MEMORANDUM

TO: COMMITTEE ON EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMS, COLLEGE OF ARTS & SCIENCE
FROM: TONY K. STEWART, CHAIR, DEPARTMENT OF RELIGIOUS STUDIES
DATE: 04 DECEMBER 2014
RE: REVISION OF RELIGIOUS STUDIES MAJOR, MINOR, AND HONORS PROGRAM
CC: KAREN CAMPBELL, SENIOR ASSOCIATE DEAN FOR UNDERGRADUATE EDUCATION, COLLEGE OF ARTS & SCIENCE

Review of the RLST Degree Programs. The Department of Religious Studies initiated a curriculum review shortly after the arrival of the new Chair (Stewart) in Fall 2011. The basic structure and intellectual justification of the existing curriculum had not been significantly altered since the department’s inception thirty-five years ago, and when revised, only tweaked when a new faculty member was added. Each small tweak necessitated a broadening of an existing category within the major or the addition of yet another new category to ensure that every student had to take at least one course from each faculty member. Some areas languished when faculty departed, creating unfortunate difficulties for students. Over the span of the program’s life, the original intellectual rationale faded by virtue of the changing appointments, nor did the model keep pace with the changes in the academic study of religion. In short, the vitality of the old program of instruction was sapped. The old program was rooted in the models of comparative religion and the emphasis was overwhelmingly on Abrahamic religions. Though never stated, the underlying perspective sought to generate an understanding of the abstraction we call religion, which of necessity emphasizes through comparison the commonalities of religious traditions. Since the mid-twentieth century, the academic study of religion has moved away from those models of universal or core concepts of religion (morphology). The multiple approaches that are adopted now by all leading institutions emphasize more the historical differences of religious traditions through the application of a rigorous set of analytical perspectives that operate through interdisciplinary and multidisciplinary discourses. The distinction is not an either/or, but the emphasis on difference radically changes the way courses are taught (religion as a synchronic, morphological, and ultimately normative category of human experience vs. religious traditions in their diachronic, historical, and distinctive culturally-conditioned forms).

Hiring Strategies. The reconfiguration of the major began with systematic hirings. Over the last three years, seven new faculty have come to grace our ranks (Bell, Lin, Lowe, Schneider, Stewart, Taneja). The appointments were in Asian, Islamic, Sub-Saharan African, and Native American traditions, previously largely absent from or only sporadically represented in the curriculum. Each faculty member has introduced new disciplinary perspectives in the study. In the past, appointments were made in the so-called silo-approach and primarily emphasized the “great traditions,” an ideological construction that cannot hide its colonial and Orientalist heritage. The new pattern follows three basic principles that integrate faculty interests rather than separate them, and which take into consideration the constraints of our small size (most of the departments in our peer institutions have double to triple the number of faculty), while thickening the offerings of courses for students.

- Each new hire has to demonstrate expertise in a second religious tradition and/or geographic area beyond the area of primary research. For a small department, we feel that this is a desideratum.
- Each new appointment is expected to contribute a new or expand one of the disciplinary perspectives to the study of religion (e.g., literary criticism, hermeneutics, art history, anthropology, LGBTQI, history, and so forth).
- Each new hire had to establish an intellectual bridge to existing expertise in the department, conversation partners through overlapping disciplinary interests, shared or linked linguistic expertise, or common interests in religious traditions that historically interacted with one another (e.g., Hindu, Buddhist, or Islamic traditions in South Asia; Buddhist, Daoist, and Confucian traditions in East Asia;
Christianity and native American traditions in North America; Islam and indigenous traditions in Africa; American slave religion and Caribbean and West African voudou, and so forth). The result is no faculty works in isolation. And similarly each faculty member must have conversation colleagues in other departments, such as History, History of Art, Anthropology, and so forth.

**Faculty Makeover.** Only after the initial set of hires (five total after the appointment of the Chair) could the full revision of the curriculum take place. During the same period, the department has adopted several institutional moves to tighten the faculty. Since 2011, senior faculty have retired, two faculty have left the university, part-time appointments have been severely trimmed, courtesy appointments have been limited to those who actually participate in the intellectual life of the department, and split appointments with other departments have been stopped. In the Religious Studies side of the department that now has eight full-time faculty in the study of religion (seven tenured or tenure track, one NTT Mellon Assistant Professor), only two remain from the faculty of four years ago (Gay, McGregor). The need for a new RLST Major, Minor, and Honors program was self-evident and explicitly discussed as part of the expectation for the new Chair when the Dean issued the charge to build an entirely new department with a new vision.

**The Review Committee.** After full faculty discussions in 2011-12 and 2012-13, the Chair drafted members of the committee in the fall of 2013 to create the new RLST Major, Minor, and Honors programs:

- Laurel Schneider, Professor and new faculty member, Chair of the Committee
- Martina Urban, Associate Professor and Director of Undergraduate Studies—Religious Studies
- Richard McGregor, Associate Professor and Director of Undergraduate Studies—Islamic Studies
- Bryan Lowe, Assistant Professor (tenure track).

**The Charge to the Committee.** The Chair charged the committee to develop a model that was intellectually sound, reflected the most important theoretical advances within the academic study of religion, yet would be streamlined from the point of requirements, would offer more choices for students, and ensure that no course of study would be dependent on any one faculty member (a real danger in small departments). We also had registered the fact that many of the course offerings over the last several decades had increasingly favored graduate students in the Graduate Department of Religion (GDR), Masters of Divinity Program (MDiv), and Masters of Theological Studies (MTS)—all of which lie outside the department’s primary mission as an undergraduate department, though all of the faculty teach in the GDR. That movement had inadvertently but gradually deemphasized the curriculum for undergraduates. The new major redresses this slippage. The committee proposals revamp entirely the Religious Studies Major, Religious Studies Minor, and Honors in Religious Studies as directed. The result reflects the vision of the entire faculty, though it may not appear on the surface to be as streamlined as we had hoped.

**Comparisons.** The committee reviewed programs at Brown University, Dartmouth College, Duke University, Emory University, McMaster University, Princeton University, Rice University, Stanford University, Syracuse University, Swarthmore College, University of North Carolina-Chapel Hill, University of Pennsylvania, and Williams College. In that process, the committee began to form a clearer idea of how the priorities of individual faculty members were aligned and could be implemented by different models. The result is a very minimally structured, but pointed guidance that gives the student great flexibility, while ensuring that the absence (e.g., leave) or departure of any one faculty member would not slow or disrupt the student’s progress toward degree. The program contains sufficient breadth to ensure the student understands the nature and function of religions across the world, and contains a depth component to ensure the student grasps the complexity of a single or closely related traditions using interdisciplinary perspectives. We feel that this new program will equip any major to pursue further study in the academic study of religion or cognate disciplines, will provide an excellent second major for a
variety of disciplines that address human issues (e.g., Medicine-Health-Society, Neuro-Science, Sociology, and so forth), or serve as a platform for developing the vigorous analytical skills necessary for professional degrees (e.g., Law, Medicine, and so forth).

Islamic Studies Minor. The Islamic Studies Minor, also administered by the Department of Religious Studies, will be reviewed in the not-too-distant future, pending developments in Arabic language instruction and anticipated new course offerings by new faculty.

Addendum, dtd. 17 March 2015

New Hire. Since this letter was written, the Department of Religious Studies has hired Alexis Wells as Assistant Professor, tenure track, in the area of Religions of the American South, with a special emphasis on the African-American religious experience. Her research area is slave religion in West Africa and the southern US.

We have not included her in the catalog copy because she is has not yet officially joined.
22 Apr. 2014 Approval of Basic Structure of New Major, Minor, and Honors Program
Faculty Vote: 6 – 0 approved (1 abstention, on leave)

12 Nov. 2014 Approval of Tracks, etc.
Faculty Vote: 7 – 0 approved

23 Mar. 2015 Approval of CEP required changes
Faculty Vote: 7 – 0 approved

CHAIR Tony K. Stewart
DIRECTOR OF UNDERGRADUATE STUDIES IN RELIGIOUS STUDIES Martina Urban, Richard McGregor
DIRECTOR OF UNDERGRADUATE STUDIES IN ISLAMIC STUDIES Richard McGregor
DIRECTOR OF GRADUATE STUDIES James Byrd (Divinity)
CHAIR, GRADUATE DEPARTMENT OF RELIGION Paul DeHart (Divinity)
PROFESSORS EMERITI Charles H. Hambrick, Gary Jensen, Daniel M. Patte, Lewis V. Baldwin
ASSOCIATE PROFESSORS Jay Geller, Elizabeth Heitman, Richard McGregor, Martina Urban
ASSISTANT PROFESSORS Dianna Bell, Nancy G. Lin, Bryan Lowe, Anand Taneja
SENIOR LECTURER Bushra Hamad

THE Department of Religious Studies offers courses that explore religion in cultures around the world and courses that train students in the intellectual skills relevant to such inquiry. Religion is the actions and thoughts people have toward that which they consider sacred, spiritual, or divine. Religion has inspired the rise of entire civilizations lasting thousands of years and the innermost experience of individuals in solitude. Religious studies courses reflect this vast scope; they range from lecture courses that compare great world traditions, such as Christianity and Buddhism, to seminars that focus upon a single religious text, or upon a religious form, such as myth and ritual, or upon a method of inquiry such as textual criticism and other methods of interpretation.

— Students majoring in religious studies have a dual focus: they study religious traditions and they acquire research methodologies such as textual criticism, history, and the social scientific study of religion. Many students complete double majors, combining religious studies with history, anthropology, sociology, philosophy, or art. Many study abroad in Asia, the Middle East, or Europe and use their research in their senior projects. Religious studies trains students to investigate world cultures and, by comparing cultures, understand theirs in depth. The multicultural and interdisciplinary character of religious studies makes it an excellent foundation to a liberal arts education.

THE Department of Religious Studies approaches religion as a fundamentally human experience. The academic study of religion begins descriptively by exploring religious commitments, identities, practices, worldviews, and institutions. Our courses investigate religious traditions through varied theoretical and methodological approaches that generate a complex understanding of religious perspectives from an array of disciplines such as anthropology, sociology, history, theology, literature, and art.

Students majoring in religious studies gain a deep knowledge of a single tradition, region, or theme and a broad understanding of religions around the world. Successful students develop a highly portable analytical skill set that equips them to pursue graduate degrees in religion or cognate disciplines, as well as professional degrees and careers in fields such as Law, Diplomacy, Medicine, and Business. It also provides an excellent second major for a variety of disciplines that address the human condition including Neuroscience, Sociology, History, Medicine, Health, and Society, and others. Majors will gain the ability to reason intelligently about one of the most difficult and sensitive topics in any society. By virtue of the variety of religious cultures studied, the training will deepen students’ mutual understanding and sensitivity to prepare them to become truly responsible global citizens.

The program offers a Major (31 credit hours), an Honors Program, a Minor (18 credit hours) in Religious Studies, and a Minor (20 credit hours) in Islamic Studies.

Program of Concentration in Religious Studies
The 30-hour major in religious studies is designed with two goals in mind. We want our students to become literate in at least two prominent world religious traditions. We also ask students to take courses that will familiarize them
with the range of ways in which religion is studied and understood. A major in religious studies lays a solid foundation on which to build either a career in professions that demand contact with diverse populations, such as international business, medicine, social work, law, and education or graduate and seminary studies.

Students majoring in religious studies must complete at least 30 credit hours distributed as follows. The first-year seminar (115E) may be counted toward the major in either Category 1 or Category 2, according to its topic. Students planning to pursue graduate studies are especially encouraged to take language courses.

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**Category 1. Religious Traditions in Cultural Contexts.** Students complete a minimum of 15 credit hours, including at least two courses in each of two religious traditions from the following:

- * These and similar courses may count toward other areas of the religious studies major (see adviser regarding starred courses and courses not listed above). However, no course may be used to satisfy more than one requirement in the religious studies major.

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**Category 2. Religion and Its Role in Human Life.** Students complete a minimum of 9 credit hours, including at least one course from each group:

- * These and similar courses may count toward other areas of the religious studies major (see adviser regarding starred courses and courses not listed above). However, no course may be used to satisfy more than one requirement in the religious studies major.

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**Category 3. Senior Requirements.** A senior seminar (280W, 3 credit hours) gathering majors during the fall semester of their last year.

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**Program of Concentration in Religious Studies**

31 credit hours. The Program of Concentration in Religious Studies seeks to introduce students to the rich diversity of religious traditions in the world (*breadth* component) and to build depth of study in areas of specific interest to the student (*depth* component). In addition, the curriculum includes instruction in the range of theories and methods used to approach religious traditions academically (*tools of the discipline* component). The student will then be able to pursue individual interests (*electives*).

A maximum of two courses (6 credit hours) outside of the department may count toward the major. Of these, one course (3 credit hours) outside of the department may count toward the Depth Component. A foreign language course approved as an elective is not subject to the two course (6 credit hours) limit. No course may be used to satisfy more than one of the four components of the major.

1. **Breadth Component (9 credit hours)**

   Ensures a familiarity with the rich diversity of religious traditions in the world.

   - a. *Encountering religious diversity*. 3 credit hours. RLST 1010. An introduction to the field of religious studies and select traditions.
   - b. *Introductory course in African or Western traditions*. 3 credit hours. Introductory course in a religious tradition originating in the Mediterranean, Middle East, Africa, or the Americas (including but not limited to Judaism,
Christianity, Islam, Egyptian religions, traditions of Sub-Saharan Africa, Native American traditions). RLST 1100, 1200, 1208, 1309, 1500. An appropriate First-Year Writing Seminar RLST 1111 may count with the approval of the Director of Undergraduate Studies in Religious Studies.

c. **Introductory course in Asian or non-Western traditions.** 3 credit hours. Introductory course in a religious tradition originating in Asia or the Pacific (including but not limited to Hindu and Buddhist traditions and those religious traditions originating in East and South Asia). RLST 1637, 1700, 1710, 2644, 2664. An appropriate First-Year Writing Seminar RLST 1111 may count with the approval of the Director of Undergraduate Studies in Religious Studies.

2. **Depth Component (9 Credit Hours)**
The Depth Component is organized according to three tracks: *traditions, geographies, and theories and themes*. The introductory course taken to satisfy the breadth requirement cannot be double-counted in this category. The student must choose 9 credit hours from *one* of the following tracks. An appropriate First-Year Writing Seminar RLST 1111 may count toward any track with the approval of the Director of Undergraduate Studies in Religious Studies.

a. **Traditions.** Allows students to focus on a particular religious tradition or related cluster of traditions that may transcend geographic limitations.
   - **Buddhist Traditions:** RLST 1700, 1710, 1637, 2644, 3669, 3670W, 3749, 3753, 3775; ASIA 3633
   - **Christian Traditions:** RLST 1309, 1330W, 1820, 2310, 3119, 3304W, 3306, 3312, 3313, 3316; HIST 1760, 2250
   - **Hindu Traditions:** RLST 2664, 4665, 4666
   - **Indigenous Traditions:** RLST 1637, 3178, 3898, 4774
   - **Islamic Traditions:** RLST 1500, 1637, 2644, 2664, 3561, 3669, 3670W, 4665, 4666
   - **Jewish Traditions:** RLST 1200, 1208, 2210, 2210W, 3270; JS 1200, 1002, 1002W, 2300, 2330, 2620; PHIL 2102

b. **Geographies.** Gives students the option of focusing on regional cultures, histories, and religions, as well as relationships between religious traditions within a specific region.
   - **Africa, West Asia, and the Mediterranean:** RLST 1208, 1330W, 1500, 2471, 3312, 3461, 3472, 3562, 3898; ARA 2305; HIST 1190, 2190
   - **The Americas:** RLST 1208, 1190W, 3119, 3142, 3178, 3304; HIST 2530
   - **East Asia:** RLST 1700, 1710, 3747, 3749, 3753, 3670W, 3775, 4774; ASIA 3633
   - **South/Southeast Asia:** RLST 1500, 1637, 2644, 2664, 3561, 3669, 3670W, 4665, 4666

c. **Theories and Themes.** Enables students to focus on theoretical, scientific, or thematic questions that may cross both traditional and geographic lines.
   - **Religion in the literary and visual arts:** RLST 2881, 2940, 3669, 3775, 4665, 4774, 4939
   - **Theories of religion, science, and/or psychology:** RLST 1820, 3079, 3472, 3879, 3940, 3941, 4834, 4835, 4837; JS 2330; ANTH 3141

3. **Tools of the Discipline Component (4-6 Credit Hours)**
Key issues in the study of religion and a formal introduction to the theories and methods in the academic study of religion.

a. **Theory and Method.** 3 credit hours. RLST 4960W “Approaches to the Academic Study of Religion.” Recommended for juniors, but may be taken earlier with permission of Director of Undergraduate Studies in Religious Studies.

b. **Majors Colloquium.** 1 credit hour (may be taken a total of three times). RLST 4970 “Majors Colloquium.” Initiation into the range of professional activities in the study of religion from the craft of research to the production of papers, articles, and theses, coupled with targeted theoretical concerns relevant to the research of the students enrolled in that particular class.
4. Electives (9 Credit Hours)

a. Electives may be drawn from any of the courses listed under the three components of the major (Breadth, Depth, and Tools of the Discipline). Students may elect to deepen an area of study or they may build additional breadth in other traditions, regions, or themes.

b. One relevant language course (at least 3 credit hours) may count, with the approval of the Director of Undergraduate Studies in Religious Studies. This course is not subject to the two course (6 credit hours) limit on courses taken outside the department.

Honors Program

The Honors Program in Religious Studies is designed to afford superior students the opportunity to pursue more intensive work within their major field. The program requires: (a) a 3.0 cumulative grade point average; (b) 6 credit hours of independent research, 299a–299b (Honors Research) normally taken during the senior year; (c) an honors thesis to be completed by the spring of the senior year; (d) successful completion of an honors oral examination on the topic of the thesis.

Honors in Religious Studies

The Honors thesis provides an opportunity for highly motivated and exceptionally capable students to engage in independent work on a topic in Religious Studies. Honors theses require original research with primary sources and extensive use of relevant secondary scholarship, both with regard to the narrowly defined topic of the thesis and on the larger theoretical and methodological issues in the academic study of religion. A 3.3 GPA in courses toward the major and cumulative 3.3 GPA is required for entry and must be maintained for completion of Honors. Students work closely with faculty members in designing, researching, and writing a thesis beginning in the second semester of their junior year in order to present the thesis at the end of the second semester of their senior year, culminating in a final oral examination on the thesis.

a. Research and Writing. 6 credit hours. RLST 4998–RLST 4999 “Seniors Honors Thesis.” RLST 4998 and RLST 4999 count as 6 of the 9 credit hours of the elective component of the major.

b. Majors Colloquium – Co-requisite with RLST 4999. RLST 4970 “Majors Colloquium” in the second semester of senior year, in which candidate must present results of research. Honor program candidates shall take 4970 co-requisite with 4999. Initiation into the range of professional activities in the study of religion from the craft of research to the production of papers, articles, and theses, coupled with targeted theoretical concerns relevant to the research of the students enrolled in that particular class.

Minor in Religious Studies

18 credit hours. Students complete a minimum of 12 credit hours in Category 1 (see above — 6 credit hours in each of two religious traditions). Students complete a minimum of 6 credit hours in Category 2 (see above — 3 credit hours from each group). The First-Year Writing Seminar (115F) may be counted toward the minor in either Category 1 or Category 2, according to its topic. Students may elect to participate in the Senior Seminar (280W) to be counted in Category 2.

Minor in Religious Studies

18 credit hours. The Minor will introduce the rich diversity of religious traditions (Breadth component), initiate depth in at least one tradition (Depth component), and encourage further exploration of different perspectives or traditions through electives. A maximum of one course (3 credit hours) from outside the department may count if it is included in any of the three components of the major (Breadth, Depth, and Tools of the Discipline). No course may be used to satisfy more than one of the three components of the minor.

1. Breadth Component (9 Credit Hours)

Ensures a familiarity with the rich diversity of religious traditions in the world.

b. *Introductory course in African or Western traditions.* 3 credit hours. Introductory course in a religious tradition originating in the Mediterranean, Middle East, Africa or the Americas (including but not limited to Judaism, Christianity, Islam, Egyptian religions, traditions of Sub-Saharan Africa, Native American traditions). RLST 1100, 1200, 1208, 1309, 1500. An appropriate First-Year Writing Seminar RLST 1111 may count with the approval of the Director of Undergraduate Studies in Religious Studies.

c. *Introductory course in Asian or non-Western traditions.* 3 credit hours. Introductory course in a religious tradition originating in Asia or the Pacific, including but not limited to Hindu and Buddhist traditions and those religious traditions originating in East and South Asia. RLST 1637, 1700, 1710, 2644, 2664. An appropriate First-Year Writing Seminar RLST 1111 may count with the approval of the Director of Undergraduate Studies in Religious Studies.

2. **DEPTH COMPONENT (3 CREDIT HOURS)**
   - *Deepening the study of one tradition.* 3 credit hours. The student must choose one of the two religious traditions used to meet the introductory course Breadth Component to delve further into that religion.

3. **ELECTIVES (6 CREDIT HOURS)**
   a. Electives may be drawn from any of the courses listed under the three components of the major (Breadth, Depth, and Tools of the Discipline). Students may elect to deepen an area of study or they may build additional breadth in other traditions, regions, or themes.
   b. With the permission of the Director of Undergraduate Studies in Religious Studies and a minimum 3.3 GPA in the minor, the student may take the Majors Colloquium RLST 4970.

**Minor in Islamic Studies**

20 credit hours. Students complete a required minimum of 20 credit hours from the list below, which must include Arabic 1102 Elementary Arabic; Religious Studies 1150 Introduction to Islam; and Religious Studies 4554 The Qur’an and Its Interpreters. The maximum number of credit hours to be counted toward the minor from Arabic language courses is 9. No credit hours will be counted for Arabic 1101.

ARABIC: 1102, Elementary Arabic; 2201-2202, Intermediate Arabic; 3101-3102, Advanced Arabic; 3201, Media Arabic; 3301, Arabic of the Qur’an and Other Classical Texts.


HISTORY: 1111, First-Year Writing Seminar (when related to Islamic history or culture as determined by the Director of Undergraduate Studies in Islamic Studies); 1160, Modern South Asia; 1190, A History of Islam; 1200, The Arab Spring; 1270, Sub-Saharan Africa: 1400–1800; 1280, Africa since 1800: The Revolutionary Years; 2140, The Mughal World; 2150, India and the Indian Ocean; 2155, Muhammad and Early Islam; 2170, Islam and the Crusades; 2190, Last Empire of Islam; 3150, Cities of Europe and the Middle East; 3210, Muslims, Christians, and Jews in Medieval Spain.

JEWISH STUDIES: 2540, Power and Diplomacy in the Modern Middle East; 2600, Islam and the Jews.

PHILOSOPHY: 2102, Medieval Philosophy; 3006, Islamic Philosophy.

POLITICAL SCIENCE: 2230, Middle East Politics; 3897, Selected Topics (when related to Islamic politics or culture as determined by the Director of Undergraduate Studies in Islamic Studies).

RELIGIOUS STUDIES: 1111, First-Year Writing Seminar (when related to Islamic religion or culture as determined by the Director of Undergraduate Studies in Islamic Studies); 1500, Introduction to Islam; 3561, Islam in South Asia; 3562, Culture, Religion, and Politics of the Arab World; 4551, Islamic Mysticism; 4552, Islam in the Modern World; 4554, The Qur’an and Its Interpreters; 4592, Advanced Seminar in Arabic; 4593, Advanced Seminar in Islamic Tradition.
The Department of Religious Studies approaches religion as a fundamentally human experience. The academic study of religion begins descriptively by exploring religious commitments, identities, practices, worldviews, and institutions. Our courses investigate religious traditions through varied theoretical and methodological approaches that generate a complex understanding of religious perspectives from an array of disciplines such as anthropology, sociology, history, theology, literature, and art.

Students majoring in religious studies gain a deep knowledge of a single tradition, region, or theme and a broad understanding of religions around the world. Successful students develop a highly portable analytical skill set that equips them to pursue graduate degrees in religion or cognate disciplines, as well as professional degrees and careers in fields such as Law, Diplomacy, Medicine, and Business. It also provides an excellent second major for a variety of disciplines that address the human condition including Neuroscience, Sociology, History, Medicine, Health, and Society, and others. Majors will gain the ability to reason intelligently about one of the most difficult and sensitive topics in any society. By virtue of the variety of religious cultures studied, the training will deepen students’ mutual understanding and sensitivity to prepare them to become truly responsible global citizens.

The program offers a Major (31 credit hours), an Honors Program, a Minor (18 credit hours) in Religious Studies, and a Minor (20 credit hours) in Islamic Studies.

Program of Concentration in Religious Studies
31 credit hours. The Program of Concentration in Religious Studies seeks to introduce students to the rich diversity of religious traditions in the world (breadth component) and to build depth of study in areas of specific interest to the student (depth component). In addition, the curriculum includes instruction in the range of theories and methods used to approach religious traditions academically (tools of the discipline component). The student will then be able to pursue individual interests (electives).

A maximum of two courses (6 credit hours) outside of the department may count toward the major. Of these, one course (3 credit hours) outside of the department may count toward the Depth Component. A foreign language course approved as an elective is not subject to the two course (6 credit hours) limit. No course may be used to satisfy more than one of the four components of the major.

1. Breadth Component (9 Credit Hours)
Ensures a familiarity with the rich diversity of religious traditions in the world.

   a. Encountering religious diversity. 3 credit hours. RLST 1010. An introduction to the field of religious studies and select traditions.
   b. Introductory course in African or Western traditions. 3 credit hours. Introductory course in a religious tradition originating in the Mediterranean, Middle East, Africa, or the Americas (including but not limited to Judaism, Christianity, Islam, Egyptian religions, traditions of Sub-Saharan Africa, Native American traditions). RLST 1100, 1200, 1208, 1309, 1500. An appropriate First-Year Writing Seminar RLST 1111 may count with the approval of the Director of Undergraduate Studies in Religious Studies.
   c. Introductory course in Asian or non-Western traditions. 3 credit hours. Introductory course in a religious tradition originating in Asia or the Pacific (including but not limited to Hindu and Buddhist traditions and those religious traditions originating in East and South Asia). RLST 1637, 1700, 1710, 2644, 2664. An appropriate First-Year Writing Seminar RLST 1111 may count with the approval of the Director of Undergraduate Studies in Religious Studies.
2. **Depth Component (9 Credit Hours)**

The Depth Component is organized according to three tracks: *traditions, geographies, and theories and themes*. The introductory course taken to satisfy the breadth requirement cannot be double-counted in this category. The student must choose 9 credit hours from *one* of the following tracks. An appropriate First-Year Writing Seminar RLST 1111 may count toward any track with the approval of the Director of Undergraduate Studies in Religious Studies.

a. **Traditions.** Allows students to focus on a particular religious tradition or related cluster of traditions that may transcend geographic limitations.  
   - **Buddhist Traditions**: RLST 1700, 1710, 1637, 2644, 3669, 3670W, 3749, 3753, 3775; ASIA 3633  
   - **Christian Traditions**: RLST 1309, 1330W, 1820, 2310, 3119, 3304W, 3306, 3312, 3313, 3316; HIST 1760, 2250  
   - **Hindu Traditions**: RLST 2664, 4665, 4666  
   - **Indigenous Traditions**: RLST 1637, 3178, 3898, 4774  
   - **Islamic Traditions**: RLST 1500, 3461, 3551, 3552, 3561, 3562, 4552, 4554; ARA 2305; HIST 1190, 2140, 2190  
   - **Jewish Traditions**: RLST 1200, 1208, 2210, 2210W, 3270; JS 1200, 1002, 1002W, 2300, 2330, 2620; PHIL 2102  

b. **Geographies.** Gives students the option of focusing on regional cultures, histories, and religions, as well as relationships between religious traditions within a specific region.  
   - **Africa, West Asia, and the Mediterranean**: RLST 1208, 1330W, 1500, 2471, 3312, 3461, 3472, 3562, 3898; ARA 2305; HIST 1190, 2190  
   - **The Americas**: RLST 1100, 1190W, 3119, 3142, 3178, 3304; HIST 2530  
   - **East Asia**: RLST 1700, 1710, 3747, 3749, 3753, 3670W, 3775, 4774; ASIA 3633  
   - **South/Southeast Asia**: RLST 1500, 1637, 2644, 2664, 3561, 3669, 3670W, 4665, 4666  

b. **Theories and Themes.** Enables students to focus on theoretical, scientific, or thematic questions that may cross both traditional and geographic lines.  
   - **Religion in the literary and visual arts**: RLST 2881, 2940, 3669, 3775, 4665, 4774, 4939  
   - **Theories of religion, science, and/or psychology**: RLST 1820, 3079, 3472, 3879, 3940, 3941, 4834, 4835, 4837; JS 2330; ANTH 3141

3. **Tools of the Discipline Component (4-6 Credit Hours)**

Key issues in the study of religion and a formal introduction to the theories and methods in the academic study of religion.

a. **Theory and Method.** 3 credit hours. RLST 4960W “Approaches to the Academic Study of Religion.” Recommended for juniors, but may be taken earlier with permission of Director of Undergraduate Studies in Religious Studies.

b. **Majors Colloquium.** 1 credit hour (may be taken a total of three times). RLST 4970 “Majors Colloquium.” Initiation into the range of professional activities in the study of religion from the craft of research to the production of papers, articles, and theses, coupled with targeted theoretical concerns relevant to the research of the students enrolled in that particular class.

4. **Electives (9 Credit Hours)**

a. Electives may be drawn from any of the courses listed under the three components of the major (*Breadth, Depth, and Tools of the Discipline*). Students may elect to deepen an area of study or they may build additional breadth in other traditions, regions, or themes.

b. One relevant language course (at least 3 credit hours) may count, with the approval of the Director of Undergraduate Studies in Religious Studies. This course is not subject to the two course (6 credit hours) limit on courses taken outside the department.
Honors in Religious Studies

The Honors thesis provides an opportunity for highly motivated and exceptionally capable students to engage in independent work on a topic in Religious Studies. Honors theses require original research with primary sources and extensive use of relevant secondary scholarship, both with regard to the narrowly defined topic of the thesis and on the larger theoretical and methodological issues in the academic study of religion. 3.3 GPA in courses toward the major and cumulative 3.3 GPA is required for entry and must be maintained for completion of Honors. Students work closely with faculty members in designing, researching, and writing a thesis beginning in the second semester of their junior year in order to present the thesis at the end of the second semester of their senior year, culminating in a final oral examination on the thesis.

- **Research and Writing.** 6 credit hours. RLST 4998–RLST 4999 “Seniors Honors Thesis.” RLST 4998 and RLST 4999 count as 6 of the 9 credit hours of the elective component of the major.
- **Majors Colloquium – Co-requisite with RLST 4999.** RLST 4970 “Majors Colloquium” in the second semester of senior year, in which candidate must present results of research. Honor program candidates shall take 4970 co-requisite with 4999. Initiation into the range of professional activities in the study of religion from the craft of research to the production of papers, articles, and theses, coupled with targeted theoretical concerns relevant to the research of the students enrolled in that particular class.

Minor in Religious Studies

18 credit hours. The Minor will introduce the rich diversity of religious traditions (Breadth component), initiate depth in at least one tradition (Depth component), and encourage further exploration of different perspectives or traditions through electives. A maximum of one course (3 credit hours) from outside the department may count if it is included in any of the three components of the major (Breadth, Depth, and Tools of the Discipline). No course may be used to satisfy more than one of the three components of the minor.

1. **Breadth Component (9 credit hours)**
Ensures a familiarity with the rich diversity of religious traditions in the world.

- **Encountering religious diversity.** 3 credit hours. RLST 1010 “Encountering Religious Diversity.” An introduction to the field of religious studies and select traditions.
- **Introductory course in African or Western traditions.** 3 credit hours. Introductory course in a religious tradition originating in the Mediterranean, Middle East, Africa or the Americas (including but not limited to Judaism, Christianity, Islam, Egyptian religions, traditions of Sub-Saharan Africa, Native American traditions). RLST 1100, 1200, 1208, 1309, 1500. An appropriate First-Year Writing Seminar RLST 1111 may count with the approval of the Director of Undergraduate Studies in Religious Studies.
- **Introductory course in Asian or non-Western traditions.** 3 credit hours. Introductory course in a religious tradition originating in Asia or the Pacific, including but not limited to Hindu and Buddhist traditions and those religious traditions originating in East and South Asia. RLST 1637, 1700, 1710, 2644, 2664. An appropriate First-Year Writing Seminar RLST 1111 may count with the approval of the Director of Undergraduate Studies in Religious Studies.

2. **Depth Component (3 credit hours)**
- *Deepening the study of one tradition.** 3 credit hours. The student must choose one of the two religious traditions used to meet the introductory course Breadth Component to delve further into that religion.

3. **Electives (6 credit hours)**
- Electives may be drawn from any of the courses listed under the three components of the major (Breadth, Depth, and Tools of the Discipline). Students may elect to deepen an area of study or they may build additional breadth in other traditions, regions, or themes.
- With the permission of the Director of Undergraduate Studies in Religious Studies and a minimum 3.3 GPA in the minor, the student may take the Majors Colloquium RLST 4970.
Minor in Islamic Studies

20 credit hours. Students complete a required minimum of 20 credit hours from the list below, which must include Arabic 1102 Elementary Arabic; Religious Studies 1150 Introduction to Islam; and Religious Studies 4554 The Qur'an and Its Interpreters. The maximum number of credit hours to be counted toward the minor from Arabic language courses is 9. No credit hours will be counted for Arabic 1101.

ARABIC: 1102, Elementary Arabic; 2201-2202, Intermediate Arabic; 3101-3102, Advanced Arabic; 3201, Media Arabic; 3301, Arabic of the Qur'an and Other Classical Texts.


HISTORY: 1111, First-Year Writing Seminar (when related to Islamic history or culture as determined by the Director of Undergraduate Studies in Islamic Studies); 1160, Modern South Asia; 1190, A History of Islam; 1200, The Arab Spring; 1270, Sub-Saharan Africa: 1400–1800; 1280, Africa since 1800: The Revolutionary Years; 2140, The Mughal World; 2150, India and the Indian Ocean; 2155, Muhammad and Early Islam; 2170, Islam and the Crusades; 2190, Last Empire of Islam; 3150, Cities of Europe and the Middle East; 3210, Muslims, Christians, and Jews in Medieval Spain.

JEWISH STUDIES: 2540, Power and Diplomacy in the Modern Middle East; 2600, Islam and the Jews.

PHILOSOPHY: 2102, Medieval Philosophy; 3006, Islamic Philosophy.

POLITICAL SCIENCE: 2230, Middle East Politics; 3897, Selected Topics (when related to Islamic politics or culture as determined by the Director of Undergraduate Studies in Islamic Studies).

RELIGIOUS STUDIES: 1111, First-Year Writing Seminar (when related to Islamic religion or culture as determined by the Director of Undergraduate Studies in Islamic Studies); 1500, Introduction to Islam; 3561, Islam in South Asia; 3562, Culture, Religion, and Politics of the Arab World; 4551, Islamic Mysticism; 4552, Islam in the Modern World; 4554, The Qur'an and Its Interpreters; 4592, Advanced Seminar in Arabic; 4593, Advanced Seminar in Islamic Tradition.
• **Encountering Religious Diversity.** 3 hours. All majors are required to take RLST 1010 [RLST 101] “Encountering Religious Diversity.” This course introduces students to the variety of theories and methods at play in the field of religious studies through the lens of a diverse range of religious traditions. It serves as a gateway to the major, emphasizing the existing strengths of the department, and invites students into further engagement with the field. We strongly encourage students to take this course at the start of their program in Religious Studies. Offered each semester on a departmental staff rotation.

• **Theory and Method Required Course.** 3 hours. All majors are required to take RLST 4960W “Approaches to the Academic Study of Religion” [formerly RLST 280W “Senior Seminar in Religious Studies” shortened to “Seminar”]. The class is recommended ideally for the junior year, but may be taken earlier or later with permission of the advisor and/or DUS. Each offering will highlight major perspectives and key issues in the study of religion, while additional content will vary based on the disciplinary expertise of the instructor. This course will be offered once each year, generally in the fall term, and will be taught on a rotation of departmental faculty.

• **Majors Colloquium.** 1 hour required (can be taken a total of three times for credit). RLST 4970. “Majors Colloquium” is designed to initiate the student into the full range of professional activities in the study of religion. Students will learn to deliver both written and oral reviews of published works, hone research skills and field methods, learn the elements of manuscript production and publication, and extend the skills of the formal study of religion to various forms of cultural production, such as film, visual art, music, and web-based activities. The instructor will set the initial activities of the term then work with the students enrolled in that particular class to determine the final topics. Students opting for Honors in Religious Studies will be required to present the results of their research in the spring term prior to submitting the thesis, the Majors Colloquium being corequisite for RLST 4999 [RLST 299b]. This course will be offered each term. [Please see sample syllabus attached for Fall 2015, instructor Stewart. It should be noted that one additional desirable outcome of this class will be to foster a more active student engagement with faculty, which will ideally spill over into the activities of the department student club, which has been moribund for a number of years.]

• **Electives.** 9 hours. To pursue personal interest, majors will take elective courses from anywhere within the Religious Studies curriculum (courses listed in the three components: Breadth, Depth, and Tools of the Discipline) to pursue individual interests. One relevant language course may count in this category (see Additional Considerations below).

• **Language Courses.** For a student taking a foreign language relevant to the depth component of the Religious Studies major, one course (3 credit hours) at the level of the fourth semester or higher may be counted toward the major in the elective category with the approval of the advisor and/or DUS. This course is not subject to the two course maximum limitation taken outside the department.

• **Courses Outside the Religious Studies Curriculum.** The student will be limited to one course (3 credit hours) outside the department to count toward the Depth Component of the curriculum. A maximum of two classes (6 credit hours) of courses outside the department may be counted toward the major.
OVERVIEW OF NEW HONORS REQUIREMENTS

The Honors thesis provides an opportunity for highly motivated and exceptionally capable students to engage in independent work on a topic in Religious Studies. Honors theses require original research with primary sources and extensive use of relevant secondary scholarship both with regard to the narrowly defined topic of the thesis and on the larger theoretical and methodological issues in the academic study of religion. Students work closely with faculty members in designing, researching, and writing a thesis beginning in the spring of their junior year in order to present the thesis at the end of the spring of their senior year.

PREPARATION

Students planning to write an Honors thesis should consult with their intended thesis advisor and the director of undergraduate studies by the beginning of the spring semester of their junior year. It is strongly recommended that students have previously taken at least one class with their intended advisor prior to initiating the thesis. A one-page letter of application outlining the proposed project, accompanied by a preliminary bibliography must be submitted to the thesis advisor and to the Director of Undergraduate Studies (DUS) by 01 April. All candidates petitioning for Honors must have a minimum 3.3 GPA in the department and minimum 3.3 GPA overall and must maintain that minimum to receive qualify for Honors. It is recommended that students have completed at least twelve credit hours in Religious Studies by the end of their junior year.

THESIS COMMITTEE

The candidate’s thesis committee will be composed of the advisor, an additional reader chosen by the candidate in consultation with the thesis advisor, and the director of undergraduate studies. The advisor and at least one other member of the thesis committee must be regular faculty in the Department of Religious Studies.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS (7 CREDIT HOURS)

• Research and Writing. 6 hours. Students researching and writing an honors thesis must enroll in RLST 4998 [299a] “Seniors Honors Thesis” in the first semester of their senior year and RLST 4999 [299b] “Seniors Honors Thesis” in the second semester of their senior year. RLST 4998 [299a] is dedicated to research and initial writing of the thesis. Honors students will meet regularly with their thesis advisor at a minimum of once every two weeks to assess progress in research and writing. RLST 4999 [299b] is dedicated to finishing the remaining research and writing. Thesis writers submit drafts of each chapter to their advisor at regular intervals for initial comments and revisions. All theses must incorporate primary sources either in the original language or in translation and include a methodological and theoretical component. Theses must be a minimum of fifty pages and include a bibliography that follows a recognized style (e.g., Chicago Manual of Style, MLA, etc.). These two courses (6 credit hours) are counted as Electives in the Major.

• Majors Colloquium – Co-requisite with RLST 4999. 1 hour. RLST 4970 “Majors Colloquium” in the second semester of senior year, in which candidate must present results of research. Course must be taken when enrolled in RLST 4999. In this colloquium, the candidate will present both written and oral versions of parts of the thesis in a seminar setting. This Majors Colloquium counts as the 1 credit hour requirement for the Major.
**Thesis Draft**

A completed initial draft of the entire thesis must be delivered to the advisor at least one month in advance of the proposed defense date. Students are expected to make further revisions prior to submitting a final copy to their advisor and committee members two weeks in advance of the oral examination. The advisor determines whether to recommend a thesis for examination after reading the final draft. A PDF copy of the thesis should be sent to the department administrator for circulation to the entire faculty of the department one week prior to the defense.

**Oral Examination**

For the oral defense, the student should deliver formal introductory remarks about the origins and significance of the project with a brief summary of the research and conclusions, after which the committee will examine the candidate’s work in the normal manner of questions and discussion. At the conclusion of the discussion, the candidate will be asked to leave the room while the committee evaluates the merits of the work and first determines by vote if the thesis passes (the award of Honors) or fails. In the event of a pass, the advisor may recommend an additional award of Highest Honors, followed by discussion and vote. Highest Honors is reserved for outstanding theses that display original thinking, careful research, and polished prose. Final approval for Honors or Highest Honors is only granted to students who meet the GPA requirements outlined by the College of Arts and Science and the Department at the time of graduation. Students whose theses fail to be recommended for Honors or Highest Honors may still receive credit for independent research at the discretion of the advisor.

**Submission**

Thesis writers should prepare two copies for submission. One should be bound and submitted to the department. The other is to be handed to the advisor. The bound copy should be delivered to the department within two weekdays after the defense. It must include a title page to be signed by all committee members and a signed waiver granting the department the right to share the thesis with other students and faculty or not (required because all undergraduate work is governed by FERPA confidentiality regulations). A sample title page and the waiver form can be downloaded from the Department of Religious Studies website.
Overview. “Majors Colloquium” is designed to initiate the student into the full range of professional activities in the study of religion. Students will learn to deliver both written and oral reviews of published works, hone research skills and field methods, explore practical issues of preparing a paper for publication as an article, and extend the skills of the formal study of religion to various forms of cultural production, such as film, visual art, music, and web-based activities. The content of this course will vary from term to term.

Fall 2015 edition. The instructor will set the content of the first several meetings of the term, after which the students will, together with the instructor, generate the remaining topics and events tailored to the research interests of the students enrolled in that particular class. Activities can include inviting departmental faculty to discuss their current research (unpublished) to talk about the research process, examination of controversial public issues, review of films germane to the understanding of religion, and so forth.

Initial Topics to be extended by students for the remainder of the term.

- How everyday speech shapes our thoughts (limits and constrains; creates and innovates), beginning with a critical reading of George Lakoff and Mark Johnson, Metaphors We Live By (Chicago, 1980).
- “Why you can’t think that thought.” A look at the Whorfian Hypothesis (Benjamin Lee Whorf and his student Edward Sapir). How we can be blinded by the very categories of thought we deploy, or, “What do we mean by agnotology?” (Proctor and Schiebenger).
- The vagaries of interpretation through translation. The act of translation and hermeneutics (Gadamer) and some current theories of translation: refraction theory (LeFevre), dynamic translation (Eugene Nida), and polysystem theory (Even Zohar).
- How do we publish articles and books: the writing process, copyediting, production, including practical exercises from The Chicago Manual of Style.

Students opting for Honors in Religious Studies will be required to present the results of their research in their final term prior to submitting the thesis, the Majors Colloquium is co-requisite for RLST 4999 [RLST 299b]. This course will be offered each term.

†The course is scheduled for Wednesday 3:10–4:00 p.m., but if there are no scheduling conflicts, the optimum timing will be from 3:10–5:00 p.m., meeting only for the first eight weeks of the semester. The course is open to Majors and Minors in Religious Studies and Minors in Islamic Studies.
Dear Jonathan,

Attached you will find the application materials for a proposal for revisions in the Religious Studies Major, Minor, and Honors Program, approved by the Committee for Education Programs on March 19, 2015. The CEP is recommending this for consideration by Faculty Council.

Best Regards,

Brian Bachmann