



THE UNIVERSITY of
NEW MEXICO

Cover Sheet for Academic Program Assessment Plans

Directions: Please complete a separate cover sheet for each academic program of study¹. Feel free to make copies of this sheet if needed. Those graduate programs with an integrated master's and doctoral program may submit one cover sheet. The department chair and respective dean are to sign before the plans are submitted to the Provost.

Department / Unit: RELIGIOUS STUDIES

Title and Level of Academic Program (e.g., Chemistry, Ph.D.): B.A.

When submitting an Assessment Plan, please check and indicate when the faculty endorsed the plan.

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Faculty have met, reviewed, and endorsed the Assessment Plans being submitted for this degree program.	Date of Endorsement: <u>5/23/08</u>
-------------------------------------	--	--

[Signature]
Department Chair's Signature

5/23/08
Date

College/School/Branch Campus Dean's Signature

Date

RECEIVED

¹ Academic Program of Study is defined as an approved course of study leading to a certificate or degree reflected on a UNM transcript. A graduate level program of study typically includes a capstone experience (e.g. thesis, dissertation, professional paper or project, comprehensive exam, etc.)

May 15, 2008: Assessment plans are to be sent to the respective Dean
June 15, 2008: Relevant materials are to be sent from the Deans to the Provost

DEAN'S OFFICE
COLLEGE OF HUMAN & SOCIAL SCIENCES

Religious Studies Program:
Proposed Strategic Plan: Mission, Vision, Goals
Submitted by Richard L. Wood
On behalf of the Religious Studies Committee
May 2008

[Please note: As the Religious Studies Program undergoes a transition in leadership during late 2008, this strategic plan should be considered a work-in-progress, to be revised in keeping with the vision of a new Director, in dialogue with the Religious Studies Committee, the College, and the overall direction of the University]

Mission and Vision Statements:

Mission:

The mission of the UNM Religious Studies Program is to promote learning regarding religion in society, through excellent work in the following areas: teaching and mentoring of students; scholarly writing and creative work; and community engagement. We simultaneously focus on religion in our rapidly globalizing world, in American life, and in the rich spiritual diversity of New Mexico. We do so as a distinctly *public* university, studying religion in its own right and as a lens through which to view the human condition, contemporary human societies, intellectual and social history, spirituality, and ethics. The Program serves both as the primary venue for teaching undergraduate students about religion (including religious traditions themselves and the role of religion in society) *and* as an intellectual hub for scholarly work on religion by UNM faculty and graduate students. By sponsoring public events for the wider community and student involvement beyond campus, the Program engages with the diverse religious communities and spiritual traditions of New Mexico, as well as with secular scientific and humanistic perspectives. In this we, we strive to promote public dialogue across the boundaries between religious traditions, between religion and science, and between the university and community.

Vision:

In five years, we envision ourselves as an intellectually vibrant site for teaching and scholarly work on religion, within the areas of strategic emphasis at the University of New Mexico – including expertise on the religious traditions prominent in New Mexico; on religion in Latin American societies; on the dialogue between reason and faith, science and spirituality; and on those religions crucial to understanding the world in the 21st century. By 2012, we envision having faculty resources deep enough to become a full-fledged department with a small but strong graduate program.

Goals to achieve this vision:**Fostering Student Success:**

- Goal 1a: Institutionalize learning assessment procedures and a culture of assessment within the Religious Studies Program.
- Goal 1b: Build the profile of the Religious Studies major and minor as a dynamic teaching program that fosters undergraduate students' experience of the joy of classroom learning *and* community-based learning that dovetails with their university education.
- Goal 1c: Strengthen our connection to undergraduate majors, through a more active and engaging student association.
- Goal 1d: Expand and deepen the Honors Program within Religious Studies, through systematic recruitment of our best students and building sufficient faculty resources to provide excellent mentoring to them.
- Goal 1d: Build opportunities for Religious Studies majors to have international educational experiences in key sites relevant to religion and UNM strategic emphases.
- Goal 1e: Create career tracks within the Religious Studies major, dedicated to linking the interdisciplinary study of religion to specific professional careers, for example in law, journalism, ministry, medicine, and academe. We will do so in a way that preserves the liberal arts' emphasis on general learning and intellectual development, linked but not subordinated to the narrower canons of pre-professional training.

Building Systemic Excellence:

- Goal 2a: Recruit a new Director of Religious Studies with institutional leadership skills, to continue building the Program toward national stature.
- Goal 2b: Recruit an outstanding scholar, teacher, and public intellectual for the newly endowed Chair in Roman Catholic Studies at the University of New Mexico.
- Goal 2c: Build faculty resources at UNM whose teaching and research are *primarily* dedicated to work on religion (and are institutionally linked to the Religious Studies Program). [Note that we have proposed to the College that this occur as part of a planned transition to departmental status; discussion on this transition awaits the arrival of a new Provost].
- Goal 2d: Build upon the recent success of the Southwest Institute on Religion and Civil Society (SIRCS, a research center now internal to Religious Studies, with ~\$1.2

million in research grants). Ultimately, we hope to institutionalize SIRCS as a primary sponsor of faculty research and graduate student training on religion.

Healthy Communities, Community Development, and Economic Development:

- Goal 3a: Draw upon the Program's recent strong ties to diverse faith communities in New Mexico to catalyze ongoing university-community partnerships. These partnerships foster critical reflection and shared dialogue across religious traditions, across the university-community divide, and between the scientific community and religious leaders.
- Goal 3b: Strengthen the opportunities we provide to undergraduate students to link their university-based religious studies with real-world experience through community engagement and internships.

In achieving these goals, the UNM Religious Studies Program will contribute to New Mexico's community spirit and economic development by nurturing the rich, diverse cultural milieu sought by the creative class – the foundation of success in a knowledge-driven, high-wage economy.

Religious Studies Program
College of Arts and Sciences
The University of New Mexico
Program Assessment using Capstone Courses and Portfolio

BA Religious Studies

Contacts:

Dr. Lisa Gerber, Lecturer III in Religious Studies and Philosophy lgerber@unm.edu

Dr. Richard Wood, Director of Religious Studies Program rlwood@unm.edu

Ms. Nancy Rice, Administrative Assistant III in Religious Studies, nrice@unm.edu

1. Broad Learning Goals

UNM graduates who have majored in Religious Studies will...

...in the area of *knowledge*:

- A. understand the common ground between major religious systems *and* their contrasting perspectives;
- B. understand the complex role of religions in public and private life in the contemporary world;
- C. hold an in-depth understanding of the basic beliefs, practices, history, and sacred writings of at least one major tradition (of the student's choosing);

...in the area of *skills*:

- D. be able to write insightfully and analytically about at least one sub-area of religious studies, integrating knowledge from the humanities, social sciences, and/or natural sciences;
- E. be able to articulate how religious symbols and narratives are interpreted and mobilized to construct meaning in human life, by individuals and by communities (and how this changes over time or across different communities);

...in the area of *attitudes*:

- F. appreciate the diverse bodies of wisdom carried by different religious traditions;
- G. engage in constructive dialogue regarding the role religions play in public life in a modern democracy.

2. Measurable Student Learning Outcomes

UNM graduates who have successfully completed a major in Religious Studies can:

- A. compare and contrast the nature of belief and practice in two religious systems;
- B. draw on analytical concepts from the humanities, social sciences, or natural sciences to describe the basic beliefs and practices of one major religious tradition, how it has developed historically, and the approaches to sacred writings within that tradition;
- C. describe particular religious symbols and narratives, how they arose within a historical community, and how they shaped (and are shaped by) subsequent individuals and human communities;
- D. describe why respect across different traditions matters in contemporary society;
- E. engage in public dialogue and debate regarding ethical and political issues related to religion.

3. Assessment of Student Learning Three-Year Plan

A. Student Learning Outcomes

University of New Mexico Student Learning Goals				
Program SLOs	Knowledge	Skills	Attitudes	Program SLO is conceptually different from university goals.
2. A. <i>UNM graduates who have successfully completed a major in Religious Studies can compare and contrast the nature of belief and practice in two religious systems</i>	X	X		Consistent with University goals.
2. B. <i>UNM graduates who have successfully completed a major in Religious Studies can draw on analytical concepts from the humanities, social sciences, or natural sciences to describe the basic beliefs and practices of one major religious tradition, how it has developed historically, and the approaches to sacred writings within that tradition</i>	X	X		Consistent with University goals.

B. Assessment of Learning Outcomes

1. There will be two types of assessment.
 - a. Completion of essay from one of the eligible 400 level courses (see appendix A).
 - b. Completion of a portfolio consisting of four essays and a reflective paper.
2. The types of measurement are direct (student essay and portfolio) and indirect (reflective essay).
3. The criteria for success for all the above means of assessment is 80% of students score on a level that is "acceptable or better" as defined by rubrics approved by Religious Studies Faculty and the Religious Studies Committee.
4. There are two categories of students who will be assessed.
 - a. Essays assessed from all junior and senior Religious Studies majors taking eligible 400 level classes in the Fall. In the Spring we will collect essays only from those majors who were not included in the Fall data collection. [Exception: During the 2008-2009 academic year, we *may* choose to collect essays only during the Spring semester, to allow time for syllabi to be revised to reflect assessment priorities]

- b. Portfolios will be required from all seniors who are Religious Studies majors (to be implemented gradually, as new majors enter the program).
5. By assessing an essay we will be able to see how the students are doing by the end of the program. With the portfolio, we will gain an understanding of students' academic growth over the course of the program.

C. Timeline for Assessment

1. 2008-2009

- b. September 2008 – Develop and approve rubric for assessing essay from 400 level classes. The Religious Studies faculty and the Religious Studies Committee will be responsible for approving the rubric.
- c. October 2008 – Revise major in light of program assessment. At a minimum, this will include: 1) adding the requirement that Seniors in Religious Studies submit a portfolio; 2) listing the specific courses that will fulfill the existing “senior seminar” requirement; and 3) systematically revising syllabi for those courses so that assignments reflect the assessment goals. The requirements in the catalogue will need to be changed as well as the agreement that students sign when they become majors.
- d. October 2008 – The Religious Studies Committee, faculty, and Chair will discuss whether to add a required one-credit seminar for students. The purpose of this seminar would be to give students an understanding of the professional field of religious studies. This seminar may be the appropriate place to finalize and submit the portfolio.
- e. December 2008 – A faculty member not teaching the 400 level classes will collect data from the essays in the eligible 400 level classes.
- f. May 2009 — A faculty member not teaching the 400 level classes will collect data from the essays in the eligible 400 level classes.
- g. Summer 2009 – The Religious Studies Committee and faculty who teach the 400 level seminars will meet to discuss and analyze the material from the essays.
- h. Fall 2009 – Meeting with Religious Studies faculty to discuss analysis of assessment material and recommendations for improved student learning, potential restructuring of major, and potential changes to the assessment process.

2. 2009-2010

- a. December 2009 – A faculty member not teaching the 400 level classes will collect data from the essays in the eligible 400 level classes.

- b. May 2010 – A faculty member not teaching the 400 level classes will collect data from the essays in the eligible 400 level classes.
- c. Develop a rubric to assess the portfolio. The rubric will be approved by the Religious Studies Committee and Religious Studies faculty.
- d. Summer 2010 – The Religious Studies Committee and faculty who teach the 400 level seminars will meet to discuss and analyze the material from the essays.
- e. Fall 2009 – Meeting with Religious Studies Faculty to discuss results and recommendations for improved student learning.

3. 2010-2011

- a. December 2010 – A faculty member not teaching the 400 level classes will collect data from the essays in the eligible 400 level classes.
- b. May 2011 – A faculty member not teaching the 400 level classes will collect data from the essays in the eligible 400 level classes.
- c. May 2011 – Departmental committee of three members will review and evaluate the senior portfolios.
- d. Summer 2011 – The Religious Studies Committee and faculty who teach the 400 level seminars will meet to discuss and analyze the material from the essays and from the portfolios.

D. How the assessments will be used to improve the program.

- 1. Who participates in the process - The Religious Studies faculty will participate in the assessment process. A faculty member who is not currently teaching the 400 level seminars will gather and assess the essays from juniors and seniors. A committee of three faculty members will collect and analyze the data from the portfolios.
- 2. Process for consideration of the implications of assessment for change – Each Spring, the Religious Studies Committee and faculty will meet to discuss the data from the essays and portfolios. In these meetings, there will be a consideration of the data, looking particularly for strengths and weaknesses in pedagogy and in the program itself. . The RSC committee and faculty will make recommendations to improve student learning. This could include recommendations about pedagogy and program design.
- 3. Each Fall, before the semester begins, there will be a faculty meeting to discuss the recommendations and ways to implement the recommendations.

Appendix 1

Provisional list of Religious Studies 400 level classes eligible for “senior seminar” requirement:

- 404. Augustine
- 413. Kierkegaard
- 422. Sociology of Religion
- 426. History of the Holocaust
- 438. Buddhist Philosophy – India
- 439. Buddhist Philosophy – China
- 441. History of Religion in America
- 442. Religions of China
- 447. Seminar in Religious Studies
- 449. The Bhagavad Gita and Yoga
- 450. Spanish Mysticism
- 457. Seminar in Islamic Tradition
- 463. Seminar in Biblical Studies
- 465. C.S. Lewis
- 481. Islam
- 490. Black Liberation and Religion
- 491. African American Religious Traditions.