

Religion and Philosophy

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Religion and Philosophy Degrees

Religion and Philosophy Major (BA)

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The religion and philosophy major at Lyon College offers students a broad range of courses rich in philosophical and theological thought. Because it combines rigor and clarity of thought and expression with concern for all aspects of the human condition, the study of religion and philosophy also provides a strong foundation for a range of professions.

All RPH majors will take the advanced seminar. They will either undertake in-depth research and complete a project on a topic in religion or philosophy or connect religious and philosophical insights to other academic disciplines. With the approval of RPH faculty, students in other disciplines may take this course and connect their specialized fields to theological or philosophical perspectives.

Students can choose one of four possible tracks in religion and philosophy.

NOTE: To graduate with a Bachelor of Arts or Bachelor of Science degree from Lyon College, students must successfully complete a minimum of 120 semester credit hours comprised of our required Core curriculum (44-48 hours), the requirements of at least one major (credit hours vary per major), and a selection of our Liberal Arts electives. They must also earn at least a 2.00 cumulative grade point average for all work taken at Lyon College and a 2.00 cumulative grade point average in their major, minor, and concentration.

Track One: General RPH major

Item #	Title	Credits
	RPH Foundation Classes (Choose 4)	12
	General RPH Electives (21 credits)	21
RPH 470	Advanced Seminar: In-depth Study of Religion and Philosophy	3

Track Two: RPH Major with a focus on religion

Item #	Title	Credits
	RPH Foundation Classes (Choose 4)	12
	RPH: Religion Electives	21
RPH 470	Advanced Seminar: In-depth Study of Religion and Philosophy	3

Track Three: RPH major with a focus on philosophy

Item #	Title	Credits
	RPH Foundation Classes (Choose 4)	12
	RPH: Philosophy Electives	21
RPH 470	Advanced Seminar: In-depth Study of Religion and Philosophy	3

Track Four: RPH major with a focus on ethics

Item #	Title	Credits
	RPH Foundation Classes (Choose 4)	12
	RPH: Ethics Electives	21
RPH 470	Advanced Seminar: In-depth Study of Religion and Philosophy	3

CORE CURRICULUM

Item #	Title	Credits
	Core Curriculum Requirements (In addition to Major hours)	44-48
	Total Credits	80-84

RPH Foundation Classes (Choose 4)

Regardless of which track they choose, all RPH majors are required to take four of the following eight courses:

Item #	Title	Credits
RPH 110	Old Testament	3
RPH 120	New Testament	3
RPH 130	Introduction to Christian Theology	3
RPH 140	Introduction to World Philosophies	3
RPH 150	World Religions	3
RPH 205	Introduction to Ethics	3
RPH 210	The Legacy of Ancient Greek Civilization in the Era of Globalization	3
RPH 306	Logic	3

General RPH Electives (21 credits)

Select 7 religion and philosophy courses to fulfill this elective.

RPH: Religion Electives

Select 7 courses from the following:

* Students can also take HIS 329, 331, 354 or 355 in lieu of RPH 329, 331, 354 and 355, respectively.

Item #	Title	Credits
RPH 205	Introduction to Ethics	3
RPH 320	Christian Ethics	3
RPH 325	Jesus and the Gospels	3
RPH 329	The Early Church	3
RPH 331	The Middle Ages	3
RPH 354	The Byzantine Empire	3
RPH 358	The Reformation	3
RPH 365	Topics in Religion	3
RPH 450	Independent Study	
RPH 460	RPH Practicum	

RPH: Philosophy Electives

Select 7 courses from the following:

* Students can also take POL 351 and 353 in lieu of RPH 351 and 353, respectively.

Item #	Title	Credits
RPH 210	The Legacy of Ancient Greek Civilization in the Era of Globalization	3
RPH 306	Logic	3
RPH 335	Women's Issues	3
RPH 337	Plato's Dialogues	3
RPH 350	Business and Professional Ethics	3
RPH 351	Ancient Political Philosophy	3
RPH 353	Modern Political Philosophy	3
RPH 360	Introduction to Contemporary Critical Theory	3
RPH 362	Environmental Ethics	3
RPH 370	Topics in Philosophy	3
RPH 450	Independent Study	
RPH 460	RPH Practicum	

RPH: Ethics Electives

Select 7 courses from the following:

Item #	Title	Credits
RPH 205	Introduction to Ethics	3
RPH 306	Logic	3
RPH 320	Christian Ethics	3
RPH 335	Women's Issues	3
RPH 350	Business and Professional Ethics	3
RPH 362	Environmental Ethics	3
RPH 450	Independent Study	
RPH 460	RPH Practicum	

Religion and Philosophy Minor

The religion and philosophy minor is a body of courses designed as a second field for students who wish to develop their skills of thought and expression and their understanding of the human experience through an exploration of philosophical and theological thought.

Summary of Requirements for a Minor in Religion and Philosophy

Item #	Title	Credits
	RPH Minor Electives	18
	Total Credits	18

RPH Minor Electives

Students must select 6 RPH courses, including at least three at the 300 level or above.

Religion and Philosophy (RPH) Courses

RPH 110: Old Testament

Introduction to critical and interpretive methods in the study of the Old Testament.

Credits 3

RPH 120: New Testament

Introduction to critical and interpretive methods in the study of the New Testament.

Credits 3

RPH 130: Introduction to Christian Theology

Basic beliefs and forms of the Christian religion.

Credits 3

RPH 140: Introduction to World Philosophies

Philosophical problems, methods, and values as they have developed in various world cultures, with a comparison between Western and non-Western world views, such as Hinduism, Buddhism, and Confucianism. Emphasis is given to the ways different world views affect international relations today.

Credits 3

RPH 150: World Religions

Survey of several major living religions, including Hinduism, Buddhism, Taoism, Confucianism, Shinto, Judaism, and Islam. Students will study each religion in terms of its social, cultural, historical, ritual, and symbolic experiences.

Credits 3

RPH 205: Introduction to Ethics

The course examines the place of ethics within philosophy and religion, major ethical theories, and how ethical theories can be applied to contemporary issues, such as abortion, homosexuality, capital punishment, the environment, and euthanasia.

Credits 3

Prerequisites

ENG 102

RPH 210: The Legacy of Ancient Greek Civilization in the Era of Globalization

The class examines how all aspects of Ancient Greek civilization fit together into a unified worldview. Among other aspects of the culture, we will discuss the mythology (religion); the religious rituals; the cultural context of the Olympics; the cultural context of the performance of tragedies; and the political- legal system, including trial by jury and political decisions determined by an assembly of citizens. We will read literary and philosophical texts including some Pre-Socratic philosophers, Hesiod's creation story, Homer, Greek tragedy, Plato, and excerpts from Aristotle in order to better understand the worldview underlying the texts. All along the way, we will be looking for analogies with our own experiences in culture. We will reflect upon the lessons the Ancient Greeks were trying to pass on to posterity and the ways those lessons are or are not relevant for us today.

Credits 3

Prerequisites

One RPH class, HIS 201, or permission of the instructor.

RPH 306: Logic

Study and practice of the basic skills of critical thinking, including deductive, inductive, analogical, cause-effect, statistical analysis, and normative argument.

Credits 3

Prerequisites

One RPH class or permission of instructor.

RPH 310: Philosophy of Art

Readings from Western and non-Western texts on the nature of art with emphasis on issues of race, gender, multiculturalism, and the natural environment. Central questions include the following: What is art? What is beauty? What is creativity? What is the relationship between a work of art and the artist? The audience? The critic? What is the relationship between art and politics? Ethics? Education? Psychology? Religion? Reason? Faith? What makes an experience an aesthetic experience?

Credits 3

Prerequisites

Permission of instructor.

RPH 320: Christian Ethics

Study of the basic approaches and principles of Christian ethics with special attention to the ethics of character and the use of the Bible and theology in ethics. Application will be made to several contemporary ethical issues, including character formation; marriage, family, and sexuality; the sanctity of life; and environmental issues.

Credits 3

Prerequisites

RPH 110, 120, or 130

RPH 325: Jesus and the Gospels

An examination of the four canonical gospels, along with some non-canonical documents (e.g., Gospel of Thomas), in terms of their literary and historical meanings to better understand the nature of Jesus Christ as a focus of religious faith and as a focus of historical research.

Credits 3

Prerequisites

RPH 110, RPH 120, or RPH 130 or permission of instructor.

RPH 329: The Early Church

The development of Christian thought and life to 600 A.D. (Same as HIS 329)

Credits 3

Prerequisites

RPH 120 or permission of instructor.

RPH 331: The Middle Ages

Survey of the history of Europe from the fall of the Roman Empire to the end of the 15th century. Topics include the Christianization of Europe, the evolution of feudalism, the rise of the papacy, the Crusades and the Hundred Years' War. (Same as HIS 331)

Credits 3

Prerequisites

HIS 201 or permission of the instructor.

RPH 335: Women's Issues

An examination of the history of beliefs regarding the treatment of women, the Women's Movement in the West, and international women's issues today. Beginning in Ancient Crete, the course will discuss how ideas surrounding human nature and the human condition have led to social institutions and expectations which affect women's experiences in relation to sexuality, gender, marriage, child rearing, education, religion, the legal system, economics, politics, and the relation between culture and nature. The last half of the class will focus on issues women face today, in particular the impact of race, class, ethnicity, post-colonialism, and economic globalization.

Credits 3

Prerequisites

one RPH class or permission of the instructor.

RPH 337: Plato's Dialogues

"Know thyself," "an unexamined life is not worth living," "nothing in excess." Most Westerners have heard these expressions and know something about the Gold Age of Athens. Plato was born when Athens was thought to be the greatest democratic society in human history. He watched as ignorance, lust, pride, greed, delusions, arrogance, and self-absorption led to the collapse of the great "free and open society." The "liberals" destroyed Athens with their self-indulgence, the conservatives destroyed Athens with their religious and intellectual intolerance, those who sought military or economic empire building drove the city to overextended itself and fall apart. The dialogues read in this class take place before Athens destroyed itself. Plato's readers must have natural intelligence and educational opportunity and be living in a society that allows citizens free intellectual inquiry. He is showing his readers what the Athenians made.

Credits 3

Prerequisites

at least one RPH class and junior or senior standing or permission of the instructor.

RPH 350: Business and Professional Ethics

Examination of professional responsibility with case studies of ethical issues in business and the professions.

(Same as ECO 350)

Credits 3

RPH 351: Ancient Political Philosophy

An examination of the political thinkers who started the Western political tradition. Concentrating on original sources, students will consider the origin of political philosophy in selected works by such authors as Xenophon, Plato, and Aristotle. (Same as POL 351)

Credits 3

RPH 353: Modern Political Philosophy

Study of major political thinkers such as Machiavelli, Locke, Rousseau, Hume, and Marx. Students will concentrate on selected works and topics that have influenced contemporary politics. (Same as POL 353)

Credits 3

RPH 354: The Byzantine Empire

The rise and fall of the Byzantine Empire from 330 to 1453 with emphasis on the political, social, and economic structures of Byzantium and the religion and culture of its peoples. In addition, students will study the influence of Byzantium on the Slavs, Arabs, Turks, and Western European kingdoms. (Same as HIS 354)

Credits 3

Prerequisites

HIS 201 or permission of instructor.

RPH 358: The Reformation

An exploration of the causes and consequences of the Reformation with emphasis on understanding the role of the major reformers such as Luther, Calvin, and Loyola. In addition, students will explore the Reformation's sociopolitical and cultural dimensions. (Same as HIS 355)

Credits 3

Prerequisites

HIS 201 or permission of instructor.

RPH 360: Introduction to Contemporary Critical Theory

An introduction to the theory and practice of several vital critical approaches to literature, including cultural-historical, psychoanalytic, deconstructive, and feminist methodologies. Readings will include selections from primary theoretical texts by such figures as Freud, Lacan, Kristeva, Irigaray, Barthes, Derrida, Saussure, and Foucault, as well as selected literary texts to be interpreted through the various critical methods. This course is highly recommended for students interested in attending graduate school in literature, arts, and humanities. (Same as ENG 365)

Credits 3

Prerequisites

ENG 290 or 291 OR any 300-level foreign-language literature course. Students in other disciplines who are interested in critical theory may enroll with permission of instructor.

RPH 362: Environmental Ethics

Readings in environmental ethics that address the ways Western and non-Western philosophies have shaped understanding of the environment and responses to environmental problems. Discussions will revolve around utilitarianism, libertarianism, Christianity, Hinduism, and deep ecology. Among the problems discussed will be overpopulation, global warming, and various plans for addressing environmental needs.

Credits 3

Prerequisites

100-level RPH course

RPH 365: Topics in Religion

Study in areas such as biblical interpretation, systematic and historical theology, and world religions.

Credits 3

Prerequisites

Permission of instructor.

RPH 370: Topics in Philosophy

Study in areas such as philosophical psychology and philosophical perspectives on various contemporary moral problems.

Credits 3

Prerequisites

Permission of instructor.

RPH 450: Independent Study

Concentrated study in selected fields.

RPH 460: RPH Practicum

Variable credit.

RPH 470: Advanced Seminar: In-depth Study of Religion and Philosophy

Students will do in-depth research and complete a project or paper on a topic either in Religion or Philosophy, or connecting Religious and Philosophical insights to other academic disciplines. With the approval of RPH faculty, students majoring in disciplines other than Religion and Philosophy are also invited to take this course.

Credits 3