

RELIGIOUS STUDIES, CONTEMPLATIVE STUDIES (BA IN RELIGIOUS STUDIES)

The Contemplative Studies major explores the nature, practices, and effects of contemplative experience across cultures and traditions, examining how practices like meditation, mindfulness, prayer, and ritual shape human consciousness, ethics, and well-being. Contemplative Studies bridges disciplines like neuroscience, psychology, philosophy, religious studies, education, and the arts, and involves active experiential learning, to explore fundamental questions of self and one's being in the world—how we think, feel, relate, and flourish. Consultation with a Contemplative Studies advisor is expected.

Required Credit Hours: 30

Major Writing Requirement:

Students can fulfill the Major Writing Requirement by completing RELG 391 Theory and Method in the Study of Religion with a C- grade or better.

Contemplative Studies Requirements:

Religious literacy is foundational to Contemplative Studies because contemplative practices are deeply embedded in the historical and philosophical traditions that shaped them. By requiring case studies in Buddhism and Hindu Traditions students engage two of the world's richest contemplative lineages through historical and textual case studies. These courses provide essential context for understanding how practices of contemplation, wisdom, and self-transformation developed, and how they continue to inform contemporary practices.

Code	Title	Hours
Degree Core Requirements:		
RELG 201	Religions of the World: The Human Religious Experience	3
RELG 391	Theory and Method in the Study of Religion	4
2 Courses from Traditions:		6
RELG 213	Introduction to Hinduism	
RELG 214	Buddhism	

Through these required course students will be able to: understand and explain the psychological and neurological mechanisms underpinning awareness, emotion, mental health, and self-regulation; examine and compare contemplative traditions and practices across cultures and time periods; analyze and evaluate recent scientific studies on the cognitive, affective, and neurophysiological effects of meditation, and compare and contrast these findings with key Buddhist and Hindu texts on meditation and conceptions of the self.

PSYC 201	Introduction to Psychology as a Natural Science	3
RELG 320	Meditation & Wellness: Introduction to Contemplative Studies	4
One Contemplative Studies (CTST) course that also carries the PSYC or BIOL or NSCI attribute. Options include:		3
NSCI 305	Exploring Neuroscience: Molecules, Cells, and Synapses	
or BIOL 345 Neurobiology		
NSCI 306	Exploring Neuroscience: Brain Systems & Behavior	

or PSYC 313 Physiological Psych		
PSYC 311	Cognitive Psychology	
PSYC 355	Cognitive Science	
PSYC 448	Self-transcendent States	
PSYC 470	Topics in Psychology (Science of Positive Psychology)	
One Wellness Application Course		1
Through this requirement, students will engage in mind-body practices and meditative techniques that support wellness and enhance empathy, focus, regulation, & resilience—key predictors of academic and life success.		
INTR 110M	Mindfulness Meditation	
INTR 110Y	Yoga	
INTR 110	Wellness Applications (Intro to East Asian Medicine)	
INTR 110	Wellness Applications (Sound Wellness)	
Electives		6
One elective at any level. This can include any of the below electives at 300/400 level, select RELG 100s, select RELG 150s, transfer RELG credit in the field of Contemplative Studies, or any course that carries the CNST attribute. Consult with your advisor to see if your COLL 100/150 or transfer credit can fulfill this requirement.		
Remaining elective at the 300/400 level. This can be any course at the 300 or 400 level that carries the CTST attribute. Options include the PSYC, BIOL, and NSCI courses listed above as well as:		
DANC 304	Mind-Body Unity in a Fractured World: Introduction to Somatics and Social Justice	
PHIL 345	Philosophy of Mind	
RELG 215	History of Religion in East Asia	
RELG 340	Spiritual But Not Religious	
RELG 364	Yoga and Tantra	
RELG 380	Buddhist Philosophy	
RELG 382	Buddhism and Science	
Total Hours		30