

Without a knowledge of religion, it is difficult to understand daily newspapers, modern history, and many of our own behavior patterns. Familiarity with a wide range of religious traditions and the ways in which religions shape society, culture, and world affairs provides scholarly tools for coming to terms with the wide variety of sometimes strange, always interesting phenomena that occur in modern society. Many students take religion courses to learn more about their own religious traditions, the traditions of others, or to clarify their own thinking in the process.

THE PROGRAM

The religious studies program at Virginia Wesleyan is a field of inquiry located within the humanities that provides students with a basic understanding of historical religious tradition, exposure to religious traditions other than their own, and familiarity with more than one approach to the study of religion. The methods and interests of the humanities, the social sciences, and the natural sciences converge in this program as students examine the role of religion in history, literature, and science; in human experience and diversity; and in culture, politics, and society. The religious studies curriculum introduces students to major fields of scholarship including biblical studies, ethics, theology, and world religions.

THE MAJOR

The religious studies major is designed to introduce students to the diversity of religious beliefs and values. Students will develop “cultural literacy” in the major religions of the world and be able to understand concrete ethical/social issues from different faith perspectives. The courses in this major involve analysis, comparison, and interpretation and require sensitivity to the perspectives and practices of others.

THE COURSES

Classes at VWU are small, interactive, and seminar-based. Based on what you hope to do in the future, you choose from a variety of courses, including World Religions, Judaism through Food, The Old Testament World, The New Testament World, Religion and American Politics, Religions and Constitutional Law, Theology and Film, C.S. Lewis, Extreme Religion & Religious Freedom, and Mediating Religious Conflict.

INTERNSHIPS/RESEARCH/GRADUATE SCHOOL

Each of us is on a different academic journey. Over the years many of our students have continued to graduate school, law school, or seminary at universities abroad, or at American universities including Yale, Princeton, Harvard, Northwestern, and Duke. Many students take advantage of individual research experiences with faculty, many become interested in issues relating to conflict mediation, and many also take an internship course on Servant Leadership that allows them to both work in a particular ministry setting and then, with others, reflect academically on that experience.

BEYOND THE CLASSROOM

The study of religion prepares students well for careers in ministry, education, social services, politics, journalism, public health, and administration. Some students will go on to seminary, law school, or graduate school.

CONTACT INFORMATION

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