

## QUICK FACTS

# Philosophy & Religion

## THE “PRE-LIFE” MAJOR EXPLORES THE NATURE OF REALITY...

The Philosophy & Religion program is dedicated to freedom of thought and inquiry. The various aspects of the study of philosophy and religion reflect some of the quintessential efforts of human beings throughout history to know themselves, their society, and their purpose in life. Philosophy has also sought to free individuals from the forces of ignorance, fear, and injustice in society. The exploration of religious traditions likewise requires students to see the world as others have and to challenge their preconceived notions about what is “true” and “right” in the world. The support for critical inquiry on the part of the Philosophy & Religion faculty inevitably goes hand in hand with the advancement of knowledge and the personal, social, and intellectual growth of our students.

## FACULTY

- ▶ The Philosophy & Religion Department includes 10 full-time and 3 part-time faculty members, all of whom hold a terminal degree (Ph.D. or Th.D.) in their field.
- ▶ Learn more about the faculty at [http://philosophy-religion.truman.edu/philosophy\\_religionfaculty.asp](http://philosophy-religion.truman.edu/philosophy_religionfaculty.asp)

## GOALS

- ▶ Broad, foundational understanding of the history and practices of philosophies and religions
- ▶ Engaged familiarity with methodological questions in philosophy and religious studies

- ▶ Knowledgeable appreciation of philosophical issues and questions of religion that relate to other disciplines
- ▶ Critical and empathetic reading of texts
- ▶ Development of critical thinking
- ▶ Communication and argumentation skills
- ▶ Intellectual independence
- ▶ The capacity for open-mindedness and ethical sensitivity.

## CURRICULUM

- ▶ We offer a Bachelor of Arts (B.A.) degree and a minor in Philosophy & Religion. Both directly support and expand the liberal arts experience.
- ▶ The Philosophy & Religion major is flexible, and almost half of our students are double majors. It is an area of study that can be integrated with any other field in the liberal arts.
- ▶ It is a great complement to pre-professional programs, especially in education and health sciences – fields in which our majors regularly find jobs after graduation.

## WHAT MAKES PHRE STUDENTS DISTINCTIVE?

- ▶ **CRITICAL THINKING** Nearly 80% of graduating majors surveyed on how well the major prepared them to think critically – arguably the most important question for any Truman graduate – gave the major the top score, compared to less than 60% for Truman overall. Similar scores are found on the question “How adequately has your major prepared you to apply knowledge in defining problems and solving them?”  
All of our majors and minors learn to examine the way arguments are made and evaluate their claims; they learn to avoid fallacies of bad scholarship, such as ad hominem attacks, straw man arguments, and poor attribution of sources.
- ▶ **WRITING** The program emphasizes strong, clear, persuasive writing as the best place to demonstrate critical thinking. A

PHRE major or minor will leave with professional-level writing skills applicable to any kind of employment the student wishes to pursue – an essential qualification that will give you an edge over most other candidates for a job.

- ▶ **RESEARCH** All PHRE majors and minors have the potential to work closely with one or more faculty members on a research project – either the student's or the professor's. Multiple presentation opportunities exist for student work:

*Truman Conferences*

  - The **Annual Undergraduate Philosophy & Religion Conference**, hosted by the Department of Philosophy & Religion and drawing students from Missouri and other states.
  - The **Student Research Conference**, held at Truman in April.

*National Conferences*

    - American Academy of Religion; Society of Biblical Literature; American Philosophical Association; Midsouth Undergraduate Philosophy Conference; National Conference on Undergraduate Research.
  - ▶ **HONORS** PHRE students are regularly recognized for their academic achievements, including:

    - The Rhodes Scholarship. In Fall 2009, Truman was honored with its first-ever Rhodes Scholar, Andrew McCall, a PHRE major.
    - The Fulbright Scholarship.
    - Phi Kappa Phi.
    - Phi Beta Kappa.
    - Theta Alpha Kappa, the Undergraduate Theological and Religious Studies Honors Society.
    - Departmental Honors and Outstanding Students in Philosophy and Religion.
    - Valedictorian.

## AFTER THE DEGREE

- ▶ **GRADUATE SCHOOL** PHRE majors and minors have enrolled in any number of the top graduate programs in the country, including the University of Chicago, Duke University, Claremont Graduate Union, Emory University, and Georgetown Law. They have been

prepared for studies not only in philosophy, theology, and religious studies, but also in fields as diverse as information science, chemistry, library science, and music. Invariably, majors report entering graduate school far more prepared than most of their peers in the same programs. Many are now Ph.D.s in their fields and teach at the college level.

- ▶ **LAW** The program is an ideal preparation for the analytic and argumentative environment of the law profession. In fact, in a recent study on top scorers nationwide on the LSAT law school entrance exam, undergraduate philosophy majors ranked second after mathematics.
- ▶ **EDUCATION** Many of our majors wish to teach elementary or high school and transition fluidly from Truman to the M.A.E. (Masters of Arts in Education), with specializations in English as a Second Language (our graduates have taught in France and China), Special Education, and Music Education. Some also become school administrators.
- ▶ **HEALTH PROFESSIONS** Many graduates find opportunities in one of the fastest-growing fields of employment, working in nursing, hospital administration, elder care, and community health.
- ▶ **MINISTRY** Frequently students choose PHRE because of their interest in religious outreach and education. Graduates have sought seminary degrees at Columbia Theological Seminary, Covenant Theological Seminary, Denver Seminary, Duke Divinity School, Dallas Theological Seminary, and Midwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, and have worked as pastors, chaplains, and youth ministers.
- ▶ **NON-PROFITS** The values and skills common to PHRE majors naturally lend themselves to work in non-profit organizations. Recent graduates have found positions in non-government organizations in the Middle East, the Missouri Historical Society, the Peace Corps, grants research, community theatre, intentional/sustainable communities, and state government – including an internship with Missouri's Lt. Governor.

## COOL STUFF TO STUDY

A Sampling of Courses that will *get you thinking*

- ▶ Exploring Religions
- ▶ Philosophy and Literature
- ▶ Religion and American Culture
- ▶ Judaism, Christianity, Islam
- ▶ Hinduism, Buddhism, Taoism
- ▶ Chinese and Japanese Religions
- ▶ Yoga Traditions
- ▶ Feminist Ethics
- ▶ Symbolic Logic
- ▶ Psychology and Religion
- ▶ The Mystical Vision
- ▶ Jesus of Nazareth
- ▶ Philosophy of Religion
- ▶ Medieval Philosophy
- ▶ Philosophy of Action
- ▶ Faith and Reason in Christian Thought
- ▶ Philosophy of Mathematics
- ▶ Philosophy of Language
- ▶ Religion and Science
- ▶ Understanding the New Testament
- ▶ Philosophical Writings of Augustine
- ▶ Contemporary Continental Philosophy
- ▶ Special Topics Classes (PHRE 386): Consciousness, Ethics and Emotion, Environmental Ethics, Religion and Film, New Religious Movements; The Millennium and the Apocalypse
- ▶ Junior Interdisciplinary Seminars (JINS) taught by PHRE faculty: Friendship; Cultural Crossroads; Jerusalem; Varieties of Non-violence; Religion, Health, and Healing; On Human Nature; The Faust Tradition