

Student Learning Objectives for the Religious Studies Program

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Program's Educational Goals and Objectives

This Program draws together the University's resources across many disciplines to offer a minor in the area of Religious Studies. The Program is designed to foster a nuanced, in-depth understanding of religious phenomena across diverse cultures through history and in the contemporary world, to cultivate intellectual and practical skills, and inculcate personal and social responsibility. One need only consider the kind of flashpoint religion has become across a range of issues in society throughout the world, to appreciate the need for serious inquiry and analysis, and critical study of religion. The Program is designed to offer a cohesive structure with systematically created opportunities for students to learn core information and develop analytical skills.

Student Learning Outcomes

Once a student has graduated with a minor in Religious Studies he or she should be able to demonstrate knowledge and skills as summarized in these specific Learning Outcomes:

1. *Disciplinary Knowledge:* identify a broad range of religious references in cultural, historical, artistic and literary contexts both Western and non-Western, *i.e.* demonstrate "religious literacy," including Biblical literacy, and explain how religions have interacted with host cultures.
2. *Inquiry and Analysis:* examine the subject matter of religion utilizing academic methodologies, which entail collection and analysis of evidence to result in informed conclusions, and to distinguish how this approach differs from faith-oriented perspectives and methods.
3. *Creative Thinking:* synthesize existing ideas, images or concepts involving religion in innovative and imaginative ways which may entail divergent thinking and risk taking.
4. *Critical Thinking:* comprehensively explore issues, ideas, events and artifacts relating to religion, seek evidence before accepting conclusions or formulating opinions, and recognize one's own and others' biases.
5. *Written Communication:* demonstrate an understanding of context, audience, and purpose in written assignments; demonstrate writing skills including clear paper organization (thesis, evidence, conclusion), use of conventional writing styles, use of proper citation methods; demonstrate ability to make use of credible, relevant sources to sustain supportable arguments.
6. *Intercultural Knowledge and Competence:* explain the importance of religious and cultural diversity, the role played by religion in producing the tapestry of diverse

populations in the world, and support effective and appropriate interaction in a variety of cultural contexts.

7. *Ethical Reasoning and Action*: assess own ethical values and recognize assumptions, explore ethical issues in a variety of contexts, consider ramifications of ethical choices, and explain the central role played by religious beliefs and values in ethical decision making.

<i>Learning Outcome</i>	<i>Below Proficient</i>	<i>Proficient</i>	<i>Above Proficient</i>
<p>1. <i>Disciplinary Knowledge</i> Identifies a broad range of religious references in multiple contexts</p> <p>Explains how religions interact with host cultures</p>	Offers limited or inaccurate knowledge of religious references in a variety of contexts, or how religions interact with host cultures	Demonstrates accurate knowledge of religious references in a variety of contexts, and can explain how religions interact with host cultures	Demonstrates depth of knowledge of religious references in a variety of contexts, and shows sophisticated understanding of how religions interact with host cultures
<p>2. <i>Inquiry and Analysis</i> Examines religion from academic methodologies</p> <p>Distinguishes academic from faith-oriented perspectives</p>	Demonstrates little facility with academic approaches to religion or critical methodologies; tends to automatically and uncritically apply faith-oriented perspectives	Demonstrates adequate recognition of academic approaches to religion, and how these differ from faith perspectives, and uses care in compiling evidence before reaching conclusions	Fluently demonstrates recognition of academic approaches to religion, and skillfully articulates how these differ from faith perspectives, organizes and synthesizes evidence to offer logical conclusions
<p>3. <i>Creative Thinking</i> Synthesizes ideas and issues in innovative, imaginative ways</p> <p>Open to divergent thinking and risk taking</p>	Shows little facility with moving beyond standard perspectives on religious ideas and issues; rarely entertains divergent thinking or takes intellectual risk	Shows some ability to experiment and move beyond standard perspectives on religious ideas and issues to result in novel or unique approaches	Explores issues in depth to produce innovative, unique, imaginative perspectives, sometimes new knowledge or synthesis of existing ideas and theories; incorporates divergent thinking and risk taking
<p>4. <i>Critical Thinking</i> Looks for evidence before reaching conclusions</p> <p>Recognizes own and others' biases and assumptions</p>	Tends to accept ideas and statements as fact without question, approaches religious ideas and issues simplistically, with little awareness of own or others' biases and assumptions	Subjects ideas and statements to appropriate examination, seeks evidence for validation of conclusions, and shows some awareness of own or others' biases and assumptions	Comprehensively explores ideas and statements, and subjects these to questioning and analysis from multiple perspectives before accepting conclusions; can articulate own and others' biases and assumptions
<p>5. <i>Intercultural Knowledge and Competence</i> Recognizes importance of religious and cultural diversity</p> <p>Supports effective and appropriate interaction in a variety of contexts</p>	Shows minimal awareness of own biases and of the complexity of elements important to cultural diversity, or the role played by religion; tends to undervalue cultures different from own, and views experience of others through own cultural worldview	Identifies own biases and demonstrates partial understanding of the complexity of elements important to cultural diversity, and the role played by religion; Expresses openness to interaction with cultures different from own, though still tends to view experience of others through own cultural worldview	Recognizes own biases and assumptions and is able to suspend judgment and step outside own cultural worldview in valuing interaction with culturally different others; can consider multiple perspectives and worldviews

<p>6. <i>Ethical Reasoning and Action</i> Assesses ethical issues critically, and considers ramifications of ethical choices</p> <p>Recognizes role of religion in ethical decision making</p>	<p>Has trouble recognizing own ethical values and assumptions; shows little awareness of ramifications of ethical choices or the role of religion in ethical decision making; tends to uncritically apply own religious beliefs in ethical decision making with little recognition of perspectives different from own</p>	<p>Can articulate own ethical values and recognizes assumptions, and to some degree, complexities in ethical issues, ramifications of ethical choices, and the role of religion in ethical decision making; can approach ethical issues from perspectives different from own</p>	<p>Can articulate own ethical values and biases, shows awareness of own process in ethical decision making; demonstrates nuanced understanding of complexities in ethical issues, ramifications of ethical choices, and the role of religion in ethical decision making; is able to apply multiple perspectives to ethical issues</p>
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