



## **A GUIDE TO STUDYING THEOLOGY ABROAD**

Many of the oldest universities in the world were founded with theology as the core discipline of study. Although religion has changed in form throughout human history, the concept of the Divine has maintained its steady presence in human thought. Studying theology abroad will expose you to important perspectives and cross-cultural viewpoints about the conceptualization and practice of religion.

### **WHY STUDY THEOLOGY ABROAD?**

Whether you retain a secular or religious interest in theology as an academic discipline, studying abroad carries the seed of a spiritually enlightening journey for all who will take the leap. Traveling the world to study how life in other religious contexts differs from your own can be an invaluable experience in coming to understand how religion is truly a universal human phenomenon; religious differences as cultural differences are but a matter of changing form.

### **LOCATIONS**

Where you decide to study theology abroad will greatly determine the scope of your theological studies. Though in today's hyper-globalized world you can find people practicing different religions everywhere, there is an undeniable geographical clustering that has resulted from the forces of history. Different cultures vary greatly with their level of religious conservativeness, so keep this in mind too when deciding where to study theology abroad. Christianity, the world's largest religion, has been practiced most places in the world, although it is most prevalent today throughout the Americas, Europe, and parts of Africa.

Likewise Islam, the world's second largest religion, is most popular in regions of North Africa, the Middle East, and Southeast Asia. The most popular Eastern religions are Hinduism and Buddhism, both, which have their roots in the Indian subcontinent. Hinduism is the world's third largest religion today with over one billion practitioners, mostly residing in India. Buddhism holds a strong influence in Eastern countries such as Japan and China. This is only a brief synopsis of the major global religions, and there are thousands of other smaller indigenous religions also continuously practiced throughout the world. As stated Theology is a universal discipline, and anywhere you go is bound to provide you with a unique and fascinating scope of study.

### **COURSES & PROGRAMS**

The type of coursework you will complete will depend largely on the type of school you study theology abroad in. Most major universities today are secular by nature, and thus theology courses are offered as a systematic and rational study of religion. World Religions, Comparative Religions, History of Religion, Religion and Society, and other courses within these veins are all examples of the classes you might take while studying theology abroad.

### **BENEFITS**

Students who study theology abroad become ambassadors to other cultures around the world, and today perhaps more than ever it is becoming vitally important to promote cross-cultural understanding of

theological differences and sameness. Whatever your beliefs, students of theology cannot help but benefit from the experience of uprooting from their own context of religious understanding and traveling to experience life within another. Religious and cultural differences interact heavily with one another, and studying theology abroad is the perfect way to begin unwinding the intricate web of difference.

### **SJU SEMSTER ABROAD PROGRAMS**

Please note the list of programs and courses are only listed as a guide and does not guarantee automatic approval of courses counting for SJU academic credit. You will work with both your Academic Advisor and Study Abroad Advisor to determine the program and courses to best meet your needs. All courses **must be approved** by the appropriate SJU Department Chair or Associate Dean prior to studying abroad.

- **Gonzaga University in Florence**
  - *Sample Courses: Introduction to the Old Testament, Contemporary Church: A Feminist Perspective, Dietrich Bonhoeffer Faith, The Reformation, Christian Spirituality*
- **John Cabot University in Rome**
  - *Sample Courses: Science & Religion, Mystics, Saints & Sinners, Pathways of Faith*
- **Marquette University, South Africa**
  - *Sample Courses: Theology of Forgiveness, Reconciliation and Justice, Moral Discourse on Economics, Labor and Business*
- **IFSA-Butler: University of Auckland**
  - *Sample Courses: Christianity in Aotearoa New Zealand, God and the Natural Sciences, Voices at the Margin, Theological Ethics,*

*In addition to Theology Major/Minor courses, you may also be able to take some of SJU's GEP courses while abroad, including but not limited to: Art/Lit, Social Science, Religious Difference & Philosophical Anthropology.*

**Can't find a program or university on our approved list that appeals to you? You can always petition to attend another study abroad program of your choosing with more information can be found on our [website](#).**

### **NEXT STEPS**

- Meet with the Study Abroad Advisor** | Learn about your options
- Meet with your Academic Advisor** | Discuss course selection
- Apply for a passport** | <http://travel.state.gov/passport>
- Apply to study abroad!** | Applications are due to the CIP office by: March 1<sup>st</sup> for the Fall semester abroad, and October 1<sup>st</sup> for the Spring semester abroad