

## THE MISSION OF RELIGIOUS EDUCATION AT BRIGHAM YOUNG UNIVERSITY

is to assist individuals in their efforts to come unto Christ by teaching the scriptures, doctrine, and history of the restored gospel of Jesus Christ through classroom instruction, gospel scholarship, and outreach to the larger community.

**PRESIDENT GORDON B. HINCKLEY**, in his dedicatory prayer of the Joseph Smith Building on December 10, 1991, said:



“We pray for those who [take religion classes], that their minds may be enlightened, that their understanding may be quickened, that they may learn those things which will bless their lives in the world of which they will become a part, and, in a more particular way, that they may become familiar with the truth which is eternal in its nature and everlasting in its consequences.”



# NEW STUDENT GUIDE TO RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

*Answers to frequently asked questions*

## **BYU** RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

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# FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

## about Religious Education at BYU

### 1 WHAT IS THE PURPOSE OF RELIGION CLASSES AT BYU?

The purpose of religion classes at BYU is to help you to learn, by study and faith, the restored gospel of Jesus Christ from the scriptures and modern prophets. Your earnest engagement in your religion classes will help you to develop faith in and a testimony of Heavenly Father and His “great plan,” the Savior, Jesus Christ, and His infinite atoning sacrifice, and the restored gospel of Jesus Christ. Additionally, your class time and coursework will aid you in becoming lifelong disciples of Jesus Christ, who make and keep covenants, who love God and others, and who are able, willing, and committed to gather Israel on both sides of the veil. Your religion classes will also strengthen your ability to find answers, resolve doubts, respond with faith, and give reason for the hope within you (1 Peter 3:15) in whatever challenges you may face.

### 2 WHO TEACHES THE RELIGION CLASSES?

The religion faculty at BYU includes women and men who have completed graduate degrees and have experience in areas related to the courses they teach. They are qualified university professors who are subject experts. You will find them knowledgeable, friendly, and interested in helping you succeed in their courses.

### 3 HOW DOES AN EXPERIENCE IN A BYU RELIGION CLASS DIFFER FROM A CHURCH CLASS OR AN INSTITUTE OF RELIGION COURSE?

The Church provides us with many opportunities for gospel learning. However, Church and Institute classes are not courses for university credit and do not have to meet the high academic standards required by a university. Because they are university courses, BYU religion classes must be rigorous, university-level experiences in learning the gospel. You can expect your class workload and grading standards to be similar to other university classes.

### 4 WHAT TAKES PLACE IN A RELIGION CLASS?

Your religion classes will be invigorating both intellectually and spiritually. You will have an opportunity to increase your understanding of the gospel through study and faith. Your instructor will expect you to participate in class discussions, take notes in class, complete challenging assignments and pass difficult exams. While a religion class at BYU is certainly a quality spiritual experience, it is also as academically demanding as your other university classes.

### 5 HOW ARE RELIGION CLASSES GRADED?

Success in BYU religion courses is dependent solely on performance related to assessments and stated outcomes. Students are not graded on their testimonies or personal beliefs. You can expect the workload and grading standards in your religion classes to be similar to other university classes. BYU expects you to study, discuss, complete assignments, and be evaluated in your religion courses, just as you would in your chemistry, English, or psychology courses. Examinations and grades encourage you to challenge yourself to grow in your understanding of the scriptures, history, and doctrine of the Church. Students who invest the appropriate time and effort into BYU religion classes will find these classes to be as spiritually strengthening as they are academically challenging.

### 6 WHAT IF I'M NOT A MEMBER OF THE CHURCH OF JESUS CHRIST OF LATTER-DAY SAINTS?

Students who are not Latter-day Saints are an integral part of BYU. We hope that you will see yourselves as valued members of our learning community—here both to learn and to contribute your unique perspectives and life experiences. We also recognize the challenge you may face in religion courses, where some knowledge about The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints is assumed. We encourage you to enroll during your first semester in REL C 100 — “Introduction to The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.” In addition, you may enroll in a section of REL A 275 – Teachings and Doctrine of the Book of Mormon specifically for non-LDS students. These courses will provide you with the foundation necessary for success

in other religion courses. Your professors want to help you succeed. Take the time to share your beliefs and concerns with them, and please don't hesitate to ask for help.

### 7 WHY ONLY TWO RELIGION CLASSES A SEMESTER?

As you enroll in your religion courses remember that the university will only count four religion credits per semester toward fulfilling the BYU religion requirement. The purpose of this policy is to encourage students to spread their religious education throughout their college career.

### 8 HOW MANY RELIGION CLASSES ARE REQUIRED?

There are two parts to the religion requirement at BYU: (1) the four cornerstone courses and (2) residency hours. The cornerstone courses are Rel C 200: “The Eternal Family”; Rel C 225: “Foundations of the Restoration”; Rel A 250: “Jesus Christ and the Everlasting Gospel”; and Rel A 275: “Teachings and Doctrine of the Book of Mormon” (some of these have approved substitutions—see “Doctrinal Foundations” at [catalog.byu.edu/about-byu/general-education](http://catalog.byu.edu/about-byu/general-education)). If you take one of these through Institute for BYU credit or at another Church school, it will count for the corresponding class at BYU; however, it will not count toward your BYU residency hours. “Residency hours” means you must complete a certain number of religion credit hours while at BYU. For new first-year students, it's 14 credits; for transfer students it may be less, depending on your total number of transfer credits (check with your advisor). Cornerstone classes taken at BYU count toward the residency hours, as do other courses you select from the wide variety of religion courses offered.



### DID YOU KNOW?

Students who graduate from BYU report that their religion classes were one of the best things about their college education. Responses to the annual BYU senior and alumni surveys give religion classes the highest possible ratings.