Study of Religion

Recognizing that Religious Studies is not formally represented in Berkeley’s curriculum, the Designated Emphasis in the Study of Religion (DESR) was established to provide multidisciplinary training in histories and methods of the study of religion, as well as in critical perspectives on both. DESR is administered by the Graduate Group in the Study of Religion through the Center for Interdisciplinary Critical Inquiry, in partnership with the Berkeley Center for the Study of Religion.

Applicants to the DESR must fill out the online application and submit a statement of intent (500-1000 words) describing how religion relates to the applicant’s dissertation project or research interests. A recommendation form from a faculty member preferably in the applicant’s home department (potentially an adviser) should also be sent under separate cover.

For more information see https://bcsr.berkeley.edu/academics/

STRELIG 200 Methods in the Study of Religion 4 Units

Terms offered: Prior to 2007

STRELIG 200 is an introduction to methodological best practices in the Study of Religion from the perspectives of different fields. It is made up of multiple modules that combine the study of primary sources with exemplary methodological approaches. These approaches include but are not limited to: anthropological theories of religion and society, historical genealogies of categories of religion and the secular, theology and Church history, sociological approaches to issues like religious organization and conflict, religion and science, religious literature and Biblical hermeneutics, as well as particular religious histories.

Methods in the Study of Religion: Read More [+]

Hours & Format

Fall and/or spring:
15 weeks - 3-4 hours of lecture per week
15 weeks - 3-4 hours of lecture per week

Additional Details

Subject/Course Level: Study of Religion/Graduate

Grading: Letter grade.

Methods in the Study of Religion: Read Less [-]

STRELIG 203. Study of Religion Elective
STRELIG 201 Histories of the Study of Religion 4 Units
Terms offered: Fall 2023, Fall 2021
STRELIG201 is an introduction to the history and development of the field of “Religious Studies” as an intellectual space for the study of a sometimes historicized, sometimes naturalized phenomenon called “religion.” Since the narration of any history of the study of religion serves to circumscribing a particular set of phenomena as “religious,” this course does not isolate a canonical history of the field. Instead, it progresses in roughly diachronic manner, through a number of thematic threads representing the development of different domains of the study of religion.

Histories of the Study of Religion: Read More [+]

Hours & Format

Fall and/or spring:
15 weeks - 1-2 hours of lecture and 2-1 hours of discussion per week
15 weeks - 1-2 hours of lecture and 2-1 hours of discussion per week

Additional Details

Subject/Course Level: Study of Religion/Graduate

Grading: Letter grade.

Histories of the Study of Religion: Read Less [-]

STRELIG 202 Local Approaches to the Study of Religion 2 - 4 Units
Terms offered: Prior to 2007
STRELIG202 is a required course in the Designated Emphasis in the Study of Religion, intended to create a space for students to reflect on the issues involved in the application of critical and theoretical approaches. Looking closely at a case study of the application of both of these kinds of approaches to a particular subfield prepares the student for the methodological challenges of applying the term “religion” in their own field. STRELIG202 asks students to consider the opportunities and benefits of two approaches to the beliefs and practices connected with a particular set of traditions: first, as studied in their historical and cultural specificity, versus second, as described as the instantiation of a universal religious phenomenon.

Local Approaches to the Study of Religion: Read More [+]

Rules & Requirements

Prerequisites: It is recommended, but not required, that students take STRELIG 200 and STRELIG 201 prior to STRELIG 202

Hours & Format

Fall and/or spring:
15 weeks - 1-2 hours of lecture and 2-1 hours of discussion per week
15 weeks - 1-2 hours of lecture and 2-1 hours of discussion per week

Additional Details

Subject/Course Level: Study of Religion/Graduate

Grading: Letter grade.

Local Approaches to the Study of Religion: Read Less [-]

STRELIG 203 Study of Religion Elective 4 Units
Terms offered: Prior to 2007
Study of Religion electives are taught by core and affiliated faculty in the Graduate Group in the Study of Religion and Berkeley Center for the Study of Religion and offer important treatments of materials significant to the program’s course of study in the history, development, methods, and theories of the study of religion. In a typical DESR elective, materials are presented through anthropological, historical, philosophical, political, rhetorical, sociological, or other disciplinary lens that constitutes the course’s primary materials for study and inquiry. Students in the Designated Emphasis in the Study of Religion are required to complete one elective from a wide selection of cross-listed courses offered each year.

Study of Religion Elective: Read More [+]

Hours & Format

Fall and/or spring:
15 weeks - 1-2 hours of seminar and 2-1 hours of discussion per week
15 weeks - 2-1 hours of seminar and 1-2 hours of discussion per week

Additional Details

Subject/Course Level: Study of Religion/Graduate

Grading: Letter grade.

Study of Religion Elective: Read Less [-]