

Interreligious Studies

Degree conferred

Bachelor of Arts in Interreligious Studies

Options

Option of an award bearing the distinction «Bilingual curriculum, French/German».

Languages of study

Possibility to study in French, in German or in French and German.

Commencement of studies

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

Access to further studies

Master

Interreligious Studies approaches theology from the viewpoint of the religions. In Europe, the history of non-Christian religions is closely bound up with Christianity. Taking this as the starting point, the central questions are, for example, those arising from interreligious dialogue or dealing with current concepts of Islamic theology or religious law. Special attention is focused on Christianity, interreligious and intercultural dialogues, and self-reflection in other religions, particularly Islam.

The main programme is currently being offered in German or as part of the bilingual course (German and French), in which case the resulting degree will carry the distinction «Bilingual curriculum, French/German».

Profile of the study programme

The religious landscape in Switzerland has been changing for some time. One of the main reasons for this evolution is the growing number of religions represented in the country. Contrary to secularisation theory, what we currently see unfolding is less a return to the established churches that have existed in Europe for centuries than the stabilisation of these same religious groups, and the growing importance of denominations recently introduced into Switzerland through immigrant communities (whether Christian, Muslim, Hindu or Buddhist).

Religions are thus becoming key social players because, by virtue of their histories, they possess rich reservoirs of practices, institutions and ways of attributing meaning to human life. These reservoirs can, if needed, be useful to society, for example in interreligious discussions or peace education. However, it must not be forgotten that religion can also spark conflict, and it is therefore also necessary to be able to anticipate interreligious dynamics that

could trigger destructive forces.

The programme serves to link the perspectives of theology, religious sciences and self-apprehension as well as analysis of religions based on external factors such as economics, law and literature. This orientation makes the programme unique within Swiss academia. Other features help make this programme particularly interesting, including the study of religious law, a focus on the hermeneutical spaces between religions and, finally, Islamological studies. The programme has been designed to bridge the gap between scholarship and political and social practices. Four religions — Christianity, Islam, Judaism and Asian religions — are of particular importance in this course because they continue to shape the religious landscape today. Historical knowledge, which the Faculty of Theology offers from the Ancient Near East to modern times, forms the basis of research and teaching. The study programme is centred on current events to make the regional and global aspects of religion accessible.

In this context, the study programme wishes to equip participants with two skills:

- The ability to analyse religion as a factor in ethics and social and political change;
- Understanding of the fundamental problems that arise in interreligious dialogues and thinking about ways to solve them.

This study programme is run by the Faculty of Theology but is part of an interfaculty, interdisciplinary network. It is thus open to students from all disciplines.

Learning outcomes

The bachelor programme aims to transmit basic knowledge about religions with respect to their history, beliefs, rituals, forms of organisation and the societal practices they espouse, but will also look at religious and ethical law and interreligious relations. Through this curriculum students acquire a wide range of content and methods of understanding both the past and the present.

Skills

Programme participants learn to develop and work on historical, legal and theological issues related to religions, and on interreligious dialogue based on the fundamental knowledge acquired. The programme also offers students the opportunity to focus on questions involving worldviews and societal orientations within the framework of a systematic discourse, in the process further developing their own identity.

Career prospects

The programme offers career prospects for the following target groups, among others:

- Specialists needing intercultural skills of a religious nature, such as professionals working in civil administration, the media, NGOs or the intercultural domain;
- Theologians seeking to specialise in major areas of society and politics, for spheres of activity either within or outside the church;
- Mediators involved in different interreligious or intercultural fields;
- Teachers (see «Teacher Education for Academic Upper Secondary Schools»).

Studies organisation

Structure of studies

120 ECTS credits + 60 ECTS credits in one or two minor study programmes freely chosen, 6 semesters

Curriculum

<https://studies.unifr.ch/go/26> (French)
<https://studies.unifr.ch/go/27> (German)

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 Theology
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