The religious studies minor is a broadly based interdisciplinary program focused on the various components of religious aspects of human life. This minor is designed to complement academic programs currently offered at Bethel and responds to Bethel’s commitment to understanding diversity, specifically with regard to the fact of religious diversity. The context of the program is an evangelical Christian liberal arts environment that seeks to foster an appreciation for the complexity of the human religious phenomenon; to develop the capacity to critically evaluate religious traditions and worldviews; and to cultivate the skills necessary to engage responsibly as evangelical Christians in religiously plural societies. The goal for students in this program is not only to supplement their major field of study with further preparation for a variety of roles, including leadership in many professional settings, but also to prepare them for graduate study in religion and related fields.

Minor in Religious Studies

• Religious Studies (http://catalog.bethel.edu/academics/catalog/2015-2016/arts-sciences/academic-programs-departments/religious-studies/religious-studies-minor)

REL201 • Religion and Art in Asia. 3 Credits.
Examination of artistic expressions of the major religious traditions of India, China, Japan, and Southeast Asia. Definitions of “religion” and “art” provide a guide for identifying and understanding Asian architecture, statuary, and paintings. Doctrinal and ritual elements of the major traditions are explained, and art that symbolizes and expresses these elements is analyzed.
Offered: Spring, even # years. Special Notes: Carries cross-credit in art.

REL202 • Introduction to Religious Studies. 3 Credits.
An introduction to the world’s religious traditions and to the history and methods of religious studies as a discipline. Using primary and secondary sources, this course focuses on affirmations regarding ultimate reality as it relates to the meaning and purpose of human existence within various religious and cultural contexts.
Prerequisites: GES130 (may be taken concurrently) or GES244 (may be taken concurrently). Offered: Fall or spring.

REL205U • Religions of India, China and Japan. 3 Credits.
Introduction to the study of religion and its application to religions of India, China, and Japan. The origin, development, and diversity of major and minor religions including Hindu, Buddhist, Confucian, and Shinto traditions through reading primary and secondary literature. The spread and importance of these traditions in America is demonstrated.
Prerequisites: GES130 (may be taken concurrently) or GES244 (may be taken concurrently). Offered: Fall.

REL206UZ • Religious Traditions in Asia: Thailand. 3 Credits.
Formal academic study, direct observation of, and interaction with the Buddhist, Muslim, Christian, and traditional religions on location in Thailand. The rich presence of mosques, pagodas, temples, churches, and shrines supported by the respective communities of faith provides the opportunity to engage with living representatives and with the concrete manifestations of the traditions. Interaction with representatives of the religions supplement academic learning.
Prerequisites: GES130 (may be taken concurrently) or GES244 (may be taken concurrently). Offered: Occasionally interim.

REL212U • History of Islam. 3 Credits.
Introduces the religion of Islam from its inception and development to Islam as it is practiced worldwide today. Students interact with members of the Islamic community in Minnesota in an attempt to understand Islam from the personal experiences of Muslims. Contemporary issues and controversies are examined through the lens of the Muslim experience throughout history.
Prerequisites: GES130 (may be taken concurrently) or GES244 (may be taken concurrently). Offered: Spring. Special Notes: Carries cross-credit in history.

REL225L • New Religious Movements. 3 Credits.
History, beliefs, and practices of the major alternative religions active in America today, including Mormonism, Jehovah’s Witnesses, offshoots of Eastern religious traditions, and the New Age movement. Relationships of these movements to their parent traditions are discussed and comparative analyses drawn.
Prerequisites: BIB101; GES130 (may be taken concurrently) or GES244 (may be taken concurrently). Offered: Occasionally.

REL230L • Politics and Religion in the United States. 3 Credits.
Examines the historical and contemporary relationship between religion and politics in the United States. Divisions and political affiliations of various religious communities are considered alongside discussion of secularism, pluralism, and civil religion in America.
Prerequisites: GES130 (may be taken concurrently) or GES244 (may be taken concurrently). Offered: Interim. Special Notes: Carries cross-credit in political science.

REL328G • Muslim Women in History. 3 Credits.
Global survey of the lives of Muslim women from the 7th century to the present. Examination of how Muslim women’s lives have historically been shaped by their social context, with particular attention to religious interpretation and expression, culture, ethnicity, and geographic location.
Prerequisites: [GES130; Contemporary Western Life and Thought (L) course; World Cultures (U) course] or [GES246; World Cultures (U) course]. Offered: Interim. Special Notes: Carries cross-credit in history.
REL356 • Judaism. 3 Credits.

REL401 • Christianity and the World's Religions. 3 Credits.
Exploration of the historical and contemporary relationships of Christianity and various world religions, specifically focused at the theological level. Focus rotates from year to year, emphasizing the interfaith dialogue between Christianity and one other world religious tradition.

Prerequisites: BIB101; THE201. Offered: Occasionally. Special Notes: Carries cross-credit in biblical and theological studies.