



# Introduction to the Study of Religion

*Hillary P. Rodrigues, John S. Harding*

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Why do people study religion? How have they studied it in the past? How do we study religion today? Is the academic study of religion the same as religious education? These and many other questions are addressed in this engaging introduction to the discipline of religious studies, written by two experienced university teachers. The authors have crafted this book to familiarize novice students with key concepts and terminology in the study of religion. More advanced students will find a varied array of theoretical perspectives and methodological approaches to the field. Topics include:

- definitions of religion
- perspectives in the study and teaching of religion
- how religion began to be studied: traditional perspectives – philosophical and theological
- how people experience religion: perspectives in the study of religious consciousness and perception – phenomenological and psychological
- studying religion within communities: Social and cultural perspectives – anthropological, sociological, political and economic
- judging religion: critical perspectives –feminist approaches, the interaction of popular literature and religion
- contextual perspectives – historical and comparative.

The book encourages students to think critically about the theories and methods presented. Students will find arguments for the strengths and limitations of these approaches, understand connections among religious studies and other intellectual movements, and develop their own ideas of how they might want to go about the study of religion. Summary boxes, a timeline, a glossary and other pedagogic aids help students grasp key concepts, along with a companion website at **www.sastor.com**.

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