

Pacific Lutheran University Department of Religion

A MAJOR IN RELIGION

Welcome to the Department of Religion and to a major that enables you to study religions here and around the globe, ancient religions, and new ones emerging. As a major in the department, you will discover that religion provides orientation and direction for individuals and communities, societies and cultures. The study of religion at PLU engages enduring questions about the meaning of life in a context of liberal arts learning.

As an intended or declared major in religion, there are a number of significant documents and processes you need to care for you as you enter more fully into the study of religion:

OVERALL ACADEMIC PLANNING

- Keep in mind that many majors hold another major as well; we encourage **double majors** in complementary fields
- You will need to declare your major and, later, complete your junior review with the department chair. When you declare your major, the chair will assign a faculty member as your major adviser.
- You should set up a meeting each semester with your **faculty adviser** to review courses, progress in the major, and schedule for study away (J-Term or semester programs); to avoid conflicts with other major requirements (e.g., 301 and 499); and to prepare, in the junior year, for the application process if you intend to go to graduate school, schools of theology, or seminaries.
- If you are thinking of going on for continued study, discuss with your adviser early on the **languages** that can be studied now which will prepare you for graduate or seminary studies.

RECOMMENDED SEQUENCE OF CLASSES

- It is recommended that you complete your required 8 credit hours in RC and 8 credit in RG prior to your senior year. These may include a mix of upper and lower-division courses.
- While lower-division courses are appropriate for one's first year at PLU or one's start to the major, the faculty of the department **strongly encourage you to consider taking all your required upper-division religion courses – 12 credit hours or 3 courses (outside of 301 and 499) prior to taking 301 and 499 in your junior or senior year** so that you will have a significant research and coursework base on which to build.

KEEPING YOUR WORK in RELIGION : DEVELOPING YOUR ACADEMIC PORTFOLIO

- Keep all **course readers** and **textbooks** in your major courses
- Keep a well-organized **portfolio/file that includes every course** you take in the major; each file needs to include the following:
 - ___ the course syllabus
 - ___ hand-outs for the course
 - ___ research and writing guidelines
 - ___ all written work that has been evaluated by the professor (e.g., quiz, examination, essay, research paper, journal, etc.)
 - ___ notes on the methods taught in the course
 - ___ Electronic AND Paper copies of all papers in lower-division and upper-division courses (do not store solely on computer as this may be stolen, crash, etc)

You will need this portfolio because you will be required or encouraged to base your 301 Research in Religion & your 499 Capstone paper on the foundation of research completed in an upper-division course completed prior to taking Religion 301 in your Junior or Senior year.

JOIN US FOR SCHOLARLY AND SOCIAL EVENTS

- The department sponsors four **public lectures** during each academic year, bringing scholars in religion to the campus; majors are expected to participate in the informal conversations scheduled with each speaker and attend the public lecture (usually given in the evening)
- Department faculty sponsor two **dinners** for majors and minors each year and a festive **farewell luncheon** for graduating seniors in the Spring

From the course catalog: Requirements of the major

The Bachelor of Arts degree in religion allows flexibility and presumes that you will take advantage of individual advising in designing your major program. **The major requires 32 semester hours with 12 hours in upper division courses (in addition to Religion 301 and Religion 499 as described below) and a minimum of eight hours in each of the two main areas of study:**

1. Christian Traditions, (8) examines diverse forms of Christianity within their historical, cultural and political contexts. These courses are designated as RC.
2. Global Religious Traditions (8) highlights PLU's commitment to local-global education through analysis of diverse religions, both here and abroad. These courses are designated as RG.

In addition, students participate in Religion 301: Research in Religion and Religion 499: Capstone Research Seminar. In the first course, the prerequisite to the capstone, majors are introduced to the context, methods and craft of research in the field of religion and theology. In the second course, the capstone participants work with the entire department to shape a substantial intellectual project and present their work publicly. Transfer students must take at least 20 hours at PLU. You will be encouraged to double major in religion and another field of study.