

Religious Studies

Interim Chair: Dr. Rosemary Bertocci

Religion is among the oldest academic disciplines pursued by mankind. The Religious Studies courses at Saint Francis University aim to provide each student the opportunity to explore the universal dimension of religious existence on the world and to study the Catholic-Christian faith as a particular religious commitment which empowers the believer to participate more fully in contemporary society, understanding that, for human beings, the world is a place where God is revealed.

General degree requirements for all students are six credits in Religious Studies distributed as follows: three credits from Religious Studies 205; three credits from any 300- or 400-level course.

Except by permission of the Philosophy/Religious Studies Department chair, Religious Studies 205 - Faith and Franciscanism, a general education requirement, cannot be satisfied by a transfer course or replaced by another course in the Religious Studies curriculum. A student must have sophomore standing to register for Religious Studies 205. To enroll in all Religious Studies courses numbered above the 200 level, students must have attained successful completion of Religious Studies 205 and junior or senior standing.

SPECIAL FEATURES

HONORS — National Honor Society for Theology/Religious Studies, Theta Alpha Kappa (Alpha Gamma chapter), ACHS member.

CHRISTIAN SERVICE — a practicum in Religious Studies which gives students an opportunity for service in neighboring agencies or in summer volunteer work.

FIELD TRIPS AND INTERCOLLEGIATE SEMINARS with faculty members and other students.

JUSTICE & PEACE CENTER. — special association with the Dorothy Day Center for Justice and Peace is an added dimension for student Christian life and practice..

INDEPENDENT STUDY AND SELF-DESIGNED DOUBLE MAJORS — opportunities to combine career objectives in Political Science, Psychology, Social Work, Education, etc. with Christian values and goals. Such combined study makes one especially attractive to future employers.

INTERNATIONAL STUDY PROGRAM IN MEXICO — opportunities to study religion in Mexico, do Christian service, and work with Mexican orphans.

PUBLICATIONS — opportunity for student writing of excellent quality to be published in the *Journal of Theta Alpha Kappa*, published nationally twice each year.

Students who complete the program studies successfully will have many opportunities for varied and satisfying employment. Among some fields where a B.A. in Religious Studies is highly prized and practical are: religious education, family ministry, religion and law, health care services, youth ministry, pastoral counseling, social service agencies, political networks, ecological services, rehabilitation programs, hospice centers, and community development programs.

BACHELOR OF ARTS IN RELIGIOUS STUDIES

MAJOR REQUIREMENTS

Religious Studies 205, 303, 306, 308, 310, 311, 314, 412; six additional credits in Religious Studies; three credits in Philosophy (beyond the six credits required by the core).

For those students contemplating graduate school, Spanish is recommended. Spanish is also particularly useful in pastoral work.

Minor in Religious Studies Requirements: Religious Studies 205 and 12 additional credits in religious studies (above the 200-level) beyond the core requirement.

Minor in Ethics Requirements: Religious Studies 205 or Philosophy 205, Religious Studies 311, Philosophy 309, and three additional Ethics courses (Ethics courses are noted below and in the Philosophy course descriptions).

RELIGIOUS STUDIES — COURSE DESCRIPTIONS

205. Faith and Franciscanism (3 credits)

This course systematically explores the Judeo-Christian Tradition, drawing upon biblical, theological, and Franciscan sources. Major themes in the Tradition, including images of the Divine, creation, the experience of evil, the meaning of human suffering, the meaning of faith, and the church as community are investigated. Employing the historical-critical method commonly used in theology, the course invites students to appreciate the Tradition. Through reflection on this rich Tradition, the students' life histories, and experiences in service projects, the student is invited to personal integration. *Counts toward Ethics minor. Fall, Spring, Summer.*

303. Catholicism: Its Meaning and Challenge (3 credits)

The Catholic faith from its sources in Sacred Scripture and Sacred Tradition, the challenge and promise it presents for Christian life in the modern world. *As needed.*

304. Church: Its Origin, Mission, and Life (3 credits)

The birth and development of the Christian Church during the first two centuries; the relationship between Christianity and Judaism; the New Testament as a source document for ecclesiology; the developing self-understanding of the Christian church through the centuries; implications for present-day ecclesiology. *As needed.*

305. Selected New Testament Teachings (3 credits)

New Testament teachings of interest either because of their frequent rejection in a "scientific age" or because of their value in determining the emphasis and priorities in Jesus' own teaching; miracles, the developing views about the role and person of Jesus, the Resurrection, and the parables; the value and limitations of different modern critical approaches to New Testament study. *As needed.*

306. Religions of the World (3 credits)

An introduction to the major living religious traditions: Hindu, Buddhist, Taoist, Confucian, Judaic, Christian and Islamic; leading problems of religious thought and alternative approaches to the ultimate questions. *Spring.*

307. Religion and Personality (3 credits)

Aspects of the inter-relationships between religious faith and psychological well-being: religious experience, particularly in its psychological dimensions; negative and positive responses to religion by psychological thinkers; such problems as inherited or "social identity" faith, "chaos" or crisis in the transition from inherited to personal religious faith; faith and its implications for human existence; religious faith and its role in the development of the self; personality and static religious institutions; the personality and evolutionary or prophetic forms of religion. *Fall.*

308. Peace, Justice and Human Relations (same as Philosophy 308) (3 credits)

Examines the ethical implications of contemporary economic, political, social, and environmental policies. The human impact of public policies is evaluated in light of Catholic Social Teaching and modern theories of justice. Issues to be examined include: social justice, economic justice, public policies, racial justice, poverty, the workplace, war & peace, violence & nonviolence, foreign policy, justice in the Third World, and personal & social responsibility. *Counts toward Ethics minor. Prerequisite: Philosophy 205. Fall.*

309. Religion in American Life and Literature (3 credits)

American religious thought and practice as expressed in religious themes and images found in literature, biography, and culture; literary motifs and lifestyles reflecting man's continuous quest for meaning, e.g., his search for God, for personal identity, for transcendence, for freedom, for love, for community, and for salvation; the struggle with good and evil, conscience, suffering, and death. *As needed.*

310. Human Sexuality and Christian Marriage (3 credits)

Through lectures and outside readings, an attempt to illuminate the harmony within life, love, and human sexuality, particularly as this is expressed in theological and scriptural teachings, e.g., Genesis 1:27: "God created man in his image... male and female he created them"; a positive approach to sexuality and its integral relationship to human life, whether celibate or married. *As needed.*

311. Principles of Christian Moral Decision-Making (3 credits)

Christian ethics and moral decision-making; initial exploration of Biblical morality, natural law, and ecclesiastical law; detailed consideration of the human conscience, sin and conversion and the teaching authority of the Church; resolving the inevitable conflicts that frequently affect the lives of believing persons. *Counts toward Ethics minor. As needed.*

312. The History of Judaism and the Jewish People (3 credits)

An overview and basic knowledge of the nearly 4,000-year continuum of Judaism and the Jewish people as well as an appreciation for the unique aspects and contributions of that historic experience. *As needed.*

313. Old Testament (3 credits)

This course aims to provide the student with information on the Hebrew Scriptures (the Old Testament) focusing on the Pentateuch (first five books of the OT), a brief review of the Historical Books, then a deeper examination of Wisdom Literature and the Prophetic Books. The student will have the opportunity to see the background of New Testament teachings rooted in their OT history.

314. Christian Worship: History and Practice (3 credits)

An introduction to sign, symbol and ritual in Christian worship; an historical and theological review of the sacraments. *As needed.*

320. Contemporary Islam (3 credits)

Contemporary Islam focuses on the role of Islam in the world of the 21st century. The course explores students' questions and concerns about global Islam in all its diversity including answers to ultimate questions, moral issues, the role of women, Islamic movements, Islam in America, war and peace, and includes case studies of selected Islamic nations.

330. Death, Dying, and the Near-Death Experience (same as Philosophy 330) (3 credits)

This course examines philosophical and religious aspects of death and dying. The course begins with a discussion of the "meaning" of death and the significance of death as the final terminus of life. Further topics include: the stages of dying and bereavement; legal issues in death and dying; how the major world religions treat death and dying, and the significance and possible meaning of recent scientific inquiry into the near-death experience. *As needed.*

340. Franciscan History and Life (3 credits)

Since the beginning of Franciscan movement, Franciscans have debated whether they were true to Francis' charisma and spirit. This course will take an in-depth look into the life of Francis of Assisi, his charisma and the charisma of the early Franciscans. In studying the spirit and charisma of Francis and his early followers, one will discover his/her own personal approach to the little man from Assisi.

350. Franciscan Gospel Living in the Contemporary World (3 credits)

A study of theology and spirituality as the foundation of the Franciscan Gospel life with an emphasis on the challenge to shape a spiritual, historical, and Franciscan vision in the contemporary world. An explanation of the pastoral and spiritual dimensions of Christian Franciscan tradition in terms of their spiritual roots, historical developments and current interpretations, highlighting the relevance of Christian Franciscan values for living in the contemporary world. This course is based upon FRAN 201, which is also offered for non-credit through the Institute for Contemporary Franciscan Life.

351. The Franciscans: A Family History (3 credits)

An introduction, through history, to the Franciscan Family (Friars, Poor Clares, Third Order: Secular and Regular) and the creative diversity that has distinguished its mission in Church and society since the lifetimes of St. Francis and St. Clare of Assisi in the

thirteenth century. This course is based upon FRAN 202, which is also offered for non-credit through the Institute for Contemporary Franciscan Life.

**352. Franciscan Spirituality
(3 credits)**

A study of the conversion and Gospel form of life followed by Francis of Assisi and his early companions in their historical context. An investigation of the religious experience of these men and women, their encounter with and understanding of Jesus Christ, and the expression of their religious values. The course will use a variety of historical tools to understand how Francis, Clare and their early companions were 13th century Italians and how they expressed their faith in their concrete social context. This course is based upon FRAN 204, which is also offered for non-credit through the Institute for Contemporary Franciscan Life.

**353. Clare of Assisi: Her Life and Writings
(3 credits)**

This course attempts to study Clare of Assisi as the co-founder of the Franciscan Movement, the "first Franciscan woman" to embrace the Gospel life in accord with the example and teaching of Francis of Assisi. The course will study the form of life established by Clare at San Damiano, her struggles with preserving the privilege of poverty, and her legacy to the Franciscan Movement, the Church, and the world. This course is based upon FRAN 206, which is also offered for non-credit through the Institute for Contemporary Franciscan Life.

**354. Franciscan Prayer
(3 credits)**

This course examines the theology and spirituality of prayer in the Franciscan tradition based on the writings of Francis, Clare and Bonaventure. Prayer as the foundation of Franciscan spirituality is considered, and the implications of this tradition for the contemporary Christian life are explored. This course is based upon FRAN 207, which is also offered for non-credit through the Institute for Contemporary Franciscan Life.

**395. A History of the Catholic Church
(same as History 395)
(3 credits)**

Founding of the Church, the underground Church, the Church Councils, the Great Schism, the Reformation, the Counter-Reformation, Anglicanism, Gallicanism, the Enlightenment assault upon the Church, Ultramontanism, Leo XIII and the Modernization of the Church, and Vatican II.

**400-403. Special Topics in Religion
(3 credits)**

A specific subject to be announced each time the course is offered, e.g., the Church today; the ecumenical movement; historical theology; Christology; significant issues in Christian morality; the Councils and Fathers of the Church; history and theory of religious education; the problem of prayer; mysticism; liturgy; the charismatic movement; and the lay apostolate. Students' requests for treatment of a specific subject are invited. May be repeated for credit. *As needed.*

**410. Christian Service
(1-6 credits)**

At the discretion of the department, arrangements may be made to earn up to six credits for field work in pertinent Christian service areas. This service may include such diverse activities as hospital ministry, religious education, development and coordination of parish liturgies, service in state and county institutions, prison ministry, poverty, Habitat for Humanity, Mexican orphanage, and pro-life programs. Such service will be supervised and evaluated by department faculty in the light of career objectives of the student. Course paper required. Open only to majors or students taking a third course in religious studies beyond the core General Education requirements or those with academic concentration in Religious Studies. *Fall, Spring, Summer.*

**412. Seminar
(3 credits)**

Scholarly sources and methods in religious studies through research, writing, and formal presentation of papers to seminar members. *Required of all majors in Religious Studies. As needed.*

**450. Religion in Mexico
(3 credits)**

The course examines the history of Mexico, its people and religions, including the periods of the Conquest, New Spain, Independence, Revolution, and the formation of the modern nation. The course looks at contemporary Mexico and its people and problems exploring the ethical-moral implications of historical and contemporary economic, political, social, and religious worldviews.

**501. Independent Study in Religious Studies
(1-8 credits)**

INSTITUTE FOR ETHICS

Director: Dr. Michael McKale

Organizations play an increasingly important role in shaping the context of people's lives throughout the country and the world. Everyone concerned about the quality of human life must take seriously the impact of these organizations; both the contributions they make and the problems they present.

Schools, churches, businesses, hospitals, and a wide variety of other organizations have all recognized the growing demand for moral accountability. Saint Francis University proposes to raise consciousness about ethical concerns within our local communities and to work with policy makers of various organizations who are concerned about corporate responsibility and ethics.

Recognizing the Judeo-Christian culture in which we live, realizing that work in corporate ethics must operate ecumenically, and convinced of the contemporary relevance of Franciscan values, Saint Francis college is prepared to accept a leadership role in this effort by supporting the work of the Institute for Ethics.

The mission and purpose of the Institute for Ethics is to contribute to the community's understanding of contemporary ethical issues facing various types of institutions and professions. The Institute will focus on ethics in :

Business	Government	Medicine
Communications	Labor Relations	Religion
Education	Law	Social Services

The Saint Francis University Institute for Ethics is funded by private contributions.