



RELIGIOUS STUDIES STUDENT HANDBOOK

2025/2026



BURMAN
UNIVERSITY

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

FALL SEMESTER 2025

September 2	Classes begin Welcome Back Bash	Drop by the Theology Club table
September 10 6:00 - 7:30 pm	RS welcome back party & info session in NW Hall room 206	All RS students are required to join in for supper, activities and important information
September 17	Serve Lacombe Day	No afternoon classes
September 22 - October 2	Second year Pre-Professional Track evaluations	Watch for information on signing up for your evaluation time with RS faculty
September 30	National Day for Truth & Reconciliation	No classes
October 1-8	RS graduate photos for RS booklet	Watch for information on how to sign up for photos with Jr Ferrer at Marketing
October 1	Field Experience Application Deadline	All forms must be submitted by 11:59 pm
October 7	Theology Club PowerUp	Come worship together with our club
October 13	Thanksgiving Day	No classes
October 14	Reading Day	No classes
October 24 - 26	RS/Theology Club Retreat Casey's Cabin	Mandatory for all students. Friday evening to Sunday morning
November 4	Theology Club PowerUp	Come worship together with our club
November 11	Remembrance Day	No classes
December 3	Reading Day	No classes
December 4, 5, 8-11	Final exams	

WINTER SEMESTER 2026

January 12	Classes begin	
TBD	Theology Club PowerUps	Watch for announced dates
January 15 11:00 am	Field Experience meeting in NW Hall room 206	Mandatory for all students who have been accepted for summer 2026 field experience
January 26 5:00 - 6:30 pm	Theology Club Meet & Greet with Canadian Conference officials at The Hideout	All RS students welcome
January 27 & 28	Interviews for 3rd & 4th year students in 4yr program	
February 16	Family Day	No classes
February 17-20	Reading week	No classes
March 23	Reading day	No classes
March 31	Last day to apply for 26/27 Graduation without fee	Graduation application can be found on the homepage of student portal
April 2	Field Experience meeting in NW Hall room 206	Mandatory for all students who have been accepted for summer 2026 field experience
April 3	Good Friday	No classes
April 6	Easter Monday	No classes
April 16	All RS application documents due for first year students	For full admission into all RS programs
April 21	Reading day	No classes
April 22-24, 27-29	Final exams	
April 30 11:00 am	RS Consecration Service Admin Chapel	Mandatory for graduates, highly recommended for all others. Come support our graduates.
May 1-3	Graduation	

BURMAN UNIVERSITY MISSION STATEMENT

Transforming lives through whole-person education and service, Burman University will educate students to think with discernment, to believe with insight and commitment, and to act with confidence, compassion, and competence.

BURMAN UNIVERSITY VISION STATEMENT

To provide a transformational university experience that empowers students to serve others and to share hope.

RELIGIOUS STUDIES DEPARTMENT

OUR MISSION

The Religious Studies Program educates by sharing religious knowledge and research findings with the external community through public presentations and with Burman University students through university courses that emphasize an understanding of Christian faith in the context of other religious traditions. It trains religious studies majors for specialized, voluntary, and professional services to Church and community.

OUR VISION

"Our vision is to be a faith-affirming and academically rigorous department."

OUR VALUES

We value the

- » Empowering nature of God's Word
- » Mercy and justice of God
- » Blessings of God
- » Image of God in all humanity
- » Forgiveness of God
- » Transformative power of God's love
- » Eternal plans of God

YOUR COMMITMENT

Your attendance at Burman University signifies your understanding that Burman University is a Seventh-day Adventist institution that upholds SDA standards and that you intend to support university philosophies and the community itself. As a student you acknowledge acceptance of and full cooperation with Burman University policies as stated in the Student Handbook and Academic Calendar. Your behavior, both on and off campus, is expected to comply with and reflect the values of Burman University.

YOUR RIGHTS

As a student of Burman University you have the right to

- » an environment that is conducive to learning
- » expect the university to be a place of spiritual growth
- » appropriate, affirming and respectful behavior in your interactions with other members of the university community
- » compete on a fair and equal basis for academic recognition
- » an environment that promotes wellness and safety
- » acceptable modes of public expression and communication

POLICIES

1. CHRIST-FOCUSED

It is the wish of the faculty, staff, and students that the Religious Studies department be focused on Jesus. In classes, in the student lounge, on campus or off, members of the Religious Studies program should imitate and exemplify Christ. For instances that are ambiguous or uninformed by the policies below, Christlike love will be the guiding principle.

2. ACCEPTANCE INTO THE RELIGIOUS STUDIES DEPARTMENT

Students desiring to major in any Religious Studies degree program may take their first-year sequence of courses. They must submit a completed Application for Religious Studies Admission (a form and associated documents) to the program chair no later than the final day of class in the winter term. A committee (chaired by the program chair) composed of the Religious Studies faculty, the Faculty Dean or representative will review the applications immediately following the end of the winter term to determine the eligibility of each candidate. Each candidate will be formally notified of the committee's decision of admittance into the Religious Studies department before the following fall semester

2.1 ALL RELIGIOUS STUDIES STUDENTS

- a. To apply for full admission into the Religious Studies program, students must complete the following documents before the end of their second semester:
 - RS Admission Entry Form
 - 3 Letters of Recommendation completed on the RS Letter of Recommendation form
 - Criminal Record Check, including a vulnerable sector check
 - Résumé
- b. Recommendations must come from non-family members. Pastors, former teachers, and former employers would all be appropriate recommenders.
- c. The Criminal Record Check must be issued by a police station in the student's home country. The check must be no more than six months old. The department will consider a record check valid for five years.
- d. A student whose application is rejected, and whose appeal is also rejected (see 2.3b), will not be allowed to continue pursuing a Religious Studies degree.
- e. A minimum cumulative GPA of 2.00 is required at the time of application to the three- and four-year degree. Applicants for PPT must have a cumulative GPA of at least 2.50.

2.2 PRE-PROFESSIONAL TRACK (PPT) STUDENTS

- a. The Pre-Professional Track is designed to prepare students for pastoral ministry and graduate study in a seminary. As such, students wishing to graduate in the PPT will submit additional documentation to demonstrate their commitment and aptitude for such work.
- b. In addition to the documents listed in 2.1a., students applying for entrance into the PPT program will submit the following documents before the completion of their first winter semester:
 - PF16 test results
 - Personal Growth Plan
 - Philosophy of Ministry

- c. At the end of the winter term, the Religious Studies department will review each applicant's documents. In the following fall semester, the Religious Studies faculty will meet with PPT applicants to give feedback on perceived strengths and weaknesses as per the rubric below. The students have one year to demonstrate growth in the areas suggested. The Religious Studies Admission Committee will vote on the assessment and performance of the student in the second winter semester as per the review from the previous academic year. This committee will be composed of the Religious Studies faculty and the Dean of Arts and Social Sciences, with the chair of Religious Studies serving as chair of the committee. The student will be either accepted into or rejected from the PPT. If the student's application for PPT is rejected on academic grounds, the student will be accepted into the four or three-year Religious Studies program as per the student's choice.

2.3 REAPPLICATION FOR RELIGIOUS STUDIES ADMISSION AND APPEAL PROCEDURES

- a. If a candidate is denied Religious Studies program admission, the candidate must wait a minimum of one semester before applying again.
- b. If the student wishes to appeal an admission decision made by the Religious Studies Admission Committee, this procedure must be followed:
 - i. Request of the Dean of Arts and Social Sciences an appeal meeting with the Religious Studies Admission Committee.
 - ii. If, after the appeal meeting, the decision of the Religious Studies Admission Committee remains unacceptable to the candidate, a final appeal to a committee of three may be requested: The Vice President for Academic Committee who will chair the committee, a representative of the Religious Studies Admission Committee, and a faculty member of the candidate's choice.

RUBRIC FOR ADVANCEMENT TO PRE-PROFESSIONAL CANDIDACY

Based on the NAD's Core Qualities of an Effective Pastor:

CATEGORY	EXCELLENT	PASSING	FAILING
Character	Demonstrates a close, contagious relationship with God and lives according to the teachings of Scripture	Demonstrates a relationship with God and lives according to the teachings of Scripture	Little evidence of a relationship with God or lives in a way that contradicts the teachings of Scripture
Relationships	Builds warm, appropriate relationships with peers, faculty, and staff	Builds appropriate relationships with peers, faculty and staff	Does not build relationships with, or behaves in improper ways toward peers, faculty, or staff
Scholarship	Excels in classes and shows a keen interest in learning	Passes classes and participates appropriately	Fails multiple classes or shows no interest in learning
Management	Exhibits excellent time management and clear written and oral communication	Could improve in some facets of time management or communication	Consistently late or missing assignments, poor communication skills
Leadership	Regularly helps others without being asked and demonstrates a clear ability for leadership	Shows a willingness to help when needed and the potential for leadership	Generally unwilling to help others and little leadership potential
Evangelism	Actively seeks opportunities to minister to others	Willingly participates in ministry opportunities	Fails to participate in ministry opportunities
Worship	Engaged in preaching and/or teaching in campus or church settings	Shows willingness to be involved in worship activities	Uninterested in being involved in worship activities
GPA	3.5 or higher	2.5 or higher	2.49 or lower
Biblical Languages (Greek and Hebrew)	B+ grade or higher	C grade or higher	C- or lower

3. RELIGIOUS STUDIES PROGRAM ACTIVITIES

There are several ways students are able to be involved in the Religious Studies department. Students are encouraged to check their emails and consult posted event announcements for up-to-date information regarding Religious Studies activities. Listed below are activities that occur every year:

3.1. Religious Studies Welcome Meeting

Mandatory. An initial meeting at the beginning of September for all members of the department—faculty, staff, and students. The meeting offers a chance to meet new students and review important information for the coming year.

3.2. Theology Retreat

Mandatory. The retreat is planned by the Theology club each fall semester. It is a time of spiritual refreshment. As such, the retreat is only for Religious Studies students and their families.

3.3. Other Theology Club Events

Encouraged. The Theology Club will host various social events and worships throughout the academic year. Students are encouraged to be involved and support their fellow students.

3.4. Conference Interviews

Encouraged. Every January the Religious Studies department arranges for third and fourth year students in the Pre-Professional Track or four-year program to interview with the various Seventh-day Adventist conferences across Canada. This is the best opportunity for students to secure a call to pastoral ministry before graduation. Students planning to interview are highly encouraged to submit their résumés to conferences at least two weeks before their interviews are scheduled.

3.5. Religious Studies Consecration

Mandatory for graduates, encouraged for others. On the Thursday before graduation, the Religious Studies department comes together to celebrate its graduates. Those students still on campus should attend to support and congratulate their friends as their Burman journey comes to a close.

4. THEOLOGY CLUB

4.1. Every accepted or provisional member of the Religious Studies department is also a member of the Theology Club. Students will be automatically charged a \$25 club fee each semester. Members are encouraged to involve themselves in the club's various activities.

4.2. Club officers are nominated and elected by the club members. To hold an elected office in a student organization, a student must have a minimum cumulative GPA of 2.5. In addition, no student on citizenship probation or who has been on probation the previous semester may hold an elected office.

4.3. Club members have access to the Theology Club WhatsApp group. All messages in this group should focus on the work of the club or ministries being done by current students. Former students and faculty contacts will be cleared from the WhatsApp groups during the summer.

5. FIELD EXPERIENCE

5.1. Students are encouraged to enroll in summer Field Experience. This nine-week course involves shadowing a pastor and learning the job of ministry. Students who complete this course with a C grade or higher will receive a scholarship for the following academic year.

5.2. Field Experience may be repeated for credit.

5.3. To enroll in Field Experience, an application must be received by the end of September for the following summer. Application documentation will be emailed out by the RS Administrative Assistant at the beginning of the fall term. Students must have a cumulative GPA of 2.7 or higher in the fall semester to be accepted for the Field Experience.

5.4. Students enrolled in Field Experience may not enroll in any other concurrent summer classes.

5.5. Students are not allowed to be employed in a separate job while they are enrolled in field experience.

6. STUDENT CONDUCT

While academics are important, character development is a crucial aspect of your journey at Burman. Practice high standards now to prepare for a successful life of ministry and service. Examples of activity that will put you at risk for removal from the RS program include:

- Discrimination based on race, sex, age, religion, color and/or origin.
- Physical, sexual, or verbal harassment.
- Violation of federal, state and/or local law.
- Using, distributing and/or possessing narcotics, tobacco, controlled substances (including marijuana), or alcoholic beverages in any form.
- Inappropriate sexual relationship with members of either sex outside of marriage.
- Unlawful possession of firearms, tasers, stun guns, explosives, dangerous chemicals and other forms of weapons and/or the firing or exploding of the same.

- Concerning or harmful activity online.
- Destruction of, or unauthorized access to, Burman University property.
- Stealing, lying, cheating or willful deception.
- Willful failure to live up to Christian standards.

7. SOCIAL MEDIA

7.1. Social media brings both pitfalls and opportunities. Understand that future employers and parishioners will view your posts on social media. As a rule, if you would feel uncomfortable saying something from the pulpit, think twice before posting it.

7.2. Burman University and the Religious Studies department have social media accounts to help in marketing the program and our students. You are encouraged to follow and share Religious Studies and Burman University social media content. Please do so with the intent of the posts in mind.

1. BURMAN UNIVERSITY ACADEMIC CALENDAR

When in doubt about an academic issue, it is best to consult the Burman University Academic Calendar. Many of the policies listed below are summaries of Academic Calendar content. This section contains a tailored list of items that may be of more interest to Religious Studies Students.

2. ACADEMIC ADVISING

2.1. Advisors guide students through orientation, registration, the freshman year, and beyond. The Religious Studies administrative assistant serves as the academic advisor for all students enrolled in Religious Studies programs. Students should meet with the advisor regularly, but especially as a new semester approaches.

2.2. All first, second, and third year students will meet with a professor during the last month of winter semester to debrief from the current year and plan for the future. You will be notified who your faculty advisor is and when to sign up for an advising appointment.

2.3. Academic advisors are ultimately guides, not dictators. You have final say in which courses you take, with the possible exceptions of prerequisites or restrictions established by the Academic Council. However, failure to follow advice may result in taking unnecessary classes or additional semesters beyond the typical three or four years.

3. COURSES TAKEN FROM OTHER UNIVERSITIES

For students enrolled in the Burman University Religious Studies department, all courses listed as "Major Requirements," "Pre-Professional Requirements," or "Concentration Requirements" in the Academic Calendar must be taken at Burman University. Up to 20% of courses falling under the categories "Cognate," "Breadth," and "Elective" may be taken through other universities.

4. CLASSROOM POLICIES

4.1. Electronic Devices

- 4.1.1. Cell phones should not be used in classes unless the teacher instructs you to use them for an in-class activity.
- 4.1.2. If computers or tablets are allowed in class, they should be used exclusively for note-taking or other class-related activities.

4.2. Zoom Classes

Professors seek to provide the optimal learning environment for students in the classroom. To avoid distractions, professors will not organize live or recorded videos of their classes. In certain rare cases and at the teacher's discretion, students may be allowed to record a class for a classmate.

5. FINAL EXAMS

5.1. Final exams are provided to students only one time per semester. Students are not allowed to retake final exams, except in the event that the professor is at fault.

5.2. Final exams will be given according to the final exam schedule published by the registrar of each semester.

MINISTRY OPPORTUNITIES

Theology Club: butc@burmanu.ca

Campus Ministries: campusministries@burmanu.ca

Burman Ministry Centre: bmc@burmanu.ca

Missionary Opportunities: <https://hesaidgo.org/>

CENTRAL ALBERTA SDA CHURCHES

College Heights SDA Church

6910 University Dr, College Heights, AB T4L 1Z9

Lead Pastor: Pastor Orlando Pule

613-882-0006

opule@albertaadventist.ca

Lacombe Community SDA Church

5804 45 Ave, Lacombe, AB T4L 1M6

Pastor Teddy Joseph

tjoseph@albertaadventist.ca

The Friendship Company Fellowship

5109 51 St, Lacombe, AB T4L 1J5

Pastor Mario Parchment

info@tfcadventist.ca

Bentley SDA Church

4914 49 Ave, Bentley, AB T0C 0J0

Pastor Teddy Joseph

tjoseph@albertaadventist.ca

Ponoka SDA Church

6230 57 Ave, Ponoka, AB T4J 1L2

Pastor Wesley Szamko

403-872-3767

wszamko@albertaadventist.ca

Maskwacis SDA Church

441022 Range Rd 253, Maskwacis, AB T4J 1E2

Pastor Tsholo Sebetlela

639-536-3920

tsebetlela@albertaadventist.ca

Mirror SDA Church

5035 52 St, Mirror AB T0B 3C0

Pastor Ted Deer

306-570-1844

tdeer@albertaadventist.ca

Red Deer SDA Church

37370 Rge Rd 274A, Red Deer, AB T4N 5E8

Pastor Moises Ruiz

587-877-0861

mrui@albertaadventist.ca

Epic Church (Red Deer)

5301 50 Ave, Red Deer, AB T4N 4B6

Pastor Donovan Diminyatz

250-788-6729

ddiminyatz@albertaadventist.ca

Sylvan Lake SDA Church

4607 47 Ave, Sylvan Lake, AB T4S 1N9

Pastor Felicia Williams

403-887-2604/780-554-4596

fwilliams@albertaadventist.ca

STUDENT RESOURCES

Accessibility accommodations: Sakala Success Centre (cjohnson@burmanu.ca)

Food/housing assistance:

- Burman Student Services (coneill@burmanu.ca)
- Alberta Family Support Services (<https://www.alberta.ca/family-supports>)
- Lacombe Food Bank (<https://www.lacombefoodbank.ca/>)
- Food Rescue (<https://www.echofoodrescue.com/>)

Counseling support: Sakala Success Centre (tamaravanrensburg@burmanu.ca)

Gender-based violence reporting: Elise Kruithof (elisekruithof@burmanu.ca)

Pornography/substance addiction: Sakala Success Centre (tamaravanrensburg@burmanu.ca)

Suicide Crisis Helpline: Call 9-8-8

Mental Health Helpline: 1-877-303-2642



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www.burmanu.ca