Articulating Graduate Student Skills

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Agenda:
I) Jobs vs. Work
II) Get a start
III) Concrete steps
“What can you do with that?”
What are you doing here?
An ontological question?
...or a “marketing” question?
Why Study Religion?

Whether you consider yourself a religious person or not, or whether you think religion has played a positive or negative role in history, it is an incontrovertible fact that from the beginning of time, humans have engaged in activities that we now call religion, such as worship, prayer, and rituals marking important life passages. Moreover, religions have always asked fundamental questions, such as: What is the true meaning of life? What happens to us after death? How do we explain human suffering and injustices?

Human Understanding

The answers different religious traditions give to these important questions are many and varied and often contradictory. But the questions themselves are ones with which humans throughout time have grappled, and probably will continue to grapple with into the indefinite future. Thus, one of the first reasons to study religion is simply to deepen our understanding of others and ourselves.

Cultural Influence

We also study religion in order to learn more about how different aspects of human life—politics, science, literature, art, law, economics—have been and continue to be shaped by changing religious notions of, for example, good and evil, images of the deity and the divine, salvation and punishment, etc. By studying different religious doctrines, rituals, stories, and scriptures, we can also come to understand how different communities of believers—past and present, East and West—have used their religious traditions to shape, sustain, transform themselves.
Why Study Religion?

Why major in Religious Studies? (pdf)

Religion is a major force in human experience. Across the globe religious agendas have fueled conflict and encouraged acts of terrorism and ethnic cleansing, dislocating populations and destroying economies. But religious traditions have also laid the foundation for human rights, social justice, tolerance, and international peace. Religious Studies is therefore by nature a complex, interdisciplinary field with direct relevance to the world we live in.

It is impossible to open a newspaper, listen to the radio, or watch television without being bombarded by debates about the religious and ethical dimensions of medical care, sexual behavior, interpersonal violence, large-scale war, capital punishment, and a host of other issues that fiercely divide the public both in this country and abroad. Encouraging students...
in which careers are an end

Religion is a major source of inspiration, meaning, and controversy in human culture, informing history, politics, economics, art, and literature. It rivals trade as a major trans-national force across the globe. One cannot hope to understand world history and literature — or current events like Middle East politics, the recent insurgencies in Thailand, the genocide in Sudan, or US presidential elections — without knowledge of religion. Debates over science and religion, as well as religion and law, are often front-page news. Throughout history, inquiry into religions has inspired and troubled artists, musicians, filmmakers, and writers — including T.S. Eliot, Dante, Toni Morrison, Tagore, Tupac Shakur, Euripides, Rumi, William Blake, Margaret Mead, John Updike, Tolstoy, Leonard Bernstein, John Coltraine, George Lucas, Einstein, Gandhi — among countless others. Religious ritual and belief are also among the most powerful forces uniting past and present, shaping memory and identity from generation to generation, and across millenia.

Religious Studies is a diversified and multi-faceted discipline focusing on the study of specific traditions and the general nature of religion as a human phenomenon. It spans cultures around the world, ancient as well as modern. It also combines a variety of methodologies — including but not limited to textual, historical, literary, social scientific, philosophical, and art-historical approaches.
...not a means.

Religion

Please visit the Department of Religion for more information about this major/concentration at Princeton University.

Post-Graduation Plans of Recent Religion Majors

Full-Time Employment

- Assistant Teacher - Rye Country Day School, Rye, NY
- Talent Agent - William Morris Endeavor Entertainment, Los Angeles, CA
- Legislative Aide - House Committee on Foreign Affairs, Washington DC
- Carbon Analyst/Production Assistant - Everwid Media, New York, NY
- Teacher - Teach For America, Nashville, TN
- Research Assistant - University of California, San Francisco, CA
- Chief Development Officer - Anglican Church of Shyira, Musanze, Rwanda
- Sales Analyst – Barclays Capital, New York, NY
- Business Analyst – eBay, San Jose, CA
It’s not about what JOBS divinity students can do.
It’s about what counts as intellectual work.
No Astronauts Here.
How do YOU start?
How did THEY start?
Maggie’s Narrative

Where she’s been is as important as where she is now.

Experience

Director of Annual Fund and Alumni Relations
Madison House
February 2014 – Present (10 months)

Associate Director of Corporate & Foundation Giving
The Montpelier Foundation
August 2012 – February 2014 (1 year 7 months)

Development Grant and Proposal Coordinator
Montpelier Foundation
March 2012 – August 2012 (6 months)

1 recommendation

C. Douglas Smith
Vice President, The Montpelier Foundation - Robert H. Smith Center for the Constitution
Maggie Patton is simply wonderful to work with and her sense of delivery and professionalism would be a value to any institution. I am impressed with her tremendous ability to draft comprehensive plans for fundraising and I believe that she has a... View ↓

Education Manager
Virginia Discovery Museum
March 2011 – March 2012 (1 year 1 month)

1 recommendation

Loree Spriggs
Nordstrom Item Analyst
Working with Maggie was a joyful experience. Not only was she kind, caring and understanding but she...
First steps
I: Understand Your Skillz (Form and Content):
I: Your Skillz - Form

- **“Writing”**
  - Project definition, management, self-direction
  - Goals-setting, meeting deadlines
  - Communication of progress to bosses
  - Drafting, revising, editing, written feedback

- **“Critical Thinking”**
  - Identification, synthesis, analysis of evidence
  - Delivery of feedback on peer work
  - Presentation, critique, collaboration
  - Flexibility, adaptability
I: Your Skillz - Content

- **Religion / Religious Studies**
  - Understanding of cultural climates/norms
  - Facility with difficult material
  - Ethical approaches to doing “business”
  - Communication across diverse borders

- **Cultural**
  - Language skills
  - Ability to describe regional issues
  - International research experience
  - Work on diverse teams/in diverse settings
II: It’s Not Creepy to Network
II: It’s Not Creepy to Network

- Connect with as many alumni as possible
  - Pick people, not positions
  - Find narratives, steps, stops along the way
  - Be actually interested; earlier the better

- LinkedIn is a friendly and useful place
  - Connect with Divinity alumni, sure
  - But also with UChicago alumni
  - Don’t forget about undergrad

- You’re not the first
  - ...or the last: it’s absolutely acceptable
  - LinkedIn; UChicagoAlumni.org
II: It’s Not Creepy to Network

- **What to Say to a Stranger in an Email**
  - Be up front, but brief about your interests
  - Be knowledgeable about their organization
  - Be flexible and grateful

- **Have Specific Requests (after talking):**
  - Ask for additional contacts
  - Ask whether it’s okay to follow up
  - Ask about edits to your resume

- **Stay Organized**
  - Keep notes about conversations
  - Keep records and follow up
III: Grad School as a Job

- Treat it like a job that requires:
  - Event attendance
  - Career exploration
  - Volunteering
  - Work-study

- ...should you be panicking?
No.
You should NOT be panicking.
Look! An Otter!
But you should be moving.
III: Do Not Panic

- **By Thanksgiving**
  - An updated resume; initial ideas about jobs
  - A list of 10 names you want to contact
  - Getting a Start in Social Enterprise (11/18)
  - Resume Best Practices (November 19)

- **By Winter Break**
  - Connect with Divinity alumni, sure
  - But also with UChicago/undergrad alumni

- **By Middle January**
  - One-on-one meetings
  - Informational interviews / intern applications
DON’T START “LOOKING FOR JOBS” in your final quarter
Graduate Student Affairs Provides:

- Programming (Usually With Free Food)
- One-on-One Advising:
  - Careers
  - Fellowships
  - Writing and Communications

GRAD.UCHICAGO.EDU for DETAILS
aj@uchicago.edu for QUESTIONS
Questions?
aj@uchicago.edu