

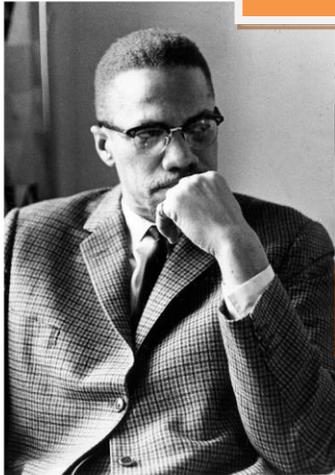
# Comparative Study of Religion

## *Handbook for Concentrators*

### 2015-16



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courses section of our website!



### **Committee on the Study of Religion**

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## **I. Why Study Religion?**

The Comparative Study of Religion draws upon social scientific and humanistic methods in order to interpret religious phenomena worldwide. Scholars of religion use a range of tools: historical methods to think about how religions change over time; comparative methods to analyze rituals or texts in different religions; anthropological methods to study how religion shapes human cultures and societies. Still others use literary-critical methods to understand religious texts and how they are used. It is a diverse, creative field in which scholars talk across disciplinary boundaries. Due to this interdisciplinary approach, the Study of Religion attracts creative, versatile students willing to learn different ways of thinking about and interpreting human life, community and culture.

The religion concentration at Harvard allows students to explore some of the most profound issues that face human beings. Concentrators consider issues like the meaning of community, the problem of God, differing conceptions of human nature, and the meaning of life, suffering and death. Our program is unique in allowing students to ponder these “big” questions in rigorous, critical ways.

Students do this work within the context of a well-organized tutorial program that is one of the best on campus. We have tutorials for sophomores, juniors, and seniors, all of which are taught by faculty members and advanced graduate students. All tutorials are in small groups or one-on-one. The sophomore tutorial introduces students to religious phenomena and the tools scholars use to interpret them. Junior tutorials offer students the opportunity to pursue topics of particular interest individually or in small groups and to focus on close reading and writing skills. The senior seminar prepares students to complete an honors thesis by early March (though a thesis is not required of all concentrators). All thesis-writing seniors have three Advisers—a faculty Adviser, a graduate-student Adviser and the Assistant Director of Undergraduate Studies.

As a small concentration at Harvard, the Study of Religion is an intimate community within a much larger university. Religion students regularly interact with faculty members and graduate students who share their interests. Student satisfaction with tutorials and with academic advising in general is consistently very high in our program. Our small concentration gives students unique opportunities to know other students and faculty.

Concentrators pursue many careers after graduation: business, law, medicine, public service, performing arts, teaching, and scholarship, among many others. Religion students find that their studies give them important skills. They learn to read texts closely and critically, to think about fundamental philosophical questions, to analyze arguments and to appreciate the diversity of human experience. These are important skills to bring to any field or profession.

## **II. Using this Handbook**

This handbook is the standard reference work for requirements, rules, and advising procedures for the undergraduate program in the Study of Religion. Faculty Advisers and tutorial leaders will assume students are familiar with it, so please read its contents carefully and keep an updated copy ready to hand. The Handbook is updated annually, so be sure get a revised version each year.

Additional information can be found on our website at <http://studyofreligion.fas.harvard.edu>.

## **III. Admission**

The Comparative Study of Religion is open to all students and no longer requires an application for admission. However, students considering concentrating in religion are encouraged to contact the Director or Assistant Director of Undergraduate Studies to discuss their interests. The DUS and ADUS have frequent office hours and are available by email.

## **IV. Joint Concentrations**

Joint concentrations are possible in two configurations: (1) religion as the **Primary Field** and (2) religion as the **Allied Field**. See Section VIII below for examples of each one. The choice between these options naturally affects one's degree requirements. In both cases, students must complete a senior honors thesis. If religion is the allied field, then procedures for undertaking and completing the thesis (including any oral exams) are dictated by the primary department. If religion is the primary field, then the thesis and oral exams are administered by the Study of Religion.

Students can combine religion with a number of different fields. In the past, Religion concentrators have joined with Social Studies, English, History, History of Art and Architecture, Music, Government, and Philosophy, among others. Students interested in a joint concentration should talk to the Director of Undergraduate Studies.

## **V. Religion as a Secondary Field**

Students are also welcome to study religion as a Secondary Field. Unlike the joint concentration option outlined above, declaring religion as a Secondary Field does not require the student to write an honors thesis, but rather to take six courses approved by the DUS. For more information, see Section VIII below.

## **VI. Advising**

Every concentrator has a faculty Adviser who signs his or her study card and is available for regular consultation. Concentrators meet with their Advisers at the start of each term to discuss their concentration plan and intellectual interests, and often more frequently.

The Director of Undergraduate Studies makes advising assignments in consultation with the members of the A. B. Subcommittee, and manages all advising relationships. If you would like to request a specific Adviser, or if you have general questions about advising, please contact the DUS.

All seniors have as their academic Adviser the Assistant Director of Undergraduate Studies, who oversees both the senior thesis program for concentrators in the honors track and the development of cohesive plans of study for all concentrators.

## **VII. Basic Requirements: An Overview**

The Comparative Study of Religion offers an honors and a non-honors track. Students in the honors track need 14 half-courses of concentration credit to graduate. Students in the non-honors track need 12 half-courses of concentration credit to graduate.

For all the concentrators, 12 half-courses are distributed as follows:

- one introductory Religion course (ordinarily Religion 11-20)
- one semester of sophomore tutorial (Religion 97)
- one semester of junior tutorial (Religion 98a or 98b)
- nine other Religion or approved courses

Students in the honors track also enroll in:

- two semesters of senior tutorial (Religion 99a and 99b)

Students who wish to be considered for honors in the Study of Religion must write an honors thesis and participate in the senior tutorial (Religion 99). In order to be eligible to write a thesis, students must have maintained a minimum average in the concentration of B+ (3.33) through the end of the first semester of the junior year. Especially because the thesis is optional and is intended for students pursuing exceptional levels of achievement, we expect students to have developed, with the guidance of their advisers and mentors, the necessary competencies for their work, among them linguistic skills, fieldwork preparation, and archival practice. In particular, students who wish to pursue a thesis using ethnographic or anthropological approaches are required to complete Religion 20 (see Section IX below), or another approved course introducing these methods. Any student planning to write a thesis involving work with human subjects should plan to take Religion 20 or an approved course in ethnographic or anthropological methods by the end of the junior year. For questions about other courses that would fulfill this requirement, contact the Director or Assistant Director of Undergraduate Studies. Note that students pursuing research using human subjects must also apply to Harvard's Committee on the Use of Human Subjects for project approval. Visit their website at <http://cuhs.harvard.edu> for application forms and more information.

The requirements for a joint concentration with Religion as an allied field are different from the requirements described in this section (see Concentration Option D in Section VIII below).

The requirements for Religion as a Secondary Field include six half-courses (see Religion as a Secondary Field plan of study form in Section VIII below).

Please note that in addition to Religion 99a and 99b (which are graded SAT/UNSAT), one half-course taken SAT/UNSAT at Harvard (such as a Freshman Seminar) can be counted for concentration credit.

### **VIII. Concentration Options A, B, C and D, and Religion as a Secondary Field**

Concentrators in the Comparative Study of Religion select one of four Concentration Options.

**Option A** allows students to study **two traditions**, or one tradition and one theme, in depth. Students are also required to take a small number of “General, Comparative, Methodological” courses. Students in Option A might examine comparative categories (e.g., pilgrimage, ritual, myth and so on) or interreligious contact and change across two traditions, or they might designate one tradition and one of the approved themes (see below). Ideally, Option A students who choose to write a senior honors thesis will combine both of their two traditions (or their tradition and theme) in the thesis.

**Option B** allows students to focus on **one major tradition**; the “General, Comparative, Methodological” requirement here is augmented slightly to ensure that students are exposed to comparative themes and different methodologies.

The last two options, **Options C** and **D**, are for joint concentrators. All joint concentrators must write a senior honors thesis. **Option C** is for students who have a joint concentration with religion as their primary field. **Option D** is for students who have a joint concentration with religion as their allied field.

**Approved Traditions:** Ancient Near Eastern / Israelite, Buddhist, Christian, East Asian, Greek-Hellenistic-Roman, Hindu, Islamic, Judaic, Modern Western / Religions of the Americas, South Asian, African and Afro-Atlantic Religions. It may be possible to substitute other traditions, depending on faculty and course offerings.

**Approved Themes:** Religion and Society, Religion and Gender, Religion and the Arts, and Philosophy of Religion. It may also be possible to substitute other themes, again depending on faculty and course offerings.

At the beginning of each semester, concentrators must complete an updated Plan of Study, discuss it with and have it signed by their adviser, and *submit a copy to the DUS*. The Plan of Study forms for each Concentration Option are included in this Handbook and are also available on our website.

Students have the option of studying **Religion as a Secondary Field**. Like the concentration, the secondary field requires a combination of (a) focused course work; and (b) comparative or methodological courses that provide a broader framework for considering an area of focus. Students pursuing a Secondary Field in Religion should complete a Plan of Study (below) and discuss it with the Director of Undergraduate Studies. All College students pursuing a Secondary Field register and file their final program of study using the College’s Secondary Fields Webtool available through the online Handbook for Students at [handbook.fas.harvard.edu](http://handbook.fas.harvard.edu).

Comparative Study of Religion – Concentration Plan of Study

**OPTION A**

**Two Major Traditions in Comparative Context (or one Tradition and a Theme)**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_

House/Class: \_\_\_\_\_

Today's Date: \_\_\_\_\_

*For each requirement, please list the following:*

**COURSE NUMBER AND TITLE; INSTRUCTOR; AND THE TERM TAKEN OR PROJECTED TO ENROLL**

**General: Methodological and Comparative (3 courses):**

1. Rel 11-20: \_\_\_\_\_
2. Rel 97. SO Tutorial \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_

**Tradition A (5 courses):**

1. Rel 98. JR Tutorial \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_
4. \_\_\_\_\_
5. \_\_\_\_\_

**Tradition B or Theme (4 courses):**

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_
4. \_\_\_\_\_

**Honors Track:**

1. Rel 99a. Senior Seminar/Thesis \_\_\_\_\_
2. Rel 99b. Senior Seminar/Thesis \_\_\_\_\_

Adviser's Name \_\_\_\_\_

Adviser's Signature \_\_\_\_\_

*Submit a copy of this Plan to the Director of Undergraduate Studies.*

Comparative Study of Religion – Concentration Plan of Study

**OPTION B**  
**One Major Traditions in a Comparative Context**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_

House/Class: \_\_\_\_\_

Today's Date: \_\_\_\_\_

*For each requirement, please list the following:*

**COURSE NUMBER AND TITLE; INSTRUCTOR; AND THE TERM TAKEN OR PROJECTED TO ENROLL**

**General: Methodological and Comparative (4 courses):**

1. Rel 11-20: \_\_\_\_\_
2. Rel 97. SO Tutorial \_\_\_\_\_
3. Tradition other than major \_\_\_\_\_
4. \_\_\_\_\_

**Major Tradition (8 courses):** \_\_\_\_\_

1. Rel 98. JR Tutorial \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_
4. \_\_\_\_\_
5. \_\_\_\_\_
6. \_\_\_\_\_
7. \_\_\_\_\_
8. \_\_\_\_\_

**Honors Track:**

1. Rel 99a. Senior Seminar/Thesis \_\_\_\_\_
2. Rel 99b. Senior Seminar/Thesis \_\_\_\_\_

Adviser \_\_\_\_\_

Adviser's Signature \_\_\_\_\_

*Submit a copy of this Plan to the Director of Undergraduate Studies.*

Comparative Study of Religion – Concentration Plan of Study

**OPTION C**  
**Joint Concentration with Religion as the Primary Field**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_

House/Class: \_\_\_\_\_

Today's Date: \_\_\_\_\_

*For each requirement, please list the following:*

**COURSE NUMBER AND TITLE; INSTRUCTOR; AND THE TERM TAKEN OR PROJECTED TO ENROLL**

**General: Methodological and Comparative (3 courses):**

1. Rel 11-20: \_\_\_\_\_
2. Rel 97. SO Tutorial \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_

**Major Tradition (5 courses):**

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_
4. \_\_\_\_\_
5. \_\_\_\_\_

**Allied Field (4 courses):**

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_
4. \_\_\_\_\_

**Honors Track:**

1. Rel 99a Senior Seminar/Thesis \_\_\_\_\_
2. Rel 99b Senior Seminar/Thesis \_\_\_\_\_

Adviser: \_\_\_\_\_

Adviser's Signature \_\_\_\_\_

*Submit a copy of this Plan to the Director of Undergraduate Studies.*

Comparative Study of Religion – Concentration Plan of Study

**OPTION D**

**Joint Concentration with Religion as the Allied Field**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_

House/Class: \_\_\_\_\_

Today's Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Primary Field: \_\_\_\_\_

Adviser in Primary Field: \_\_\_\_\_

*For each requirement, please list the following:*

**COURSE NUMBER AND TITLE; INSTRUCTOR; AND THE TERM TAKEN OR PROJECTED TO ENROLL**

**General: Methodological and Comparative (3 courses):**

1. Rel 11-20: \_\_\_\_\_

2. Rel 97. SO Tutorial: \_\_\_\_\_

3. \_\_\_\_\_

**Major Tradition/Area of**

**Inquiry (4 courses):** \_\_\_\_\_

1. Religion 98 \* \_\_\_\_\_

2. \_\_\_\_\_

3. \_\_\_\_\_

4. \_\_\_\_\_

\* Students pursuing Option D are strongly encouraged but not required to take a Junior Tutorial.

Adviser \_\_\_\_\_

Adviser's Signature \_\_\_\_\_

*Submit a copy of this Plan to the Director of Undergraduate Studies.*

**SECONDARY FIELD**  
**in the Study of Religion**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Email: \_\_\_\_\_  
Class: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

*For each requirement, please list the following:*

**COURSE NUMBER AND TITLE; INSTRUCTOR; AND THE TERM TAKEN OR PROJECTED TO ENROLL**

**General: Methodological and Comparative (2 half-courses):**

1. Rel 11-20 **OR** Rel 97. Sophomore Tutorial:

\_\_\_\_\_

2.

\_\_\_\_\_

**Major Tradition or Area of**

**Inquiry (4 courses):**

\_\_\_\_\_

1.

\_\_\_\_\_

2.

\_\_\_\_\_

3.

\_\_\_\_\_

4.

\_\_\_\_\_

Director of Undergraduate Studies \_\_\_\_\_

## IX. Introductory Courses

Introductory courses in the Comparative Study of Religion are intended to introduce students to key categories in the study of religion (e.g., scripture, ethics, myth, body and practice). Many introductory courses are taught in a comparative context (that is three or more traditions) and with some attention to theoretical and methodological issues. An introductory course (ordinarily a course numbered Religion 11 through 20) is required of all concentrators, and students are advised to take one as they explore the concentration.

Following is a selection of introductory level courses that will be offered in 2015-16. Freshmen are encouraged to take one of them to explore the field,. Note that General Education courses **can count toward the concentration**, and the program has no limit to the number of Gen Ed courses that can count for concentration credit. For a **complete list** of course offerings and descriptions, see the Study of Religion website: [studyofreligion.fas.harvard.edu](http://studyofreligion.fas.harvard.edu)

Rel 13. Scriptures and Classics (William Graham)

Rel 44. Augustine's Confessions (Charles Stang)

\*Rel 58. The Body in Christian Thought (Mayra Rivera Rivera)

\*Rel 49. From Gospel to Allegory: Christian Narratives for Living (Mark Jordan)

\*Rel 51. Religious Liberty: Contested American Stories (David Holland)

\*Rel 74. Introduction to Buddhism (David Eckel)

\*Rel 112A. Dreams and the Dreaming (Kimberley Patton)

\*Rel 441. Ancient Christian Martyrdom and its Modern Legacy (Karen King)

\*Rel 111. Cultures of Health and Healing: Religion, Medicine and Global Health (Mara Block)

\*AI54. For the Love of God and His Prophet (Ali Asani)

CB 23. From the Hebrew Bible to Judaism, From the Old Testament to Christianity

CB 28. Hindu Worlds of Art & Culture (Diana Eck)

\*HS 192. The Empire Strikes Back: Science Fiction, Religion and Society (Ahmed Ragab)

SW 30. Moctezuma's Mexico: Then and Now (David Carrasco)

SW 54. Islam and Politics in the Modern Middle East (Malika Zeghal)

\*New courses AY 2015-16

## X. Independent Reading: Religion 91r

Religion 91r is a course of supervised reading and research on a special topic in the Study of Religion. The 91r permits individuals or small groups to examine subjects that cannot be studied in regular courses. The course involves close reading and written work, both of which are evaluated by the faculty director with a letter grade and written comments.

Students who wish to enroll in a 91r must give the Director of Undergraduate Studies a petition, signed by the proposed faculty director, that describes the reading and written work to be completed. The 91r petition is available from the Director of Undergraduate Studies. All Religion 91r proposals must receive the approval of the Director of Undergraduate Studies prior to the deadline for handing in study cards.

Religion 91r is normally open only to concentrators. The instructor of the course must be a member of the Harvard faculty, though exceptions to this rule may, in some cases, be authorized by the Director of Undergraduate Studies.

## **XI. The Tutorial Sequence**

Tutorials are the core of our program. They are designed as a sequence of small seminars focused on critical thinking and writing skills. They are our most important courses, and students should treat them as such. The sophomore tutorial is taught by a faculty member; junior tutorials are taught by advanced graduate students specializing in the student's field of interest; and the senior tutorial involves faculty, graduate students, and the Assistant Director of Undergraduate Studies.

Students entering the concentration late can make up Religion tutorials. Only in rare instances can they be replaced by other courses.

### **A. Sophomore Tutorial: Religion 97**

The sophomore tutorial is a required seminar for all sophomores and new junior concentrators. Its purpose is to introduce students to different methods and theories in the Study of Religion. The course introduces students to major themes and arguments that have defined the field—including, for example, arguments about the nature of religion, ritual, myth, scripture and culture. Our hope is that the sophomore tutorial also will help students narrow their range of interests, preparing them for more in-depth work in their junior and senior years. By the end of the sophomore year, students will have been introduced to the field and to the analytical tools scholars use to interpret religious phenomena.

In the sophomore tutorial students will have opportunities to raise general questions and test ideas in a congenial, collaborative atmosphere. Responsibility for leading discussion is shared. The tutorial also helps to develop an *esprit de corps* among new members of the concentration.

Writing is a key component of work in the sophomore tutorial; students submit short and medium-length papers and receive detailed feedback on style and content. Of course, the pursuit of clear expository writing will continue in later years, but the process begins in earnest sophomore year. Students should devote their full energies to keeping up with readings and assignments, and participate actively in discussions.

### **B. Junior Tutorial: Religion 98**

The junior tutorial is an opportunity for students to work closely with a tutor and one to five other students on a specific topic in the Study of Religion. The tutorial should be within the student's major tradition. Concentrators have the option of taking a second tutorial. Students wishing to pursue this option should discuss it with the Director of Undergraduate Studies.

The purposes of junior tutorials are: (1) to read primary texts closely and critically; (2) to engage in rigorous discussion of these texts and the issues they raise; (3) to refine writing skills by writing papers and revising them; and (4) to help students explore in greater depth a topic that they may be considering for a thesis.

In short, junior tutorials help students read texts carefully and make persuasive arguments about them. They also are an opportunity for students to begin work on an area of special academic interest.

The most important part of the junior tutorial is the work assigned for each and every week, and tutorial preparation should have top priority in a student's studies. In addition, students will usually use the tutorial as a context in which to write the junior paper.

All juniors complete a **junior paper**. This project provides an opportunity to engage in an extended research project leading to a substantial piece of scholarship (approximately 25 pages). The paper should address a significant question or problem in the study of religion. It must engage both primary and secondary sources and be explicit regarding the methodology utilized. The final product should be the polished result of multiple drafts and rewriting.

Most often, students will write their junior paper in the context of the junior tutorial. In exceptional circumstances, arrangements can be made to write the paper in the context of a seminar. Students are encouraged to use this project as a starting point for the senior thesis.

### C. Senior Tutorial: Religion 99

The senior tutorial (or Religion 99: Senior Seminar) is year-long, graded SAT/UNS, and it culminates in the completion and submission of the senior honors thesis (see Section XIII below). Students are required to have a GPA of B+ (3.33) in the concentration by the end of the first semester of the junior year to enroll in the senior tutorial. By April of the junior year, students should discuss their intention to pursue a thesis with the Director of Undergraduate Studies, the Assistant Director of Undergraduate Studies, and relevant faculty members. If the student elects to write a thesis at this point, he or she should be able to articulate a general topic and have some idea who might serve as effective advisers for the project. Students are expected to speak with possible thesis advisers near the end of their junior year and, if possible, line up thesis advisers for the senior year. Students need to have both a graduate student and a faculty adviser. The Director of Undergraduate Studies and the Assistant Director of Undergraduate Studies often help in this process.

During the senior year students are expected to meet with their graduate student Advisers about once a week to discuss work in progress. They meet with faculty Advisers less often, usually once a month. In order to receive SAT in Religion 99 for the fall term, students must submit two draft chapters of their senior thesis. Submission and acceptance of the senior thesis fulfills the SAT requirement for Religion 99 for the spring term.

In addition to meeting with thesis Advisers, which is a required part of Religion 99, senior thesis writers meet bi-weekly as a group to discuss and develop research and writing skills. This seminar is organized and run by the Assistant Director of Undergraduate Studies.

## **XII. The Honors Thesis**

The Senior Honors Thesis is an opportunity to explore an area of interest in detail. Students who elect to write a thesis should regard it as the culmination of years of reading, analyzing, and making arguments about religion. As noted above, in order to be eligible to write a thesis, students must maintain a minimum average in the concentration of B+ by the end of the first semester of the junior year. Exceptions to this policy must be approved by the A. B. Subcommittee early in the second semester of the student's junior year.

Due to the nature of our field, the subject matter of religion theses varies widely. In all cases, individual theses should be specific enough to allow for depth of treatment, while not so narrowly construed that they lose sight of broader issues in the Study of Religion. This is particularly important because the readers of a given thesis are often drawn from a variety of fields within the Study of Religion. Depending on your concentration plan, your thesis may focus on a topic solely within one tradition; or it may involve two traditions, or one tradition and a theme, or (in the case of joint concentrations) one tradition and another academic field; or it may be focused on a single tradition but deal with an issue that involves the comparative study of religious phenomena from other religious traditions as well.

For more information on the thesis, please refer to the Senior Honors Thesis Handbook (available online or from the ADUS or DUS).

All concentrators pursuing honors are expected to designate the general topic of the thesis by April of the junior year. A prospectus that has been approved and signed by the senior thesis Adviser is due in September of the senior year. The prospectus should include a tentative title, a two-page description of the specific subject matter, and a bibliography. One chapter of the thesis is due in November, another in December, and a third in February. The completed thesis, which should be 50-80 pages, is due in early March. For the complete schedule of dates for the current year, see the Senior Honors Thesis Handbook.

The Assistant Director of Undergraduate Studies oversees the thesis-writing process and leads Religion 99, the Senior Seminar.

## A. Past Senior Theses

The Assistant Director of Undergraduate Studies has hard copies of many past theses that are available for students to peruse. Looking through old theses may stimulate ideas for a topic or give you ideas about how to organize or write your own thesis.

Some titles of recent senior theses include:

“Where Your Treasure Is: The Gospel and Giving at a Wealthy New York Church” (2015).  
Advisor: Marla Frederick

“Ommision” (Creative Thesis) (2015). English Advisor: Sam Marks, Religion Advisor: Kevin Madigan

“Walking the Path Together, Crossing Alone: The Practice of Care in Buddhist Hospices” (2013). Adviser: Charles Hallisey

“Spiritual Wheaties: Tradition, Prayer, and Power in the Nation’s Oldest Prayer Service” (2013).  
Advisor: Malika Zeghal

“Making Oneself Muslim: Creative Constructions of Autonomy in America” (2013). Adviser: Malika Zeghal

“Barriers to the Safe Delivery of African Mothers: On the Relationship between Religion and Material Health in Kenya” (2013). Adviser: Jacob Olupona

“Flexible Conservatism: Authority and Ambiguity in the Thought of Vivekananda and Schechter” (2012). Adviser: Parimal Patil

“Child Witches and Witch Hunts: New Images of the Occult in the Democratic Republic of Congo” (2011). Adviser: Timothy Nelson

“The Ebb and Flow of Peace: Hindu-Muslim Relations in Hyderabad” (2009). Adviser: Diana Eck

“First Timothy and the Question of Women’s Leadership in the Church: An Analysis of Evangelical Biblical Hermeneutics” (2009). Adviser: Laura Nasrallah

“At the Fault Lines: Muslim Women, Secularism and Identity in Reunified Germany” (2008).  
Advisor: Melanie Adrian

“‘We Are One Body in Christ’: The History of the Women’s Ordination Movement in the Roman Catholic Church” (2008). Adviser: Francis Schüssler Fiorenza

“Facing the Empress: Modern Representations of Women, Power and Ideology in Dynastic China” (2007). Adviser: Michael Puett

## B. Funding for Thesis Research

In preparing for senior thesis work, concentrators in the Study of Religion have often chosen to conduct research in the summer. For example, one student studying Buddhism lived in a Zen monastery in southern Japan for three months; another student working on modern Christianity did fieldwork among Christian activists in Nicaragua; still another student spent a summer tracing the headwaters of the Ganges and studying popular Hinduism.

Harvard has a number of institutes and centers that provide summer research grants for undergraduate fieldwork and research. Depending upon the project, a student may apply for grants from, among others, the Center for African Studies, the Center for Middle Eastern Studies, the Edwin O. Reischauer Institute of Japanese Studies, the Henry Rosovsky Undergraduate Research Fund, the David Rockefeller Center for Latin American and Iberian Studies, the Center for International Affairs, and the Josephine Murray Traveling Fellowship Program of Radcliffe College. For more information, students should consult <http://studyofreligion.fas.harvard.edu> as well as the Harvard College Funding Sources database at <http://funding.fas.harvard.edu>.

## C. Oral Exam

The oral examination is a chance for students to respond to comments provided by their thesis readers. In the oral exam students meet with their thesis readers and have a chance to address their questions or concerns. Oral exams are usually 1½ hours long and occur during late April or early May.

## XIII. Prizes

Study of Religion Senior Thesis Prize. This small monetary prize is given out for a Religion thesis of highest distinction and is presented at the end of the academic year.

Thomas T. Hoopes Prize. This is a prize open to all undergraduates doing outstanding scholarly work on any topic. The fund provides undergraduate thesis prizes that are given with the purpose of "promoting, improving and enhancing the quality of education." Undergraduates must be nominated by their thesis supervisors.

There are other Harvard College prizes available for outstanding theses and essays. For more information, consult the listing at <http://prizes.fas.harvard.edu>.

## XIV. Language Requirement

While students are no longer required to take an intermediate language course, the concentration expects that they will study languages necessary to their specialty. Students who elect to write a senior honors thesis should integrate the use of relevant languages into their analysis (e.g., if a student is writing about Qur'anic interpretation, he or she needs to have some knowledge of Arabic). An important consideration in the evaluation of a senior thesis is whether students demonstrate an awareness of primary sources in their original language.

In general, students may count up to two language courses towards concentration credit when the texts they are reading are either from a religious tradition or relevant to the study of a religious tradition, beginning with the second term of instruction in a single language.

## **XV. Junior Term or Year Abroad**

Studying abroad is an excellent opportunity for Harvard College students. In the Study of Religion, if a student studies abroad usually they also have to double up on tutorials for one semester, either before leaving or after returning to campus. Tutorials cannot be taken out of residence. We recommend study abroad for the fall or spring of the junior year.

## **XVI. Frequently Asked Questions**

### *1. Why should I concentrate in the Comparative Study of Religion?*

In the religion program students study a range of human experiences that have produced much of the greatest literature of the world, inspired its art and philosophy and shaped its moral consciousness. As a small concentration at Harvard, the Study of Religion is an intimate community within the larger university. Religion students regularly interact with faculty members and graduate students who share their interests. Tutorials are small (frequently one-on-one) and tailored to student interests. Student satisfaction with our program is consistently very high.

### *2. Do people who concentrate in Religion also practice a certain religion? Do you have to believe in God to study religion?*

No. Some of our students describe themselves as “religious” and others do not. Some students practice within a tradition —Judaism, Islam, Christianity, Buddhism, Hinduism and others— while others describe themselves as agnostic or atheist. There is no presumption that students in religion will believe in God or practice a certain faith. The beliefs and commitments of the students and faculty in the Study of Religion vary as widely as do those of the larger Harvard community.

### *3. Can I concentrate in Religion and still go to law or medical school?*

Absolutely. Many of our concentrators do. You should just take the classes needed to prepare you for graduate school in your chosen field in addition to fulfilling our concentration requirements.

### *4. Can courses “double-count” to meet both Core / Gen Ed and concentration requirements?*

Yes.

### *5. If I transfer into Religion from another concentration as a sophomore or junior, can I get credit for tutorials taken in other departments?*

Yes, this is possible. Make an appointment to see the Director of Undergraduate Studies, and be sure to bring with you syllabi from your other tutorials and a completed Study of Religion Plan of Study.

6. *What happens if I've been away from Harvard and the requirements for my field changed while I was gone?*

Ordinarily you will be allowed to complete your work in the Study of Religion under the guidelines that existed when you entered the program.

7. *What are the costs and benefits of spending a term or a year abroad?*

The Study of Religion program encourages study abroad, but students should plan carefully in order to complete requirements in a timely manner. Religion does grant concentration credit for work done abroad, but students have to seek approval for such courses before they leave. Sophomore, junior and senior tutorials must be taken at Harvard. Other arrangements are possible—though we discourage study abroad for seniors. See the Director of Undergraduate Studies for more information.

## **XVII. The Faculty of the Committee on the Study of Religion**

**Amy Hollywood**, Elizabeth H. Monrad Professor of Christian Studies (*HDS*) (*Chair*)

**Malika Zeghal**, Prince Alwaleed Bin Talal Professor in Contemporary Islamic Thought and Life  
(*Director of Graduate Studies*)

**Laura Nasrallah**, Professor of New Testament and Early Christianity (*HDS*) (*Director of Th.D. Studies*)

**Courtney Lamberth**, Lecturer on the Study of Religion (*Director of Undergraduate Studies*)

**Ryuichi Abe**, Reischauer Institute Professor of Japanese Religions

**Ali S. Asani**, Professor of Indo-Muslim and Islamic Religion and Cultures

**Catherine Brekus**, Charles Warren Professor of the History of Religion in America (*HDS*)

**Shaye J.D. Cohen**, Nathan Littauer Professor of Hebrew Literature and Philosophy

**Diana L. Eck**, Fredric Wertham Professor of Law and Psychiatry in Society (on leave Spring Term)

**Francis Fiorenza**, Charles Chauncey Stillman Professor of Roman Catholic Theological Studies

**Marla Frederick**, Professor of African and African American Studies and of Religion

**Luis M. Girón Negrón**, Professor of Romance Languages and Literatures and of Comparative Literature

**William Albert Graham**, Murray A. Albertson Professor of Middle Eastern Studies (on leave Fall Term)

**Janet Gyatso**, Hershey Professor of Buddhist Studies (on leave 2015-16)

**Helen Hardacre**, Reischauer Institute Professor of Japanese Religions and Society

**David Hempton**, John Lord O'Brian Professor of Divinity and Alonzo L. McDonald Family Professor of  
Evangelical Theological Studies (*HDS*)

**David Holland**, Associate Professor of North American Religious History

**Karen King**, Hollis Professor of Divinity

**Racha Kirakosian**, Assistant Professor of Germanic Languages and Literatures and of the Study of Religion

**David C. Lamberth**, Professor of Philosophy and Theology (*HDS*)

**Kevin Madigan**, Winn Professor of Ecclesiastical History (*HDS*) (on leave 2015-16)

**Anne E. Monius**, Professor of South Asian Religions (*HDS*) (on leave 2015-16)

**Jacob Olupona**, Professor of African Religious Traditions (on leave 2015-16)

**Parimal G. Patil**, Professor of Religion and Indian Philosophy

**Kimberly Patton**, Professor of the Comparative and Historical Study of Religion (on leave Spring Term)

**Michael Puett**, Walter C. Klein Professor of Chinese History (on leave 2015-16)

**Ahmed Ragab**, Richard T. Watson Assistant Professor of Science and Religion

**Mayra Rivera Rivera**, Associate Professor of Theology and Latina/o Studies

**James Robson**, Professor of East Asian Languages and Civilizations

**Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza**, Krister Stendahl Professor of Divinity (on leave Spring Term)

**Charles Stang**, Professor of Early Christian Thought

**Jonathan L. Walton**, Plummer Professor of Christian Morals and Pusey Minister in the Memorial Church (on leave 2015-16)

**Nicholas Watson**, Henry B. and Anne M. Cabot Professor of English Literature

## **XVIII. Administrative Staff**

The main office for the Study of Religion is on the third floor of the Barker Center. The Barker Center is at 12 Quincy Street, right across Quincy Street from Lamont Library. To reach the office by telephone, please call 617-495-5781. Our fax number is 617-496-5798, and our email address is [csrel@fas.harvard.edu](mailto:csrel@fas.harvard.edu).

Amy Hollywood is the Chair of the Committee on the Study of Religion, Kate Bowen is the Program Administrator, and Holly Bianchi is our temporary Staff Assistant.

Courtney Bickel Lamberth ([lamberth@fas.harvard.edu](mailto:lamberth@fas.harvard.edu)) is Director of Undergraduate Studies (DUS) and Kirsten Wesselhoeft ([wesselh@fas.harvard.edu](mailto:wesselh@fas.harvard.edu)) is Assistant Director of Undergraduate Studies (ADUS).

## **XIX. Cover Images**

People pictured from left to right and down: the Dalai Lama, Pope Francis, Malcolm X, Mother Teresa, The Aga Khan, The Ooni of Ife, Gandhi, Alysa Stanton, Katharine Jefferts Schori, Martin Luther King, Jr., Amina Wadud, Imam Feisal Abdul Rauf