RELIGIOUS STUDIES
INDEPENDENT STUDY
HANDBOOK
2012-2013
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The Department of Religious Studies
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Introduction:
The Department of Religious Studies & the Religious Studies Major

The Religious Studies major is by design flexible, to accommodate the breadth and interdisciplinary nature of the field, and also to accommodate the diverse interests and goals of our students. Many (typically, about one-third) of our majors are double majors, from many departments, including (from current and recent majors) Anthropology, Art History, Biochemistry and Molecular Biology, Classical Studies, Communication, French, History, Philosophy, Political Science, Psychology, and Sociology. So, the flexibility of the major is intended not only to accommodate such diverse ambitions but also to provide all of our majors a broad and basic framework within which to begin the academic study of religions. Therefore, simply completing the major requirements is not a complex task; however, because the field of Religious Studies is so broad and because the study of religions is inherently interdisciplinary, the advising and mentoring relationships you cultivate with Religious Studies faculty are of the utmost importance for you to flourish as a Religious Studies major. Thus, you’re urged to keep in close contact with your departmental academic advisor, and also to talk with other departmental faculty as questions arise.

When you declare the major, you will be assigned an advisor in the department. Typically, this will be either the department chair or a department faculty member with whom you may have already developed an acquaintance (for instance, in a Religious Studies class). As you progress through your time as a Religious Studies major, your advisor assignment may be changed (e.g., to correspond with your Senior I.S. project, or because a faculty member is on research or student leave).

Questions about the curriculum and degree requirements should be directed to your academic advisor, or to the department chair. Requests for exceptions to or alterations of stated requirements should be directed to the department chair.

The information on the following four pages is from The College of Wooster Catalogue 2012-2013, and is available at:

RELIGIOUS STUDIES

Kammer, Ch., Crothers, Eyl, Friedman, Graham, Mirza, Rapport

Religious Studies is an interdisciplinary approach to the academic study of religion. The department provides for students a broad, yet nuanced, understanding of the place of religion in human experience. Although Religious Studies is a mode of intellectual inquiry, for many students the study of religion involves a personal journey as academic study and religious faith intersect and challenge one another. Religious Studies does not endorse a particular creed or religious position, but creates the context for discussion and study that allows students to explore academic and personal questions about religion and society within the framework of their growing knowledge.

The natural connection of Religious Studies to other liberal arts disciplines is reflected in the range of courses offered. Courses in the department examine religion from the dual perspectives of methodology and content. Courses in the department are divided into two general areas: Area I focuses on religious traditions and histories; Area II focuses on issues and theories in the study of religions.

The major in Religious Studies aims to balance depth and breadth of study, allowing students to gain a broad exposure to the study of religions, but also allows students the possibility of considerable focus on a particular area or theme. The major consists of a minimum of ten courses total (i.e. seven courses, plus three semesters of I.S.: RELS 401, RELS 451, RELS 452.) RELS 401 is typically completed in Spring Semester. Students must complete a minimum of three courses in each area, exclusive of I.S. credits. Only two 100-level courses may count toward the seven-course minimum. Students are encouraged to work closely with their department advisors to choose courses that expose them to a broad range of religious traditions and issues in the study of religions.

Religious Studies majors and minors are strongly encouraged to consult regularly with the department chair and/or academic advisor in order to make appropriate course choices that both complete the major requirements and meet the interests of the student.

Topics courses (RELS 267; 269) are special offerings by Religious Studies faculty. Recent topics courses have included Biblical Hebrew; Violence and Peacemaking; Interfaith Dialogue; Asian and Asian-American Feminist Theology; Religious Visual & Material Culture; Catholicism in America; Asian Religions in the West.

A minor in Religious Studies consists of six courses, four of which must be above the 100-level. At least two courses must be in either Area I or II, with the remainder in the other area. The flexibility of the Religious Studies major requirements, and the many possibilities for connections between the study of religions and other academic disciplines, make the possibility of a double major a realistic option for interested students. Students interested in this option must fill out the requisite paperwork in consultation with both departments, and seek approval from the Dean for Curriculum and Academic Engagement.

Seminary Semester Program: Open to any student regardless of major. A four-course semester at Claremont School of Theology, Colgate, Rochester, Crozer Divinity School, Hebrew Union College, The Interdenominational Theological Center (a consortium of historically Black seminaries), Louisville Presbyterian Theological Seminary, Pittsburgh Theological Seminary, or Rhodes University (South Africa). The program involves an internship or field placement, which may be counted in a variety of settings and may be elected for either one or two course credit(s). Two or three courses of the student’s choice will also be taken at the seminary. The semester is intended as a time for vocational and spiritual reflection and discernment. Given variation in course credit systems, it is recommended that students ascertain the equivalent Wooster credit they will earn prior to registering for the Seminary Semester Program.
Major in Religious Studies
Consists of ten courses:
• Three courses in Area I
• Three courses in Area II
• One elective Religious Studies course
• Junior Independent Study: RELS 401
• Senior Independent Study: RELS 451
• Senior Independent Study: RELS 452

Minor in Religious Studies
Consists of six courses:
• Two courses in Area I
• Two courses in Area II
• Two elective Religious Studies courses

Special Notes
• No more than two 100-level courses may count toward the major or minor.
• Only grades of C- or better are accepted for the major or minor.

BIBLICAL HEBREW COURSES

The Religious Studies Department also offers courses in Biblical Hebrew. As with other introductory (101-102) foreign language courses, Biblical Hebrew I and II may be taken by any student to fulfill the College’s foreign language requirement, or may be taken as elective credits by students who have already fulfilled the language requirement. Students with some prior knowledge of Hebrew language who have questions about placement in HEBR 102 should contact the Religious Studies Department.

HEBR 101. BIBLICAL HEBREW I (Classical Studies)
Introduction to the grammar and vocabulary of Biblical Hebrew, beginning with the alphabet. Students will master basic grammatical forms and will read simple prose passages from the textbook and selected Biblical verses and phrases. No prior knowledge of Biblical Hebrew is expected. Alternate years. Not offered 2012-2013.

HEBR 102. BIBLICAL HEBREW II (Classical Studies)
Continued study of Biblical Hebrew grammar and vocabulary, reading selected prose passages from the Hebrew Bible, and discussion of the cultural and religious context. Prerequisite: successful completion of HEBR 101 or placement/instructor permission. Alternate years. Not offered 2012-2013.

RELIGIOUS STUDIES COURSES

Area I. RELIGIOUS TRADITIONS AND HISTORIES

RELS 110. RELIGIONS EAST AND WEST
An examination of basic issues in religious studies and an overview of the beliefs and practices of some of the major religions of the world, such as Islam, Judaism, Hinduism, Buddhism, and Christianity. Fall and Spring 2012-2013. [C, R, AH]

RELS 120. INTRODUCTION TO BIBLICAL STUDIES: INTERPRETATION AND CULTURE (Classical Studies)
Introduces the examination of basic issues of reading the Bible in an academic setting. Special attention will be given to the biblical texts as resources for understanding political, social, and religious discourses in the ancient world. The student will encounter introductions to historical, literary and feminist methodologies. Fall 2012. [C, R, AH]

RELS 130. AMERICAN RELIGIOUS COMMUNITIES
An examination of the tension between religious power and religious pluralism in American history. Fall and Spring. [C, R, AH]

RELS 216. CHINESE RELIGIONS (Chinese Studies, East Asian Studies)
This course primarily examines Chinese “popular religions,” and the three formalized traditions of Confucianism, Daoism, and Buddhism, as practiced both historically and in contemporary life in China, Taiwan, and Chinese Diaspora communities in Asia and the West. This course also examines the presence of other non-indigenous Chinese religions (e.g., Islam and Christianity) in China. Annually. Not offered 2012-2013. [C, R, AH]
RELS 217. AFRICAN RELIGIONS
This course explores African religious thought and practice. While the focus is on traditional African religions, it also investigates the impact of African thought and culture on Christianity and Islam on the African continent. The course includes the study of the role of religion in contemporary African culture and politics. Alternate years. Fall 2012. [C, R, AH]

RELS 218. HINDUISM (South Asian Studies)
Hindu concepts and practices as reflected in texts such as the Vedas, Upanishads, and Bhagavad-Gita and in religious practice in Indian cultures through the centuries, with attention to sects and modern reform movements. Alternate years. Fall 2012. [C, R, AH]

RELS 220. BUDDHISM (East Asian Studies, South Asian Studies)
Buddhist concepts and practices, including karma, rebirth, and devotion as found in religious writings and as practiced through history, across Asian cultures. Alternate years. Spring 2012. [C, R, AH]

RELS 222. ISLAM (South Asian Studies)
The foundations of Islam as set forth in the Qur’an, the life of the prophet Mohammad, Muslim philosophers and mystics as reflected in Middle Eastern and South Asian cultures, with attention to central concepts of revelation, community, law, and worship. Alternate years. Spring 2012. [C, R, AH]

RELS 224. HEBREW PROPHECY AS RELIGIOUS IMAGINATION (Classical Studies)
An exploration into the historical, political, and religious traditions of the Hebrew prophets within both Jewish and Christian scholarship. The prophetic books of the canon will be examined from historical, literary and feminist viewpoints. Prerequisite: RELS 120 or permission of the instructor. Alternate years. Not offered 2012-2013. [R, AH]

RELS 225. THE LIFE AND TEACHINGS OF JESUS (Classical Studies)
An examination of the views, problems, and hypotheses about the identities of Jesus in the first few centuries C.E. Historical issues and religious-cultural implications of the “afterlife” of Jesus will be investigated. Attention will be given to Gnostic and Rabbinic references to Jesus. The course encourages students to develop a critical awareness about the complexities involved when we talk about Jesus in today’s world. Prerequisite: RELS 120 or permission of instructor. Alternate years. Spring 2013. [W, C, R, AH]

RELS 230. THE LIFE AND THOUGHT OF MAHATMA GANDHI (South Asian Studies)
A study of the life and thought of Mahatma Gandhi and his philosophy of non-violence as reflected in his ideas about religion, politics, economics, social work, etc., in comparison with such movements as Sarvodaya, Civil Rights, Liberation Theology, and the Women’s Movement. Also includes discussion of contemporary Gandhians and their application of Gandhian thought to their personal lives and social movements. Prerequisite: RELS 100 or 110 or permission of the instructor. Alternate years. Spring 2013. [C, R]

RELS 233. JUDAISM
Presents the Jewish religious tradition and its historical evolution, its sacred texts, practices and beliefs, and modern movements within Judaism, with particular attention to central concepts of covenant, divine authority, and the interdependence of religion and people hood. Alternate years. Spring 2013. [C, R, AH]

RELS 239. GLOBAL CHRISTIANITY
Focuses on the history, theology and practice of Christianity as an international religion, especially the global zones of Asia, Africa, Europe and Latin America. Alternate years. Fall 2012. [R]

RELS 247. NATIVE AMERICAN RELIGIONS AND CULTURES
A study of tradition and change within the historical and modern religions of various regional Native American tribal groups, including Pan-Indian activism and revitalization. Alternate years. Not offered 2012-2013. [C, R, AH]

RELS 252. ASIAN AND ASIAN-AMERICAN FEMINIST THEOLOGY (Women’s, Gender, and Sexuality Studies)
To be human is to think about questions of meaning, transcendence, purpose and relationship. This course on Asian and Asian-American Feminist Theology will explore ways that women of Asian heritage are asking these questions. The course will begin with an experience of dislocation through an immersion experience in Thailand. This will provide the students with a taste of the context and experience from which Asian and Asian-American feminist theology emerges. Students’ direct engagement with the lived realities of several Thai communities forms the core of a course that will use a case-study approach. The second part of the course will take place at The College of Wooster during the regular semester. We will use the lens of sacred writing, theological discussion, and the immersion experience to better comprehend and appreciate the voice and perspectives that Asian and Asian-American feminists bring to the larger liberation conversation. Alternate years. Not offered 2012-2013. [R]

RELS 254. THE REFORMATION: PAST AND PRESENT TRADITIONS
A study of the theological, cultural, and political issues that prompted a variety of 16th Century Protestant movements. The course connects these new traditions to their modern-day instantiations around the globe. Alternate years. Not offered 2012-2013. [R]
RELS 261. BLACK RELIGIOUS EXPERIENCE IN AMERICA (Africana Studies)
An interdisciplinary study of Black religious experience, institutions, leadership, thought, and social movements in American society, with emphasis on the work of King, Malcolm X, and the Womanist tradition. Alternate years. Not offered 2012-2013. [C, R]

RELS 26700-26722. TOPICS IN RELIGIOUS TRADITIONS AND HISTORIES (some sections cross-listed with: Classical Studies, South Asian Studies, Women's, Gender, and Sexuality Studies)
An in-depth study of central issues in the history of religious traditions, such as Global Catholicism in America, Asian Religions in America, and Modern Jewish Identities. Annually. [R]

Area II. ISSUES AND THEORIES IN THE STUDY OF RELIGION

RELS 100. RELIGIOUS THOUGHT AND ACTION
Approaches to selected religious ideas, themes, and problems in the thought of diverse traditions, religious issues, or major thinkers of the past and the present. Annually. Fall and Spring. [C, R, AH]

RELS 206. SOCIOLOGY OF RELIGION
An analysis of the nature of religion, religious movements and institutions, belief and ethics in religion today from the dual perspectives of sociology and religious studies. A focus on the interaction of religion, politics, and culture. Alternate years. Not offered 2012-2013. [R]

RELS 219. ETHICS IN A SOCIAL PERSPECTIVE
A comparison of the ethical insights of a variety of Eastern and Western religious traditions as they relate to current social problems, such as war and peace, social justice, death and dying, and bioethics. Alternate years. Spring 2013. [C, R]

RELS 229. WOMEN AND RELIGION (Women's, Gender, and Sexuality Studies)
An investigation into the roles of women as depicted in sacred texts of the Jewish, Christian, Muslim, and Goddess traditions. This course will use feminist narrative skills as the primary methodology. Using leading feminists' work from all four traditions, students will investigate what texts may have to say about women's roles in both ancient and modern religious traditions, in world religions, the lives and thought of prominent women in religious history, and central issues in feminist theology. Alternate years. Not offered 2012-2013. [C, R]

RELS 241. NEW RELIGIOUS MOVEMENTS
An examination of America's marginal but influential religious movements. 19th Century groups include Mormons, Spiritualism, Jehovah's Witnesses, and Christian Scientists. 20th Century practices and traditions include Hare Krishnas, the Unification Church, New Age Spiritualities, Scientology, Branch Davidians, and Wicca. Alternate years. Spring 2013. [C, R, AH]

RELS 243. RELIGIOUS AND SPIRITUAL AUTOBIOGRAPHY
This course studies the many religious purposes (e.g. the understanding of religious experience, formation of religious identity, presentation of a moral or religious ideal, social criticism) that religious autobiographies serve. Such writings also provide readers a window into individual religious lives, experiences, and cultures. Writings selected may include classic Western religious autobiographies such as Augustine's Confessions as well as other writings, both historical and contemporary, from a variety of religious traditions. Recommended: one 100-level Religious Studies course. Alternate years. Not offered 2012-2013. [W, R, AH]

RELS 245. CHRISTIAN ETHICS
Historical overview of the structure of Christian ethics with the focus on its biblical and theological foundations and its application to important personal and social issues. Alternate years. Not offered 2012-2013. [R]

RELS 251. MODERN RELIGIOUS THINKERS (Latin American Studies)
An introduction to selected religious thinkers of the 20th Century. Attention will be given to figures representative of major movements, such as neo-orthodoxy, existentialism, process theology, and third world theologies. Not offered 2012-2013. [W, R]

RELS 263. RELIGION AND LITERATURE
This course examines the ways in which modern and contemporary writers represent religious traditions and experiences, make use of religious narratives and themes and confront religious questions in their novels, short stories, and poetry. Recommended: one 100-level Religious Studies course. Alternate years. Not offered 2012-2013. [R, AH]

RELS 264. RELIGION AND FILM (Film Studies)
This course examines the interactions of religions and religious life with the electronic media technologies of film and video. Through such a course, students can arrive at better understandings of the place of religions in contemporary cultures, the aesthetics of film and video, and the place of these media as communicators of cultural phenomena such as religion. Alternate years. Fall and Spring. [C, R, AH]
RELS 26900-26929. TOPICS IN THEORIES AND ISSUES IN THE STUDY OF RELIGION
(some sections cross-listed with: Classical Studies, Environmental Studies, South Asian Studies, Women’s, Gender, and Sexuality Studies)
An examination of one major issue involving the interface of sociological, ethical, and theoretical factors, such as Religion, Violence and Peacemaking; Interfaith Dialogue; Religion and the Environment; and Asian and Asian-American Feminist Theology. Annually. Fall and Spring. [R]

PHIL 211. PHILOSOPHY AND THE RELIGIOUS LIFE
In one part of this course we will look at traditional issues in the philosophy of religion, the nature of religious experience, classical proofs for the existence of God and the problem of evil. In the second part of the course we will focus on issues in religious language, seeing God, the place of ceremony and liturgy in religious life and religious pluralism. Alternate years. Not offered 2012-2013. [R, AH]

RELS 407, 408. ETHICS AND SOCIETY INTERN PROGRAM
Students will be placed for one semester in an agency, organization, or other context where the academic study of religion can be joined with a practical experience in dealing with ethical and religious issues in American society. Three credits, with the possibility of a fourth. (1-3 course credits) S/NC course. Prerequisite: Permission of instructor is required, and previously taken appropriate courses in the department are desirable. Annually.

OTHER COURSES

RELS 400. TUTORIAL
Individual readings and reports may be required by the instructor. The course may be given an Area I or Area II designation with departmental approval. (.5 – 1 course credit) Prerequisite: The approval of both the supervising faculty member and the chairperson is required prior to registration.

RELS 401. JUNIOR INDEPENDENT STUDY
A one-semester course that focuses upon the research skills, methodology, and theoretical framework necessary for Senior Independent Study. Combines tutorial-seminar format. Spring (unless the student is studying off-campus Spring semester).

RELS 451. SENIOR INDEPENDENT STUDY – SEMESTER ONE
The first semester of the Senior Independent Study project, in which each student engages in creative and independent research guided by a faculty mentor and which culminates in a thesis and an oral examination in the second semester. Prerequisite: RELS 401.

RELS 452. SENIOR INDEPENDENT STUDY – SEMESTER TWO
The second semester of the Senior Independent Study project, which culminates in the thesis and an oral examination. Prerequisite: RELS 451.
Section 2

Religious Studies Department Faculty Profiles
These brief profiles do not provide all the information on the teaching, research, and other professional activities of our faculty, but they should give you an introduction to our faculty and our work.

**Tenured and Tenure-Track Faculty**

**Lisa W. Crothers**  
Instructor of Religious Studies  
Kauke 003; lcrothers@wooster.edu

B.A. Muhlenberg College (Religious Studies); M.A. Indiana University; Ph.D. Emory University.

Selected courses: Religions East & West (RELS 110); Hinduism (RELS 218); Buddhism (RELS 220); and Islam (RELS 222)

Professor Crothers is the author of “Duyodhana’s Pride and Perception: The Dynamics of Distrust in the Moment of Counsel at the Kaurava Court.” In the Mahābhārata: What is not here is nowhere else (Yannehāsti na Tadkvacit), ed. T.S. Rukmani. (New Delhi: Munshiram Manoharlal Publishers, 2005)

**Joan S. Friedman**  
Assistant Professor of Religious Studies and History; Rabbi, Office of Interfaith Campus Ministries  
Kauke 006; jfriedman@wooster.edu

B.A. University of Pennsylvania (Jewish Studies); M.A.H.L. Hebrew Union-Jewish Institute of Religion; M.Phil., Ph.D. Columbia University.

Selected courses: Religious Thought and Action (RELS 100); Biblical Hebrew I, II (HEBR 101, HEBR 102); Judaism (RELS 233); Jewish Biblical Interpretation (RELS 267); Modern Jewish Identities (RELS 267); The Holocaust (HIST 101); The Arab-Israeli Conflict (HIST 301); Modern Jewish History (HIST 301).

Professor Friedman is currently completing Solomon Freehof: Reform Judaism and Jewish Law (Hebrew Union College Press), and is also engaged in a research project with the American Jewish Archives and the Women’s Rabbinic Network on the first women ordained as rabbis.

**Mark W. Graham**  
Associate Professor of Religious Studies  
Kauke 004; mgraham@wooster.edu

B.A. Ohio University (Political Science); M.A. Ohio University (Philosophy); Ph.D. Indiana University.

Selected courses: Religions East & West (RELS 110); Chinese Religions (RELS 216); Buddhism (RELS 220); Religious and Spiritual Autobiography (RELS 243); Religion & Literature (RELS 263); Religion & Film (RELS 264); Asian Religions in America (RELS 267); Religious Visual & Material Culture (RELS 269).
Charles L. Kammer III
James F. Lincoln Professor of Religious Studies; Department Chair
Kauke 023; ckammer@wooster.edu

B.A. Colgate University (Philosophy & Religion); M.Div., Ph.D. Duke University.

Selected courses: Religious Thought and Action (RELS 100); Sociology of Religion (RELS 206); African Religions (RELS 217); Ethics in a Social Perspective (RELS 219); Christian Ethics (RELS 245); Modern Religious Thinkers (RELS 251); Black Religious Experience in America (RELS 261); Ethics: Crime and Punishment (RELS 269); Religion & the Environment (RELS 269).

Professor Kammer is the author of The Kingdom Revisited (University Press of America, 1981) and Ethics and Liberation (Wipf & Stock Press, 2002).

Sarah Mirza
Assistant Professor of Religious Studies
Kauke 005; smirza@wooster.edu

B.A. William Paterson University; M.A., Ph.D. University of Michigan

Selected courses: Comparative Religious Traditions: Near East (RELS 110); Religious and History: Modern Middle East (RELS 267).

Professor Mirza is the author of Dreaming the Truth in the Sīra of Ibn Hishām in Dreaming in Islamic Societies: Exploring the Muslim Subconscious (forthcoming by SUNY Press) and Abdallah B. Rawḥa, Encyclopedia of Islam, 3rd Edition (Leiden: Brill, 2009). And she is currently working on Did Hammad al-Rawiya Destroy the Arabic Poetic Tradition? (Journal article) Selection of Arabic legal documents and letters on papyrus, 7th-13th c., from the University of Michigan Papyrus Collection, with images, translation, and commentary (volume).
Visiting Faculty 2012-2013

Jennifer Eyl
Visiting Assistant Professor of Religious Studies
Kauke 101; jeyl@wooster.edu

B.A. University of Georgia; Post-Bac/M.A. San Francisco State University; M.A., Ph. D. Brown University.

Selected courses: Introduction to Biblical Studies (RELS 120); Global Christianity (RELS 239).


Jeremy Rapport
Visiting Assistant Professor of Religious Studies
Kauke 107 (Sem I) and Kauke 129 (Sem II); jrapport@wooster.edu

B.A., M.A. University of Kansas (English & Religious Studies); Ph.D. Indiana University.

Selected courses: Religious Thought and Action (RELS 100); American Religious Communities (RELS 130); Global Christianity (RELS 239); New Religious Movements (RELS 241); Religion & Science in American History (RELS 267).


Adjunct and Other Associated Faculty 2012-2013

Linda Morgan-Clement
Center for Diversity and Global Engagement, Babcock Hall
lclement@wooster.edu
Spring 2013
Henry Copeland Chaplain and Director of Interfaith Campus Ministries

Selected courses: Asian and Asian-American Feminist Theology (RELS 269); Interfaith Dialogue (RELS 269).

Kara Skora
Morgan Hall 109; kskora@wooster.edu
Fall 2012
B.A. Harvard University; Ph.D. University of Virginia.
Selected course: Religious Thought and Action (RELS 100)
Section 3

Information and Guidelines

Junior Independent Study (RELS 401)
Senior Independent Study (RELS 451-452)
Junior and Senior Independent Study

Your Junior and Senior I.S. projects in Religious Studies should be among the most challenging and rewarding ventures of your college career. The following information is intended to provide general guidelines for the I.S. process. Please feel free to discuss any of this information with your Junior or Senior I.S. advisors, or any of the department's faculty.

Choosing an Appropriate Topic: General Considerations and Questions

By the beginning of the term in which you will begin your Junior or Senior I.S. project, you should have one or more ideas of interest for possible topics ready for discussion with Religious Studies faculty. Before classes begin, you will be contacted via email by the department chair to ask you to submit during the first week of classes a brief statement of the idea(s) you have been considering for possible topics. This statement need not be long - a paragraph is sufficient - but it will serve as the starting point for conversation about your project, and will help the department assign you an advisor as quickly as possible. A meeting of the faculty and majors will be scheduled during the first week of classes at which time these and other I.S-related considerations will be discussed. If you have not done so earlier, you should plan to meet with departmental faculty during the first week of classes to discuss your ideas for I.S. topics.

The following questions may be of some use as you begin to consider topics for your I.S. project:

1. What questions or issues in the study of religions might sustain your own interests for a semester (for Junior I.S.) or two semesters (for Senior I.S.)?

2. If you think about some common approaches to the study of religions that match up with disciplines with which you might be familiar - e.g., Anthropology, Archaeology, History, Sociology, Literature, Language, Textual, Scriptural Interpretation, Arts and Art History, Philosophy, Theology, or Gender Studies, what approaches might seem initially more familiar, engaging or challenging to you?

3. What topics or questions have you been introduced to in other courses that you might want to pursue further?

4. What types of research approaches might be most engaging or challenging for you (e.g., survey research, interview research, fieldwork, working with historical sources, etc.)?

5. How do the possible topics of interest seem to intersect with the academic study of religions, and perhaps with your personal interests or commitments?

6. Do the ideas you have initially seem either too narrow to sustain a research project, or too large to be completed in a semester or two?

Departmental faculty members, and especially the specific faculty member who will be assigned as your I.S. advisor, will work with you to develop your topic. While no specific deadline for choosing a topic is set, the success of your project depends significantly on your initiative in generating ideas for topics right away, and on working closely with your advisor to refine the topic as you proceed. Thus, it is in your interest to be thinking about topics prior to the beginning of the semester.
I.S. Advisors: Advisor Assignments and Getting Started on Your Project

Junior I.S.
As you know, some departments at Wooster structure the Junior I.S. as an individual tutorial, while most teach Junior I.S. as a seminar course in one form or another. The Religious Studies Department sees merit in both approaches. Thus, in Spring Semester, Junior I.S. is offered in a format that combines seminar class meetings and individual meetings. Junior I.S. now includes some class meetings of all students taking Junior I.S. with some common readings and writing assignments, and also includes the completion of a properly I.S.-formatted research paper on a topic chosen and developed by you, in conversation with the departmental faculty member who is teaching Junior I.S. Spring Semester.

Senior I.S.
Senior I.S. is primarily an individual tutorial experience. Decisions about these assignments are made in consultation with the entire departmental faculty, and are based on your ideas for I.S. topics and other departmental considerations. You will be assigned an advisor and a second reader, usually by the second week of classes. Your meetings with that advisor should begin right away after you are notified of the assignment, but you should not wait for that assignment to begin reading and compiling information on your possible topics, so that you can arrive at your first meeting with ideas, questions, and possible resources in mind. You and your advisor will then set up a weekly meeting schedule and a timetable for the production of your work. You will also be assigned a second reader, with whom you will not be required to meet, unless your advisor requests that you meet with her or him (e.g., for input on your topic, on possible resources, etc.). In the case of double majors, students typically meet with both advisors at the same time each week.

Length and Scope of I.S. Projects
No magic number of pages guarantees the quality or success of your project; nevertheless, some general guidelines might help you conceptualize the scope of your project. The length of the written document is not a measure of the quality of a project. Acceptable Junior I.S. projects generally range between 20-30 pages of text (not including title, abstract, contents, and bibliography). Senior projects should be a minimum of 60 pages. You will be expected to discuss these matters with your I.S. advisor, but you should expect to produce a paper that is substantially more involved and of superior quality than what you might typically produce as part of a typical class assignment. In Junior I.S., you are also being socialized into disciplinary approaches and learning research methods; thus, in a single semester, you will not be expected to produce a paper longer than about 30 pages, but you should at least expect to produce a finished product of at least 20 pages. As noted above, Senior I.S. projects have a wider range of length, but a reasonable general expectation of length is a paper of 60-75 pages. Most important here, however, are the conversations you and your advisor have about appropriate expectations for your particular project.

Format and Style of Finished I.S. Projects
Junior and Senior I.S. is in part an exercise in producing a paper in a precise, professional form. Formal considerations will thus be part of the assessment of your progress and your final grade. This form includes not only your attention to the writing itself, but also to other matters: the title page, the abstract page, the acknowledgement (if included), the table of contents, section/chapter headings, adherence to an appropriate citation and bibliographic style, and having the document appropriately bound. Starting from the beginning in order, every properly finished I.S. project must have the following: title page, abstract page, table of contents page, main text of the paper, and bibliography. In addition, you may want to or be obligated to include an acknowledgements page. If so, it should come between the abstract page and the table of contents page.
Title page format
Here is a sample --- text should be centered on the page:

TITLE OF PROJECT

By
Your Name Here

A Thesis* Submitted in Fulfillment of the
Requirements of Independent Study
In the Department of Religious Studies** at
The College of Wooster

Thesis Research I and II, Religious Studies 451-452***

Advisor: Name Here****   Month, Day, Year

*For Junior I.S., substitute the word “paper” for “thesis.”
**For double majors, list both departments, in alphabetical order.
***For Junior I.S., substitute “Religious Studies 401” here.
****For double majors, list all advisors, in alphabetical order, with departmental affiliation in parentheses.

Abstract page format
Top line, flush left: Your Name
Second line, flush left: Title of thesis/paper
Third line, flush left, date submitted
Fourth line, flush left: name(s) of advisor(s)

Skip a line or two, then:
A brief summary of (100-250 words, no more than one page) the topic, the thesis, the argument, and the conclusion of your project.
Table of Contents format
This can be done in a variety of ways, but should clearly reflect the title, show the section of your paper and the page numbers on which each section begins. See the following examples for ways to do this.

Citation and Bibliography Style
Unlike some disciplines that adhere to a single citation/bibliographic style in all publications and scholarly writing, Religious Studies scholars might use one of several styles, depending on the nature of the project and the scholarly publication. Nevertheless, the most common style, and the one you are expected to use unless other considerations (approved by your advisor) dictate a different style, is the “Chicago style” (a.k.a. “Turabian” after Kate Turabian, the author of the big reference book on this subject.) An affordable and easy-to-use guide to this style (and a couple of other styles, along with good advice about writing and research) is:


This publication is available at the Wilson Bookstore for $27.50 (new); $19.50 (used).

The complete reference on Chicago style is:


Three copies of this book are always available in the library’s Reference section. This book is also available at the Wilson Bookstore, and even though it is lots bigger than Hacker’s book, it is only $17 (new); $12.75 (used). Nevertheless, I would recommend purchasing Hacker’s book, because (a) it is smaller, and (b) it includes some other information (e.g., other citation styles, writing help) that might be useful to you in other academic settings. You are not likely to need Turabian’s big book for quick reference, and if you do need it, it is in the library.

If you are a double major, and if another academic citation and bibliographic style is mandated by your other department, then your Senior I.S. will be written according to that style.

Final Evaluation

Deadlines
For Junior I.S., unless your Junior I.S. professor tells you otherwise, expect your finished I.S. project (one copy) to be due on the Monday of Final Exam Week (Monday, May 6, 2013) or the Friday before classes end in the Fall semester (Friday, December 7, 2012) at noon, submitted to the Religious Studies department.

For Senior I.S., your finished project (two copies) is due at the Registrar’s Office no later than 5:00 p.m., Monday, March 25, 2013. And one e-copy (even if in sections) or CD should be forwarded to the Religious Studies administrative coordinator: dspringer@wooster.edu, Kauke Hall 010.
A Funny Thing Happened On The Way To The Funeral:
Cicero’s Proposed Apotheosis for Tullia

By
Alexander Everett Gholz

A Thesis Submitted in Fulfillment of the
Requirement of Independent Study
In the Departments of Classical Studies and Religious Studies at
The College of Wooster

Thesis Research I and II, Classical Studies and Religious Studies 451-452

Advisors: Dr. Monica Florence and Dr. Mark Graham

March 10th, 2008
Abstract

Alexander Everett Gholz
“A Funny Thing Happened On The Way To The Funeral: Cicero’s Proposed Apotheosis of Tullia.”
March 4th, 2008
Advisors: Dr. Monica Florence and Dr. Mark Graham

This paper examines Roman religion of the Late Republic and Marcus Tullius Cicero. Through an examination of Cicero’s proposed apotheosis of Tullia, I argue that Roman religion is predicated upon the negotiation between three spheres of religious influence. Consequently, I argue also that Cicero himself interacted, practiced, and impacted religious thought of the Late Republic. I support my argument through an examination of apotheosis (αποθεωσις), specifically in respect to Cicero’s proposed apotheosis of his daughter, Tullia. I engage primary source material, predominantly from opera Ciceronis, including: De Legibus, De Republica, Tusculan Diputations, epistularum Ad Atticum, and Phillipics. This project is intent upon shedding new light upon Roman domestic religion and Cicero’s engagement with religious thought and action (praxis) through an examination of Cicero’s peculiar use of the Greek term apotheosis (αποθεωσις).
Acknowledgements

To my parents and brother who pushed me even as stubbornly I refused. Their support throughout my education allowed me to face, and overcome, many challenges.

To my advisor Monica Florence for her assistance with translations, knowledge of the classical world, and her keen eye for particulars, proved indispensable during this project.

To my advisor Mark Graham for his time, conversations, and constant encouragement.

Thank you for everything over the course of these past four years.
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Roman Religion Re-presented

Cicero the Religious

Death and Deities

Apotheosis

Conclusion

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A WIFE, A MISTRESS, BUT NEVER A NUN: A STUDY OF BUDDHISM AND GENDER IN THAI SOCIETY

By
Jessica M. Hill

A Thesis Submitted in Fulfillment of the Requirement of Independent Study
In the Department of Religious Studies at The College of Wooster

Thesis Research I and II, Religious Studies 451-452
Advisor: Dr. Ishwar Harris March/26/2007
This study reviews how Buddhism shapes female gender roles in Thailand and claims that Thai Buddhism indirectly influences the prostitution and sex industry. This paper goes on to support that if a female order of nuns or bhikkuni sangha existed, the number of women would lessen in the brothels in Thai society. I develop the topic by giving a short introduction to the history of Buddhism in its Thai context. This section touches upon the male and female dynamics within Thai Buddhism and gives a history of bhikkhuni ordination. Next, I turn to a discussion on the complex nature of religion and culture in Thai society. To be Thai is to be Buddhist and to be Buddhist is to be Thai. As a result, it is difficult to distinguish between Thai beliefs and Buddhist beliefs in Thai society because both are congruent forces defining each other. This is relevant because many “popular” Buddhist beliefs that denigrate women stem from cultural manifestations and influences. Thereafter, I look at notions of gender and sexuality in Thailand. If women reject the prescribed gender roles of motherhood, they are in turn rejected by society. This is relevant in the next discussion of the religious roles of women, the Thai bhikkhuni and mae chi. Subsequently, I focus on how the Thai Buddhist institution indirectly influences and legitimates the sex industry, and how a bhikkhuni sangha would benefit society. The discussion then turns to the teachings and ethical principles of Buddhism that are liberating and empowering for women who are suffering. Along with this come discussions on Engaged Buddhism and on the work and accomplishments of Thai Engaged Buddhists. This is followed by my own suggestions for renewing and revitalizing Buddhism in Thailand in a way that is applicable to Thai women.
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

A friend once told me that life is a series of mini rebirths. For me, the researching and writing of this thesis has been a true experience of rebirth, resulting in newfound interests and passions in the study of religion. As a result, I have many people I would like to thank for their inspiration and encouragement in this two-year process. First and foremost, I would like to thank my parents and family for their love and support, for always driving me to ask religious questions and allowing me to go to Thailand in the first place. My parents and my sister have instilled in me the desire to always seek challenges in life. Thank you.

I would like to give thanks to the Henry J. Copeland Fund which allowed me to go back to Thailand to gather research and conduct interviews for this thesis. Without the support of the Copeland Fund my study would have not been complete. I would like to express the most sincere thanks to my advisor, Professor Ishwar Harris. His continual support and insight pushed me to develop as a student in the field of religion, as well as an individual. Another thanks needs to be given to Professor Mark Graham who helped me process and understand my study abroad experience in Thailand in the spring of 2006. Without his help, I would have never been able to develop this current independent study project. Thank you.

I would like to thank all the professors and students affiliated with Payap University for their immeasurable love, support and kindness during my stays in Thailand particularly John Butt, Betty and Claude Bennett, Micah Morton, Adam Dedman, Masaya, Nok, David, Noey, Jebe and Aoi. Thank you for putting up with my endless questions and having patience with an annoying foreigner. I would like to personally thank Jancy Thalappillil for her magnetic personality; my obsession and exploration of Thai culture and interest in women studies really began because of her influence. With love and laughter, I sincerely thank the monks of Wat Chadi Luang in particular Phra James and Phra Em. Through their friendship and telling of Buddhist anecdotes, riddles and jokes, I became deeply invested in understanding Buddhism and, moreover, in learning about the interaction of religion and culture.

Last but not least, I would like to give thanks to all my friends who have become my family at The College of Wooster. I give thanks to Damon for his friendship and wisdom during our early morning breakfast conversations. Thank you to the original Andrews crews: for fizzy pop baseball and Frank Sinatra jiving. Thanks to the women of Delta Theta Psi for their friendship, entertainment and obsession with puffy paint. I would like to express my deepest gratitude and thanks to Michael for his humor, support and love during this process. Thank you for being my transcriber and travel friend in Thailand; it was a blast. To the people who were there to offer me encouragement 24 hours a day, offer me late night snacks and were willing to complain with me in and out of the library: to Erin, Emily, Sarah, Angela, Lizzie, Ben and Cam. A tremendous thank you is given to the women who went through the painstaking task of transcribing my interviews: Jess, Jodi and E. Lastly, thank you Thailand for delicious food and to The College of Wooster for this experience. It has been a worthwhile and fun four years.
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Grading

Junior I.S. (RELS 401) is graded on the same letter grade scale as other courses at the College. The grade is determined by your Junior I.S. professor.

Senior I.S. is graded as follows:

RELS 451 is graded either as “Satisfactory Progress” (SP), or “Unsatisfactory Progress” (U). A grade of “U” indicates that too little work was done during the first semester to warrant continuing on to conclude the project in the second semester. In other words, it’s like an “F,” and you would need to repeat RELS 451 before continuing to RELS 452. Your advisor will communicate to you what the expectations are in RELS 451 to earn a grade of “SP,” but in general and until your advisor specifies her or his expectations, you might expect to have completed the following by the end of first semester: attended and been prepared for all meetings; compiled a nearly complete bibliography; written in acceptable draft form one or two chapters (perhaps 15-30 pages) of the project.

RELS 452 is graded as “Honors” (H), “Good” (G), “Satisfactory” (S), or “No credit” (No credit). This grade is assigned by the Senior I.S. advisor, in consultation and typically in agreement with the Senior I.S. second reader (or in the case of double majors, with both advisors), after the Senior I.S. oral examination, which is conducted as soon as possible after I.S. Monday. Thus, the final grade is based on an assessment of both the final product, and the entire process, including your work throughout the two semesters and your presentation during the oral examination. Prior to the oral examination, your advisor(s) will inform you about what to expect in that session. In Religious Studies, both the advisor and the second reader typically will give you a day or two before the oral examination some questions and topics for discussion in the oral examination. This process may vary for double majors.

See the following for a copy of the Senior I.S. assessment form used in Religious Studies. While this form is specified for Senior I.S., it is also relevant for Junior I.S.
I. CONTENT

1. Is the topic significant in the field of religion, or merely idiosyncratic?
   - H G S NC

2. Does the paper clearly state a thesis or position to be defended?
   - H G S NC

3. Is the thesis convincingly and plausibly supported/argued?
   - H G S NC

4. Is the paper analytical or merely descriptive?
   - H G S NC

5. Does the paper both raise and discuss salient issues, concepts, and/or controversies?
   - H G S NC

6. Does the paper appropriately present and utilize the ideas/positions of key scholars/writers on this topic?
   - H G S NC

7. Is the length of the paper adequate for this topic?
   - H G S NC

8. To your knowledge, has the student shown independent initiative in choosing the topic, searching out sources, and developing a position or theses?
   - H G S NC
## II. SOURCES

1. Does the paper reflect an awareness of the interdisciplinary nature of the study of religion?

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2. Does the paper show both the benefits and limitations of the research approach/method chosen?

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3. Did the student’s research include both recent and classic works in the field?

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4. Does the bibliography include a sufficient variety of source materials appropriate to the topic? (i.e. primary and secondary sources, interviews, internet, newspapers, book reviews, etc.)?

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5. Have these source materials been carefully studied and integrated into the whole of the paper?

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6. Has the student credited his/her sources at every point where dependence upon them is apparent?

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## III. FORM

1. Is there a Table of Contents and an orderly structure of chapters and headings and/or subheadings?

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2. Is there an introduction which clearly states the purpose, plan, and scope of the paper?

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3. Are the transitions between individual chapters and sections clear and effective?

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4. Are the results of the study brought together into an adequate statement in a conclusion?

| H | G | S | NC |
5. Are the footnotes and bibliography in the proper form according to Turabian?

6. Is this a ‘clean’ paper, with no typographic or orthographic errors?

7. Is the prose (grammar, style, vocabulary) of sufficient quality?

IV. ORAL EXAM

1. Did the student prepare and present thoughtful answers to those questions that the examiners submitted to him/her prior to the oral exam?

2. Did the student clearly and comprehensively articulate his/her answers to the examiners’ other questions during the exam?

3. Was the student able to engage in a mature, formal scholarly discussion about his/her work, and avoid seeming to be defensive, flippant, arrogant, or ill-prepared?

4. Did the student demonstrate that his/her learning experience in this project goes substantially beyond the final product?
Section 4

Conducting Research in Religious Studies
Conducting Research in Religious Studies

Religious Studies is commonly described as an interdisciplinary, multidisciplinary, cross-disciplinary, or transdisciplinary field of inquiry. To use Stephen Toulmin’s terms for academic disciplines, in contrast to compact disciplines that are relatively well united by a common and well-defined set of methods that govern most or all research, and that also set limits to the subjects that are appropriate to study (e.g., field such as Economics, Anthropology, Sociology, Chemistry, and perhaps others - though I’m sure these disciplines are more complex than this comment might suggest), Religious Studies is a diffuse discipline.¹ Richard B. Miller describes the diffuse nature of Religious Studies in this way: “[T]he study of religion is held together by an ‘overlapping’ consensus” about the methods, procedures, and goals of research; the “discipline is held together because some of these inquiries move scholars into conversation with other colleagues to such a degree that they see themselves related to each other as an intellectual family … their discussions overlap sufficiently to produce a complex intellectual kinship system.”²

And what does all of this mean for you as a novice researcher in this field? Perhaps this: Becoming a competent researcher in Religious Studies is not an easy or simple task. No single library session, database, or “methods” unit in a course will prepare you fully for what you need to do to be effective at conducting Religious Studies research. Becoming competent at finding, managing, and using information is difficult in any field, but the challenge is especially difficult in a field as diffuse and dynamic as Religious Studies. You need to pay attention to what your professors do and suggest you do, you need to consult with librarians, you need to make use of every possible resource you can access, and - most important - you need to practice. Your research will of course come to an end, but it is not going to be done in one round of searching catalogues, databases, and other sources. First attempts need to be refined. Early efforts reveal new leads for repeated visits to your catalogues and databases. Practice at research requires patience and attention to detail. It will not make you perfect, but it will make you effective, and these skills at finding, managing, and interpreting complex information will serve you well in whatever you do in your life After Wooster.

Research Resources

Comprehensive reference sources: Encyclopedias, Dictionaries, Handbooks

Starting with this category of sources will help you focus and contextualize your research ideas, help you familiarize yourself with the ways in which scholars discuss issues in your interest area, and help you develop a useful bibliography of relevant sources related to your topic. You need to begin to become familiar as quickly as possible with the state of the field in your interest area. These reference sources are the best way to accomplish this, as they have been written, edited, and reviewed by leading scholars in the field. Some of these are available electronically via OhioLink/CONSORT catalogues, but many are only available in print form, in our library’s Reference section.


This is the standard and comprehensive reference resource for the field. Any new research endeavor should make use of this resource as early in the project as possible by scanning the List of Entries in Volume 1 and by using the Index in Volume 15. Comprehensive articles in ER related to your area of inquiry will help orient you to the nature of the discourse for your project, the key terms scholars use, and at least some of the key bibliography on the subject. ER articles will help you focus your attention on what is relevant. Such articles related to your topic of research are an expected part of your bibliography, and should be used in your I.S.

Other more subject-specific encyclopedias, dictionaries, or related reference works, e.g., The Encyclopedia of Daoism, Encyclopedia of Religion and Nature, Encyclopedia of Women and Religion in North America, Historical Dictionary of Judaism, Encyclopedia of Buddhism, Encyclopedia of New Religious Movements, etc. will also be useful. Beyond these examples, our Library Reference section has an excellent collection of subject-specific reference works in Religious Studies. Your I.S. advisor(s) will direct you to some of these, but you should also take some time to browse the Religious Studies section of the Reference collection, starting with ER (BL 31. E46), and you should consider using such resources as an expectation for starting your research.

In addition to these print reference resources, OhioLink also has available a collection of Religious Studies reference sources from ABC-CLIO that are electronically available and accessible. Some of the more generally useful titles in this collection are: Religions of the World: A Comprehensive Guide to Beliefs and Practices, J. Gordon Melton & Martin Baumann, editors (ABC-CLIO 2002) and Religion and American Cultures, Gary Laderman, editor (ABC-CLIO 2003). In addition, there are several others that are tradition (e.g., Native American, Chinese, Hindu, Buddhism), or theme/issue (law, new religions, politics, sexuality, etc.) specific. The easiest way to browse this collection is as follows: OhioLink homepage (http://www.ohiolink.edu/) > E-book Center > Religion. When you get to the entire list of Religion-related electronic books (as of this writing there are 420 books in the Religion e-book collection), “modify search” and choose “ABC-CLIO” in the publisher information. That will limit the results to the ABC-CLIO reference collection.

Electronically Available Sources: Catalogues, Databases, the Internet

As novice researchers in the early 21st Century, you now have access to more scholarly information than students and scholars have ever had. Contrary to what is often asserted, this makes your research job more rather than less difficult. Because you have more access to more resources via not only print but also a range of electronically accessible sources, you have the responsibility to use these, and no excuse not to make use of what you find.

Catalogues and Databases: What’s the difference?

In the world of libraries, these are very different sorts of things yet they are more similar than different. Every library catalogue is a database of its collection; and, in a sense, every database catalogues information. What matters is having a general sense of what might be in these sources, and then figuring out how to use them as effectively as possible.

You will primarily be using two collective library catalogues: OhioLink and CONSORT. CONSORT is a small subset (Wooster, Denison, Kenyon, Ohio Wesleyan) of OL, which includes library catalogues from across the state. Basically, these catalogues are electronically accessible lists of all the books, periodicals, and other stuff in these libraries’ collections. Typically when you search these catalogues (e.g., by keyword), you are searching books, or rather, the library’s record of the books, which may
include title, author, sometimes table of contents, and whatever Library of Congress Subject Headings are assigned to that book. Generally, you are not searching “inside” the books, except at the chapter title/author level in the case of edited volumes, for instance. Likewise, with periodicals, you are not searching at the “journal article” level.

You also have access to a larger catalogue - WorldCat - which (as its title suggests) accesses library catalogues around the world. It is available on the College’s Library home page (http://library.wooster.edu/) under “Other Catalogues.”

Generally it is easier to work at the OhioLink level, because (a) it is much easier to use than WorldCat, and (b) it gives a very good sense of what books and periodicals are out there on particular topics.

Turning now to databases, the best place to begin your orientation is on the Library’s home page (http://library.wooster.edu/), at the “Databases by Title” link (http://library.wooster.edu/resources/title.php), which shows you an alphabetical list of all the subject and issue specific databases to which we subscribe. In layperson’s terms, the difference between catalogues and databases is this: a catalogue shows you what is in a library’s collection. A database is subject/discipline or issue-specific, e.g., Sociology, Literature, Gender Studies, Asian Studies, etc. Most significantly, databases search within journals and other serial publications, in addition to searching for books (that might also be found in a catalogue). Thus, database searching can reveal journal articles that catalogue searching would normally not reveal. And even though the subject area of a database is usually the most important item to note, because Religious Studies is always interdisciplinary, you should focus on the particular electronic interface that these databases use, e.g., EBSCOhost, FirstSearch, OhioLink, JSTOR, etc. that will permit you to search multiple disciplinary and subject-specific databases at once.

Two databases are explicitly Religious Studies-related:

A
ALTA Serials, Religion Collection (EBSCOhost)
[Note: next to this item is the “ATLA Religion Database (OhioLink)”, which is a different electronic interface of pretty much the same database as listed just above.

R
Religion and Philosophy Collection (EBSCOhost)

Even though these are Religious Studies-specific databases, they do not offer comprehensive searching. As you browse the databases, you may see many other databases in other fields that might contain relevant research for you. For example, you may need to be searching in History, Sociology, Psychology, Philosophy, Gender Studies, Literature, Communication Studies, and other databases. Fortunately, this task is almost as easy to perform as searching one database. Thus, searching databases one at a time is really a waste of effort and imagination on the part of the researcher.

You will notice next to the title of each database in the parentheses is another bit of information, e.g., “EBSCOhost,” “OhioLink,” etc. This shows you the specific electronic interface used by any given database. ELSCOhost is growing in popularity, which is good, because (a) both of the Religious Studies-specific databases are in EBSCOhost versions, (b) many other Religious Studies-relevant databases are also available via EBSCOhost, and (c) EBSCOhost allows you to search as many databases as you wish in one comprehensive search.

You access the EBSCOhost databases via any specific database that lists EBSCOhost as its interface. For example, when you begin to browse the alpha list of databases, the first one is “Academic Search Complete.” If you click into that one (or any EBSCOhost available database), you have a link at the top of the interface that suggests “choose databases.” Click that, and start selecting databases that might be relevant. For instance,

Academic Search Complete
ATLA Serials, Religion Collection (Religious Studies)
Religion and Philosophy Collection (Religious Studies & Philosophy)
Humanities International Complete (Humanities Disciplines)
Sociological Collection (Sociology)
You may also want to choose databases in Psychology, Gender Studies, Communication, Film, etc.

The EBSCOhost interface is also helpful as you begin searching. It suggests ways to narrow or broaden your searches, and (if you set up an account), allows you to save search results, export them, etc.

If you are not sure what databases might be useful, browse the list with your advisor(s). You will notice, perhaps that some databases do not have EBSCOhost interfaces. Two of the more popular interfaces after EBSCOhost are OhioLink, and FirstSearch.

FirstSearch is another interface, not unlike EBSCOhost, but not as user-friendly. Still, you may need to use some databases that use the FirstSearch interface. For instance, the catalogue WorldCat uses FirstSearch, as does one important Anthropology database (you may have noticed that no Anthropology databases are EBSCOhost interfaces). So, click into a FirstSearch interface database, e.g., AnthropologyPlus or WorldCat. Once in, you’ll see a tab at the top of the page for “databases.” Under this tab, you can select up to three databases (unlike EBSCOhost, which does not limit you).

Comprehensive searches would probably use WorldCat and FRANCIS, an “international, multilingual, and multidisciplinary humanities and social sciences” database. Others you might choose in this interface would depend on your interests.

JSTOR (listed under “J” in the alpha database list) is an archive of more than a thousand journals. It easily and clearly permits you to choose multiple disciplinary subsections (or simply to search the entire database). Using JSTOR is as about as easy and powerful as EBSCOhost.

Finally, OhioLink offers several databases that might be of specific use to you, such as (http://journals.ohiolink.edu/ejc/), which can be searched under broad subject headings, e.g., Humanities, Social Sciences, Health Sciences, etc.

So, given all these electronically available catalogues and databases, what about Internet or “webbase” sources more generally? Where, for instance, does Google fit into all of this? Depending on the nature of your topic, certain sorts of Web sites might, in fact, be primary sources but you should discuss this with your advisor. Google Scholar (available from the Google home page, under the “more” menu) can be helpful. Google Scholar limits your Internet searching to scholarly sites, and sometimes gives me results of journal articles, conference papers, or other scholarly web sites that were not indexed in any of the other sources used.

Your first round of research work is not done until you have worked through these various catalogues and databases, using multiple databases and multiple database interfaces.

The real challenge and skill needed for using these electronic tools lies in your ability to specify useful and usable search terms. This is the perennial problem - either you get zero results or you get thousands of results. The only way to get better at arriving at the relevant results is to practice, to keep track of your work, to be patient, and to review your results with your advisor(s) and with librarians. You will do a bit better if you preface your electronic searching with work in the basic reference sources mentioned earlier, as those will help you find and use the relevant vocabulary for your topic. EBSCOhost is helpful in this regard, as it makes suggestions as you proceed, to broaden or narrow your results, so at least you will get some help from the interface when using EBSCOhost databases. You also need to be careful to learn how to truncate or combine search terms in these various tools. Each tool shows you how to do this, but again, there is no substitute for conversation with your advisor(s) and especially with librarians when you have questions.

Most of your research will probably start with varieties of Keyword searchers, which is usually the default search option in any of these catalogues, databases, or other search engines. As noted, your reading in basic reference sources will help you develop appropriate keywords, but that reading will also direct you to specific authors and writings that can be searched specifically by author or title. Library catalogues also use the Library of Congress Subject Headings to index their collections. These subject
terms are not always easy to use directly, because you have to know the precise terms to use, but once
you find a relevant book in a catalogue (CONSORT or OhioLink), you can use the subject terms listed to
index that item to find related books.

Accessing materials - CONSORT, OhioLink, and Interlibrary loan (ILLiad)
Regarding databases and catalogues, many journal articles are available with full-text direct electronic
access, so that facilitates your access. However, some books and articles are not available through our
extensive OhioLink system. For those, you need to use Interlibrary loan, i.e., ILLiad, which is linked to
the Library’s home page. You should set up an ILLiad account, so that if you need to use it, it will be
available. Moreover, in some cases, when searching in databases where you have the option of searching
directly in OhioLink for journal availability, if an article is not available through OhioLink sources, you
can go directly to ILLiad, and have the ILLiad request automatically filled out.

College of Wooster Libraries Subject Guides: Religion
Additional guidance for finding appropriate resources related to Religious Studies is available on the
following Subject Guide Web site for Religious Studies:

http://library.wooster.edu/resources/subjects/religion.php

Library Reference Consultation
Once you have a general idea of your topic, you should have a consultation with a reference librarian.
This should be done by making an appointment for a reference consultation by using the following online
form:

http://library.wooster.edu/forms/consultation.php

Checklist of Basic Steps in the Research Process
Here is a simple checklist of basic steps in the research process:

_____ Search Encyclopedia of Religion, 2nd edition, using the list of articles and the index. Copy relevant articles and share with your advisor(s).

_____ Browse and find other relevant subject-specific encyclopedias, dictionaries, or handbooks, and search them. Copy and share relevant articles/entries.

_____ From your reading, and in consultation with your advisor(s) and librarians, develop a working list of key terms that can be used in searching electronic catalogues, databases, and Google Scholar.

_____ Search catalogues, e.g., OhioLink. Save results to share with advisor(s).

_____ Using the various interfaces, as described earlier, choose relevant databases and search them. Save results to share.

_____ As you begin to read the various items you find, you will no doubt begin to refine your sense of your topic, and may need to re-visit some of these search tools, to make sure you have not missed anything crucial. A follow-up consultation with a librarian might be a good idea.

Henry J. Copeland Fund for Independent Study
For details on this program, which supports Senior I.S. research, see the following:
http://www.wooster.edu/Independent-Study/Copeland-Fund-for-Independent-Study

Proposals for Fall Semester 2012 funding - i.e., for 2012-2013 Seniors seeking support for I.S. research during Winter Break - are (tentatively) due Thursday, September 27, 2012. Proposals for Spring 2013 funding - i.e., for rising Class of 2014 Seniors seeking support for I.S research during Summer 2013 - are (tentatively) due Wednesday, March 27, 2013. If you are considering applying for such support, be sure to check the link above for updated deadlines, and be sure to talk with your I.S. advisor(s) as soon as possible.
A Final Note

For seniors, starting from the beginning of Fall semester, I.S. Monday is 211 days away. In other words, about seven months.