Religious studies

Degree conferred
Bachelor of Arts

Options
For information on the optional award of the distinction «Bilingual curriculum, French/German», please contact the relevant Department (see Contact).

Languages of study
Possibility to study in French, in German or in French and German. Some courses are offered in English.

Commencement of studies
Commencement of studies in the Autumn Semester (September) or in the Spring Semester (February)

Access to further studies
This bachelor programme qualifies students for the master programme **Culture, Politics and Religion in Pluralist Societies**.

If you are interested in the specifics of religions in their historical, social and cultural contexts, this bachelor programme will introduce you to religions outside of Europe and to the main historical religions. You will study the central role they play in past and present societies, how they affect individuals, interactions between social groups and relationships between men and women. This programme focuses on issues specific to sociology in fields such as religion, politics, law and education, as well as societal phenomena, such as Islam in Switzerland.
In addition to learning scientific research and presentation techniques, you will become familiar with historical and empirical research methods in social sciences, such as survey methods (interviews, observation) and methods of analysis. In addition, you will be given opportunities to visit religious communities and attend certain religious festivals.

Profile of the study programme

The study of religions began in Europe in the 19th century out of an interest for the history of religions, on the one hand, and for religions outside of Europe on the other. The initial purpose was to understand, in an objective manner, the historical bases and the main themes of the different religions, by the recourse to the methods of disciplines such as philology, linguistics, archaeology, sociology and history, while at the same time remaining impartial to theological points of view. Today, the study of religions focuses on the particularities of religions in their different historical, social and cultural contexts. Until recently, it focused mainly on the study of religions outside of Europe and on the main historical religions. But, in recent years, empirical sociological research on everyday religion has become an increasing focus of investigation.

Religions in today's societies
Religions play a key role in the study of the past and present of European societies. They influence politics, art and culture. They guide individuals and human societies by providing values, meaning and identity. Religions thus play a central role in defining the possibilities and limits of human co-habitation in general. This concerns individuals, as well as interactions between social groups or nations, ethnic groups, and relationships between men and women.

Thus, as societies evolve over time, religions and their role in society also undergo changes. The religious field in Europe has become more complex in recent decades because of migration, on the one hand, and new religious orientations on the other. In addition, religious dimensions emerge in different areas of life (wellness, health) and in popular culture (novels, advertising, films).

Fribourg profile
In Fribourg, both research and teaching emphasise not only on issues specific to sociology in fields such as religion, politics, law and education, but also on societal phenomena, such as Islam in Switzerland, new religious movements and ideological communities, and the relationship between religion and media. In addition to the 30 lectures a year offered by the Study of Religions programme, students can attend lectures in other study programmes in the Faculty of Humanities (especially Contemporary History and Social Anthropology), at the Institute of Religious Law and in the Faculty of Theology.

In addition to learning scientific research and presentation techniques, students will become familiar with historical and empirical research methods in social sciences. This includes **survey methods** (interviews, observation, surveys) and **analysis techniques** (content interpretation/analysis). Excursions to religious communities and attendance at particular religious festivals are an integral part of the cursus.

Learning outcomes and career openings
The Study of Religions does not provide specific professional training, yet opens a number of doors and possibilities for future career choices. The fields of activity are many and varied for holders of diplomas in the study of religions, as they acquire inter-cultural knowledge and skills during their course of study: education, media, publishing, consulting in companies, social and community integration, social work, counseling, diplomatic services and NGOs.

Studies organisation

Structure of studies

120 ECTS credits + 60 ECTS credits in a minor study programme freely chosen, 6 semesters

Curriculum

http://studies.unifr.ch/go/qN68x *(French)*
http://studies.unifr.ch/go/A0cJ8 *(German)*

Comments

This study programme may be chosen jointly with a study programme worth 60 ECTS credits in the «Social Sciences» domain.

Admission

The following **Swiss school-leaving certificates** grant **admission to bachelor programmes** at the University of Fribourg:

- Swiss academic Maturity Certificate
- Federal vocational or specialised Baccalaureate + supplementary examination of the Swiss Maturity Commission (passerelle)
- Bachelor Degree from a Swiss university, from an accredited Swiss university of applied sciences (HES/FH) or from a Swiss university of teacher education (HEP/PH)

A **complete list of all further recognised Swiss school-leaving certificates** is to be found on the webpages of swissuniversities (*in French and German only*): https://studies.unifr.ch/go/fr-admission-swisscertificates; https://studies.unifr.ch/go/de-admission-swisscertificates
Foreign upper secondary school-leaving certificates are recognised only if they correspond substantially to the Swiss Maturity Certificate. They must qualify as general education. Foreign school-leaving certificates are considered to be general education if, among other things, the last three years of schooling include at least six general education subjects, independent from each other, in accordance with the following list:

1. Language of instruction (at the school)
2. Second language (a foreign language)
3. Mathematics
4. Natural sciences (biology or chemistry or physics)
5. Humanities and social sciences (geography or history or economics/law)
6. Elective (computer sciences or philosophy or an additional language or an additional subject from category 4 or 5)

The general **admission** requirements to the **bachelor programmes** at the University of Fribourg for holders of foreign school-leaving certificates as well as the **admission requirements for individual countries** are to be found on the webpages of swissuniversities: https://studies.unifr.ch/go/en-admission-countries
In addition, applicants with foreign school-leaving certificates must present **proof of sufficient language skills in French or German**.
All guidelines are available at *(only in French and German)*: https://studies.unifr.ch/go/adm-guidelines

The assessment of foreign school-leaving certificates is based on the «Recommendations for the Assessment of Foreign Upper Secondary School-Leaving Certificates» adopted by the Chamber of universities of swissuniversities on 21.11.2024 (https://studies.unifr.ch/go/swissuniversities24fr; https://studies.unifr.ch/go/swissuniversities24de). The admission requirements are valid for the respective academic year. The Rectorat of the University of Fribourg reserves the right to change these requirements at any time.

Alternatives

Also offered as a minor study programme (60/30 ECTS credits).

Contact

Faculty of Humanities
Department of Social Sciences
Religious Studies Unit
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http://studies.unifr.ch/go/fr-religious-studies *(French)*
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