



CELEBRATING FIFTY YEARS OF THE
COMPARATIVE STUDY OF RELIGION
IN HARVARD COLLEGE


HANDBOOK FOR STUDENTS 2024-5



COMMITTEE ON THE STUDY OF RELIGION
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AN EXCEPTIONAL INTERDISCIPLINARY CONCENTRATION IN HARVARD COLLEGE

In the Comparative Study of Religion, students explore the most profound issues that face human beings. These include the meaning of community, differing conceptions of the human and the divine, global politics and history, and the multiplicity of understandings of life, suffering and death. Our program is unique in allowing students to ponder relevant and profound questions in a rigorous, critical, multi-disciplinary context. Students refine their interests and craft individual plans of study in conversation with dedicated faculty advisers. A superb Tutorial sequence is at the heart of the concentration, both in its high academic quality, and in generating a close group of concentrators. Religion 97, the Sophomore Tutorial, introduces students to religious phenomena and the tools scholars use to interpret them. Religion 98, the Junior Tutorial, offers students the opportunity to pursue topics of particular interest individually or in small groups, and to focus on close reading and writing skills. Religion 99ab, the Senior Seminar, guides students who elect to write a thesis through the process. Those pursuing a thesis have an advising team that includes a faculty adviser, an advanced graduate-student adviser, and the Assistant Director of Undergraduate Studies. Seniors not writing a thesis can choose to “cap” the concentration experience through independent research which can take the form of an additional term of Religion 98r, or enrollment in Religion 91r.

IN A COMMUNITY OF OUTSTANDING STUDENTS AND WORLD CLASS FACULTY

The concentration welcomes about 10 sophomores each year. In the tutorials, students get to know one another well, fostering a strong, engaged, and genuine intellectual community within the larger university. Students regularly interact with faculty members and graduate students at weekly teas, lectures, and other events. Student satisfaction ratings of our tutorials and academic advising is consistently extremely high, ranking among the best in the College. Students design a concentration plan in conversation with the Director of Undergraduate Studies. The initial sketch is not set in stone, as students revise their plans each term as additional course work enables further refinement of their interests. A student’s choice of Tradition, Geographical Area and/or Approach anchors their requirements.

CONNECTED WITH ALUMNI WORKING WITH DISTINCTION IN A RANGE OF JOBS

Our alumni work in a wide range of industries including business, finance, education, politics, entertainment, creative and performative art, foreign intelligence, public service, law, ministry, and medicine. They pursue advanced studies in a variety of humanistic and social scientific fields, as well as in music, art, creative writing, and the dramatic arts. Please browse our website for more about what alumni go on to do after College, and for a list of Senior Thesis topics in the Study of Religion.

STEPS TO A CONCENTRATION PLAN IN THE COMPARATIVE STUDY OF RELIGION

1: SELECT A TRADITION AND/OR A GEOGRAPHICAL AREA

- Ancient Near Eastern/Israelite*
- African & Afro-Atlantic*
- Greek/Hellenistic/Roman*
- Hindu*
- Buddhist*
- Christian*
- East Asian*
- Islamic*
- Judaic*
- South Asian*
- Modern West & Religions of the Americas*

2: CONSIDER INCORPORATING A PARTICULAR APPROACH (OPTIONAL)

- Philosophy of Religion*
- Religion & Social Science*
- Religion, Race & Gender*
- Religion, Literature & the Arts*
- Religion & Science*

3: CHOOSE FROM THE FOLLOWING CONCENTRATION OPTIONS

- Full Concentration: Option A or B*

Basic Requirements: 1 Comparative Course, Sophomore Tutorial (Rel 97), Junior Tutorial (Rel 98), Thesis Seminar (Rel 99, optional), 8 or 9 courses as approved by the D. U. S.

- Joint Concentration: Option C or D*

Basic Requirements: 1 Comparative Course, Sophomore Tutorial (Rel 97), Junior Tutorial (Rel 98), Thesis Seminar (Rel 99, optional), 4 or 5 courses as approved by the D. U. S.

- Religion as a Secondary Field*

Requirements: 1 Comparative Course, 5 courses approved by the D. U. S.

Please make an appointment with the D. U. S. to discuss your interests in greater detail: lamberth@fas.harvard.edu

LANGUAGE STUDY

The concentration expects that students will study languages necessary to their specialization. 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, knowledge of Arabic is expected). An important consideration in the evaluation of a senior thesis is whether students demonstrate an awareness of primary sources in their original language. Students may count up to two language courses towards concentration credit beginning with the second year (third term) of study. The required texts in the course must be either relevant to the study of a religious tradition. Note that not all second-year language courses fit these criteria.

STUDY ABROAD

Many of our concentrators choose to study abroad. Concentration credit for study abroad is possible with advanced consultation with the Director of Undergraduate Studies. Tutorials cannot be taken out of residence. After visiting Harvard's Office for International Education (oie.fas.harvard.edu) make an appointment to discuss your plans with the D.U.S.

THE SENIOR HONORS THESIS

Students who wish to pursue Latin Honors must write a Senior Honors Thesis, participate in the Senior Tutorial (Religion 99ab), and must have maintained a minimum average GPA in the concentration of B+ (3.33) by the end of the first semester of the junior year. Thesis writers are expected to have developed, with the guidance of their advisers, the necessary competencies for their studies, which may include language skills, fieldwork preparation, and archival practice. Students who plan to pursue a thesis using ethnographic or anthropological approaches are required to complete at least one course introducing these methods by the end of the junior year. Consult the D.U.S for approved courses. 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 Assistant Director of Undergraduate Studies has hard copies of past theses. Reading through these projects can stimulate ideas for a topic or prompt new thinking about how to organize the thesis.

Creative Thesis: A creative thesis is an option for some thesis writers. This is a thesis that includes a work of fiction, drama, film, music or other artistic medium, and must be approved by the A. B. Subcommittee before the start of the second term of the junior year. All creative theses must include an written, analytical component. In their petition, students articulate why they are interested in a creative thesis, and how this pursuit will allow them to accomplish a project that could not be accomplished by writing a conventional thesis. In many cases, the student will need a separate

adviser for the creative component of the thesis. College-level course work in the genre of the creative project is required. If the project involves a performance or exhibition of any kind, the student is responsible for ensuring that it is professionally recorded for the purpose of formal evaluation. Any funding for supplies, publicity, and the like is the responsibility of the student. The creative component and the analytical component of the thesis will be assigned separate Latin grades, counted equally; if different, these two grades will be averaged into a single grade for the entire project.

Funding for Thesis Research: In preparing for senior thesis work, concentrators often choose to conduct research in the summer. 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 the Study of World Religions, the Ambassador Loeb Fund, 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, and the Ethnicity, Migration and Rights Thesis Grants. For more information students should consult with their advisers and with the Harvard College Funding Sources database at <http://funding.fas.harvard.edu>.

Thesis Oral Exam: An oral exam is required of all thesis writers. Thesis readers provide written comments to thesis writers in advance of the oral, to help students to prepare. Oral exams are usually 1½ hours long and occur during late April or early May. See the Senior Honors Thesis Handbook for more information.

Prizes: Study of Religion Senior Thesis Prize: a monetary prize given out for a thesis of highest distinction. Thomas T. Hoopes Prize: open to all undergraduates with outstanding scholarly work on any topic. Consult <http://prizes.fas.harvard.edu> for more information on College prizes.

MEMBERS OF THE COMMITTEE ON THE STUDY OF RELIGION

Catherine Brekus, Chair, Charles Warren Professor of the History of Religion in America
Terrence L. Johnson, Charles G. Adams Professor of African American Religious Studies (Director of Graduate Studies)

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

Ali S. Asani, Professor of Indo-Muslim & Islamic Religion and Cultures (on leave)

Swayam Bagaria, Assistant Professor of Hindu Studies at Harvard Divinity School

Giovanni Bazzana, Professor of New Testament

Bernstein, Anya, Professor of Anthropology

Davíd Carrasco, Neil L. Rudenstine Professor of the Study of Latin America (on leave spring term)

Shaye J.D. Cohen, Nathan Littauer Professor of Hebrew Literature and Philosophy (on leave)

Dunning, Benjamin, Florence Corliss Lamont Professor of Divinity and Professor of New Testament and Early Christianity (on leave)

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

Mohsen Goudarzi, Assistant Professor of Islamic Studies

Ahmad Greene-Hayes, Assistant Professor of African American Religious Studies (on leave)

Janet Gyatso, Hershey Professor of Buddhist Studies

Jay M. Harris, Harry Austryn Wolfson Professor of Jewish Studies

David Holland, John A. Bartlett Professor of New England Church History

Amy Hollywood, Elizabeth H. Monrad Professor of Christian Studies (on leave)

David C. Lamberth, Professor of Philosophy and Theology

Jacob Olupona, Professor of African and African American Religious Traditions

Kimberley C. Patton, Professor of the Comparative and Historical Study of Religion (on leave fall term)

Irene Peirano Garrison, Pope Professor of the Latin Language and Literature

Felipe Pereda, Fernando Zóbel de Ayala Professor of Spanish Art

Michael Puett, Walter C. Klein Professor of Chinese History

Reed, Annette Yoshiko, Krister Stendahl Professor of Divinity and Professor of New Testament

Julia Rhyder, Assistant Professor of Near Eastern Languages and Civilizations

James Robson, James C. Kralik and Yunli Lou Professor of East Asian Languages and Civilizations

Michelle C. Sanchez, Associate Professor of Theology (on leave spring term)

Martha Selby, Sangam Professor of South Asian Studies and Professor of Comparative Literature (on leave spring term)

Terenjit Sevea, Prince Alwaleed Bin Talal Assistant Professor of Islamic Studies

Charles M. Stang, Professor of Early Christian Thought and Director of the Center for the Study of World Religions

David Stern, Harry Starr Professor of Classical and Modern Jewish and Hebrew Literature and Professor of Comparative Literature and Director of the Center for Jewish Studies

D. Andrew Teeter, Professor of Hebrew Bible

Eugene Y. Wang, Abby Aldrich Rockefeller Professor of Asian Art (on leave fall term)

Malika Zeghal, Prince Alwaleed Bin Talal Professor in Contemporary Islamic Thought & Life

ADMINISTRATIVE STAFF

Elise Ciregna, PhD, Director of Administration, Committee on the Study of Religion and Department of Germanic Languages and Literatures

Sarah Passinhas-Bergman, Student Coordinator, Committee on the Study of Religion and Department of Germanic Languages and Literatures

Paola Gaona Salamanca, Staff Assistant III, Committee on the Study of Religion

Nancy Barricklo, Graduate Program Coordinator, Committee on the Study of Religion

Susan Hunt, Administrative Coordinator, Committee on the Study of Religion and Department of Germanic Languages and Literatures

Sophomore Tutorial, Spring 2023



Above front row: **Thor Reimann** (joint concentrator with EPS), **Anna Dean** (joint concentrator with WGS), **Eliza Banbury** (joint concentrator with HEB), **Sophia Ludeke** (EPS/Physics), **Sana Shahul** (double Religion/Neuroscience). *Second row:* **Ru Perry-Mize** (joint concentrator with Social Studies), **Shira Hoffer** (joint concentrator with Social Studies), **Sam Libenson** (joint concentrator Social Studies/Philosophy), **Hanna Carney** (HAA/Religion Secondary), **Aidan Scully** (double concentrator with Classics), **Tyler Heaton** (joint concentrator with Philosophy). *Back row:* Courtney Bickel Lamberth (DUS)

On Cover: Seniors at the Thesis Writers' Presentation in the Thompson Room, Barker Center: **Breda Page Violette**, '24, (Study of Religion), **Sarah Ramberran**, '24 (joint concentrator with Government) **Elijah Shell** '24 (joint concentrator with Anthropology)



COMPARATIVE STUDY OF RELIGION IN HARVARD COLLEGE
 CONCENTRATION PLAN A: Two Religious Traditions/Geographical Areas,
 or one Tradition/Geographical Area with a particular Approach

Student Information

Name _____
 Email _____
 House/Class _____
 Today's Date _____
 Concentration Adviser _____

Required Courses

1. Comparative course _____
 2. Religion 97 _____
 3. Course in Tradition
 or Geographical
 Area other than
 Major _____

***Name of Major Tradition or Geographical Area of Study:**

4. Religion 98r _____
 5. _____
 6. _____
 7. _____
 8. _____

****Second Tradition, Geographical Area, or particular Approach:**

9. _____
 10. _____
 11. _____
 12. _____

For Thesis Writers:

13. Religion 99a _____
 14. Religion 99b _____
 Double concentrator? _____

Select one:** African and Afro-Atlantic Religions; Ancient Near Eastern / Israelite; Buddhist; Christian; East Asian; Greek- Hellenistic-Roman; Hindu; Islamic; Judaic; Religion in the Modern West / Religions of the Americas; South Asian. *Select another** Tradition, Geographical Area, or one of the following Approaches: Philosophy of Religion; Religion & Social Science; Religion, Race & Gender; Religion, Literature and Art; Religion & Science



COMPARATIVE STUDY OF RELIGION IN HARVARD COLLEGE
 CONCENTRATION PLAN B: One Religious Tradition/Geographical Area
 in Comparative Context

Student Information

Name _____
 Email _____
 House/Class _____
 Today's Date _____
 Concentration Adviser _____

Required Courses

1. Comparative course _____
 2. Religion 97 _____
 3. Course in different Tradition/Geographical Area _____
 4. Course in different Tradition/Geographical Area _____

*** Name of Major Tradition or Geographical Area of Study:**

5. Religion 98r _____
 6. _____
 7. _____
 8. _____
 9. _____
 10. _____
 11. _____
 12. _____

For Thesis Writers:

13. Religion 99a _____
 14. Religion 99b _____

*Select one: African and Afro-Atlantic Religions; Ancient Near Eastern / Israelite; Buddhist; Christian; East Asian; Greek- Hellenistic-Roman; Hindu; Islamic; Judaic; Religion in the Modern West / Religions of the Americas; South Asian.



COMPARATIVE STUDY OF RELIGION IN HARVARD COLLEGE

PLAN OF STUDY C: Joint Concentration with Religion as the Primary Field

Student Information

Name _____

Email _____

House/Class _____

Today's Date _____

Name of Concentration Adviser _____

Required Courses

1. Comparative course _____

2. Religion 97 _____

3. Course in Tradition or Geographical Area other than Major _____

*Name of Major Tradition or Geographical Area of Study:

4. Religion 98r _____

5. _____

6. _____

7. _____

8. _____

Name of Allied Concentration:

9. _____

10. _____

11. _____

12. _____

13. Religion 99a _____

14. Religion 99b _____

Name of Adviser in Allied Concentration: _____

*Select one: African and Afro-Atlantic Religions; Ancient Near Eastern / Israelite; Buddhist; Christian; East Asian; Greek- Hellenistic-Roman; Hindu; Islamic; Judaic; Religion in the Modern West / Religions of the Americas; South Asian.



COMPARATIVE STUDY OF RELIGION IN HARVARD COLLEGE

CONCENTRATION PLAN D: Joint Concentration with Religion as Allied Field

Student Information

Name _____

Email _____

House/Class _____

Today's Date _____

Name of Concentration Adviser _____

Required Courses

1. Comparative _____
2. Religion 97 _____
3. Course in Tradition or Geographical Area other than Major _____

* Major Tradition or Geographical Area of Study:

4. _____
5. _____
6. _____
7. _____

Name of Primary Concentration _____

Adviser in Primary Concentration _____

*Select one: African and Afro-Atlantic; Ancient Near Eastern / Israelite; Buddhist; Christian; East Asian; Greek- Hellenistic-Roman; Hindu; Islamic; Judaic; Religion in the Modern West / Religions of the Americas; South Asian



COMPARATIVE STUDY OF RELIGION IN HARVARD COLLEGE
THE SECONDARY FIELD

Student Information

Name _____

Email _____

House/Class _____

Today's Date _____

Concentration _____

Requirements

Six courses are required for Religion as a Secondary Field one of which must be "comparative," that is, the course considers more than one tradition. Students pursuing Secondary may choose courses across a range of traditions or may prefer to focus their studies on a particular Tradition or Geographical Area: African and Afro-Atlantic; Ancient Near Eastern / Israelite; Buddhist; Christian; East Asian; Greek- Hellenistic-Roman; Hindu; Islamic; Judaic; Religion in the Modern West / Religions of the Americas; or South Asian.

Interested students should contact Courtney Bickel Lamberth, Director of Undergraduate Studies, who serves as Adviser for all Secondary Field Students: lamberth@fas.harvard.edu

Courses

1. Comparative or Religion 97 _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____
6. _____