

The Humanities in Our Lives

THE VALUE OF RELIGIOUS STUDIES

In a 2015 survey on the long-term impact of a degree in religious studies, the American Academy of Religion found that a majority of college graduates from the discipline reported their degree helped them understand religious and cultural diversity better, work more effectively with people from diverse backgrounds, and apply ethical and social thinking to their lives. After completing their degrees in religious studies, these students also found themselves well prepared for the job market because of their strong writing and communication skills.

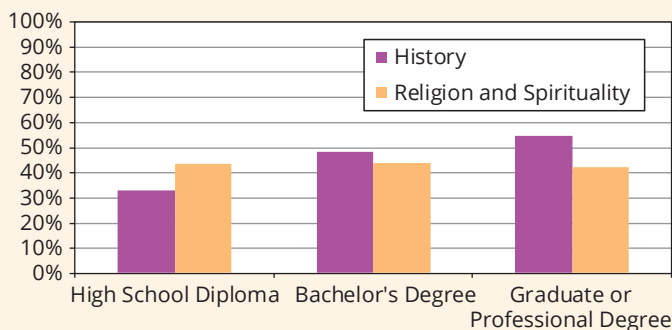
RELIGION AND HUMANITIES

A 2003 Stanford University survey on the religious attitudes of college students revealed a diversity of ways in which students employ religion in their lives. Some viewed religion as a journey or spiritual quest on which religion and spiritual texts could guide their actions. Others used religion to inform a compassionate self-concept or an ethic of caring and charitable involvement.

KEY FACTS

- From 2014 to 2017, 35% of adults read religious scripture at least once a week, and 10% read it at least once a month.
- In 2017, almost 45% of American adults reported they had read a work of religion/spirituality in the past year.

Share of Americans Reporting They Read a Book on History or Religion and Spirituality in Past Year, 2017



INNOVATIVE PROGRAMS

Sacred Writes is an innovative program that “provides support, resources, and networks for scholars of religion committed to translating the significance of their research to a broader audience”; it aims to “host trainings for scholars, create and fund partnerships between scholars and media outlets, and convene meetings to discuss best practices for public scholarship.”

The program employs academics to support the media in more nuanced reporting on religion. It accomplishes this by arranging for scholars to author pieces for the media, promoting joint journalist-scholar reporting, and connecting journalists with scholars who can provide background information for the journalists’ reporting work. Moreover, the group trains scholars in religion to make their expertise more widely available and accessible to the public.

The Humanities in Our Lives series (#HumInOurLives) highlights the many and diverse forms of humanities activities in the nation, and key facts about the health of the field.

THE ANDREW W. MELLON FOUNDATION

For more on the broad trends that mark American engagement with various forms of the humanities, visit humanitiesindicators.org or email humanitiesindicators@amacad.org.

 HUMANITIES INDICATORS
a project of the American Academy of Arts & Sciences