

# **CULTURAL STUDIES - RELIGIOUS STUDIES CONCENTRATION - FOR STUDENTS MATRICULATED AFTER JULY 1, 2006 BUT BEFORE SEPT. 3, 2014**

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The academic study of religious traditions requires the student to develop the ability to use relevant methods of critical thinking, reading, and writing to analyze and assess the content of religious texts, beliefs, and practices.

The studies should:

- Reflect a multicultural perspective and include an awareness of diverse representations of religious expressions in their ancient, modern and contemporary forms.
- Contain a substantive historical component that fosters an understanding of the growth and development of religions in various cultures and of significant cross-cultural relationships.
- Reflect an interdisciplinary perspective that provides the student an understanding of the usefulness of diverse disciplinary (e.g., sociological, psychological, philosophical) approaches to the study of religion.

Although individuals may find religious studies useful in the exploration of their personal beliefs, prospective students should be aware that the faculty of Empire State College is committed to a pluralistic perspective in teaching religious studies, examining multiple schools of religious thought including critiques of religion itself. The faculty's commitment also includes the tacit understanding that no tradition has exclusive access to religious truth, however that is defined.

At Empire State College, a well-designed religious studies program should evidence:

- Study of diverse religious expressions including those from the East and West.
- Historical study of religion.
- Consideration of the phenomenon of religion through the social sciences.
- Consideration of recurring religious themes, patterns, structures, language and practices.
- Examination of the place of religion in society both as an institution and as an ethical and/or moral force.
- Critical study of the significance of sacred texts, scriptures, traditions, rituals and devotional practices.