

PROGRAM-SPECIFIC COMPETENCIES - RELIGIOUS STUDIES

Competencies are the skills, knowledge and attributes gained through every work, educational, volunteer and life experience.

UVic students in the [Religious studies](#) program develop the following program-specific competencies. We worked with the Department of Religious studies to develop this document.

CRITICAL THINKING

Fosters critical thinking about a wide variety of textual, visual, cultural, material and archeological sources:

- + Understands the importance of historical, political and cultural context in the interpretation of texts
- + Identifies the critical questions to be asked of a religious event, figure, phenomenon, theory, text, and debate

CONTEMPORARY SIGNIFICANCE

Understand the significance of religious artifacts and ideas on today's society:

- + Comprehends the historical and cultural origins of the ideas, texts, art forms, architectural expressions, rituals and ideas associated with the world's religious, spiritual, national and ethnic traditions from Asia, Europe, Africa, and the Americas
- + Has a strong sense of the link between the contemporary and ancient worlds

METHODS OF INQUIRY

Uses a very wide variety of intellectual approaches in order to understand religious phenomena:

- + Uses anthropological or ethnographic approaches to study contemporary religious communities in his or her own or a far removed culture
- + Focuses on the history, politics and literary conventions associated with "sacred" texts or commentaries upon those texts
- + Addresses the ways religious traditions and institutions have shaped particular notions of what it means to be a woman or a man
- + Is concerned with the role of religion in historical periods or events
- + Participates in political debates around the real-world challenges faced by orthodox religious adherents in secular or secularizing societies from around the world and particularly as it relates to Canada
- + Immerses himself or herself in philosophical or theological analyses of the relationship between particular ideas, claims, arguments, and debates in the modern or ancient, and eastern or western, worlds
- + Explores the role of economic and political forces in the ways religions have developed, as well as the role of religious forces in the way economies and political groups have developed, and the ways these forces play a role in the present

SOCIAL AND CULTURAL PERSPECTIVE

Understands texts, visual culture and material culture in their social and cultural contexts

- + Understands the means by which knowledge was generated and transmitted in religious cultures
- + Assesses the enduring importance of classical scholarship upon the intellectual and artistic traditions of the religious world
- + Critically evaluates the role of religious belief in the formation of societies
- + Appreciates the cultural interactions between different ethnic, religious, political and socioeconomic communities.
- + Proposes critical assessment of spiritual discourses and practices