

Internships

As you prepare for a career in religious studies, consider internships as a practical, enjoyable, and sometimes life-changing way to get acquainted with the players, organizations, and major themes in the field. Imagine an internship at a nonprofit organization that works on women's spirituality in Santiago, Chile, or a semester interning at a group that works on reproductive health in Washington, D.C.. Consider moving outside of your usual circles in your internship choice. If you are Jewish, think about going to a Muslim agency; if you are Christian, search out a Buddhist option. The sky is the limit. It is often through internships that we find our career direction, and practical ways to move in it. The supervisor makes all the difference in the world, so research and choose as carefully as if you were taking a paid position.

Interviewing

Virtually every job requires an interview. Books have been written on the subject; consultants will prep you on what to wear and how to act. None of it guarantees you a job. Our advice is to treat the interview as the first day on the job. If you do not like it or the "fit" is not right, better to find out sooner rather than later. In the current competitive climate, it can feel as if the interviewers have all the power, especially in academia, with so many candidates and so few jobs. In fact, as the candidate you have plenty of decision-making power as well as control.

Our advice is simple: Be prepared and be yourself. If this sounds simplistic and you prefer to strategize each move, that may work in your case. For the most part, you can expect that the members of the search committee are looking for long-term colleagues with that vague quality called "fit." They want someone they would value as a member of their community and who shows promise of a distinguished career. You may or may not be that person. However, you are yourself and that will have to be enough.