition for and complete the preliminary exam by the end of their fourth year. Members of the student's dissertation committee individually write examination questions.

Sometimes faculty are included as "examiners" who will not serve on the Dissertation Committee. Students arrange with their Dissertation Committee when the exams are to be taken. Normally exams are done within the Department of Religion, using a computer under supervised conditions. All examiners and members of the Dissertation Committee must agree that the student has demonstrated competence in the relevant areas of study, and that the student is capable of completing the dissertation proposed.

The written exams serve as the basis for the oral preliminary examination. All faculty for whom exams were written participate in the oral preliminary exam.

Dissertation Proposal:

The proposal demonstrates the student's knowledge of the current research in the field on their particular problem of interest. Students should show methodological awareness and state the uniqueness of the proposed research with regard to the ongoing body of scholarly literature.

Dissertation:

The dissertation is to demonstrate original and significant contributions to the study of Religion. It should make use of primary texts and demonstrate reading knowledge of appropriate original languages.

The Dissertation Examining Committee evaluates the student's dissertation and oral defense. This committee is comprised of the Doctoral Advisory Committee and at least one additional Graduate Faculty member from outside the Department of Religion. The Outside Examiner should be identified no later than the beginning of the term in which the student will defend the dissertation. The Dissertation Examining Committee evaluates the student's written thesis in making an original scholarly contribution to the field and their ability to defend and discuss orally the contents of the thesis.

If a student needs to change a member of a Committee, the new member must be approved by the Department's Graduate Studies Committee and registered with the Graduate Secretary and the Graduate School.

Students who are preparing to defend their dissertation should confirm a time and date with their Dissertation Examining Committee and register with the Graduate Secretary at least 30 days before the defense is to occur. The Graduate Secretary arranges the time, date and room, and forwards to the student the appropriate forms. After the Graduate Secretary has scheduled the defense, the student must send to the Graduate School a completed "Announcement of Dissertation Defense" form, found in TUportal under the Tools tab within "University Forms," at least 10 days before the defense. The department posts flyers announcing the defense.

Contacts

Program Web Address:

<https://www.temple.edu/academics/degree-programs/religion-phd-la-rel-phd>

Department Information:

Dept. of Religion
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215-204-3663

Submission Address for Application Materials:

<https://apply.temple.edu/CLA/>

Department Contacts:

Admissions:

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