

Religion and Social Change

Description:

The concentration in Religion and Social Change (RSC) is an interdisciplinary research program focusing on the relation of religions and societies. Religion functions sometimes to conserve values in the midst of change; sometimes to inhibit urgently needed change, and sometimes to empower and motivate qualitative change. The concentration provides a scholarly context for pursuing descriptive, analytic and constructive examination of these complex interrelationships between religions and societies. A commitment to explore the ways religious thought may contribute to responsible engagement with contemporary societal and global challenges is a major dimension of this concentration. A critical aspect of this exploration is the systemic whole of globalization within which particular contexts and problems are located. Academic disciplines especially germane to this interdisciplinary concentration are social sciences (e.g. sociology, anthropology, international studies); religious, intellectual and cultural histories; and critical reflection (ethics, philosophy, theology, cultural theory). An assumption of this program is that the interrelationships of religions and societies are most fruitfully understood through a combination of descriptive, historical and critical theories and methods.

Within this concentration, special resources are available in:

- Religion, Politics and Social Change in varied societal contexts (e.g. Europe, First Nation Peoples, Middle East, North America, South Asia, Southern Africa)
- Religious and Cultural Diversity in varied societal contexts (see above)
- Postcolonial Thought and Critiques of Globalization
- Critical Theory Pertaining to Systemic Analysis
- American Indian Cultures and Religious Traditions
- Human Rights
- Latina/o Religion and Religion on the Border

Requirements:

In addition to the three required Core courses required of all students, RSC Concentration students are required to take two of the following courses during the coursework portion of their program:

1) THEO 6305: Postcolonial Discourse and Other Myths, and

2) THEO 6365: Topics in Religion and Social Change.

Each Seminar will be taught by a faculty member or a team of faculty members from within the Concentration on a topic germane to the Concentration. The Seminars will be offered every other year on a rotating basis and will count for 4 or 5 quarter hours of credit.