

October 2026

Religious Studies News

Department Newsletter

In this Issue:

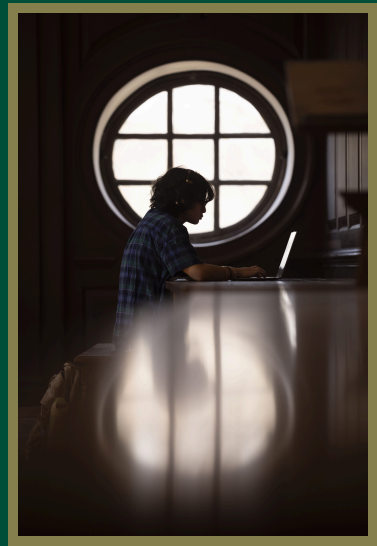
- New Contemplative Studies Major
- Homecoming
- Summer Abroad in Goa

Welcome!

Welcome to the Fall 2026 Religious Studies Alumni Newsletter. We are excited to share some recent campus happenings, including our new Contemplative Studies major and upcoming study abroad programs. Check our department website and events calendar for upcoming happenings and information about what is going on in the Department of Religious Studies!

New Contemplative Studies Major

Faculty in religious studies, psychological sciences and the neuroscience program collaborated to create the new contemplative studies major, available beginning this fall. Offering a holistic and integrative approach, the new major encourages students to engage with ideas actively and experientially through practices like mindfulness, meditation and reflective inquiry. According to the faculty, “This program of study fosters rigorous intellectual formation as well as reflexive inquiry into how individuals develop awareness, empathy, and resilience — skills vital for leadership and success in a wide array of career fields. In addition to professional preparation, the contemplative studies major cultivates authentic self-understanding, ethical discernment and psychological well-being.”



Click [here](#) to continue reading about the new Contemplative Studies major.

You're Invited! Homecoming 2026

Rekindle connections with old classmates, connect with professors, and celebrate your Tribe Pride with the Religious Studies Department this Homecoming Weekend. Study up to reenter the classroom in the newly reconstructed Wren Building for a chance to win swag from the bookstore at the catered Religious Studies Homecoming Reception on October 24.



The reception will be held in **Room 301 of the Wren Building from 10AM to 12 PM on October 24th, 2026**. Alumni and current students are welcome and light refreshments will be served. For more information, click [here](#). To **RSVP**, [click here](#).

Applications Open for Study Abroad in India



The Department of Religious Studies is excited to share an upcoming Study Abroad opportunity in Goa, India for Summer 2027. The program is directed by Professor Mark McLaughlin of the W&M Religious Studies Department and runs from May 28 to July 3. Students will have the opportunity to participate in 2 courses taught by both Professor McLaughlin and Professor Vishvesh Kandolkar of the Goa College of Architecture.

The first 3 weeks of William & Mary's summer abroad program in India will be based in Panjim, Goa, where students will participate in a COLL 300 art history course (taught by Professor Vishvesh Kandolkar of the Goa College of Architecture), and a COLL 200 ALV (taught by Professor McLaughlin, Director of the Goa Program). The art history course focuses on Goan architecture and its reflection of and relationship to

social, political, and cultural identity of Goa and its appropriation in the colonial, modern, and post-modern eras. The COLL 200 ALV examines the intersection of Hindu temple architecture & ritual with modern western conservation practices, as well as environmentally sustainable solutions for the Hindu religious festivals of Ganesh Chaturthi and Holi.

Reves Summer Scholarships are available for the program, and seniors are eligible to apply. For more information on details of the program, please visit the [program's website](#). Click [here](#) for more Religious Studies news.



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