

Religious Studies Minor
Academic Program Review Report
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Program Review Panel:

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Section 1: Program Overview

The Religious Studies Minor became available to students in the fall of 2006, and it was created by Humanities Area faculty in the Department of Humanities. Professor David Aiken was the primary creator of the minor. According to him, the minor was created as part of the general movement of the College of Arts and Sciences to generate traditional programs. The minor was built upon two existing courses (RELG 325: Eastern Religions and RELG 326: Western Religions). His long-term strategy for the minor was to fuse this minor with the Philosophy Minor to form a BA in Philosophy and Religious Studies. This strategy is still alive and functioning, and there are ongoing conversations between the two minors. This is the first Academic Program Review report generated for the minor. Professor Aiken initiated the process, but he resigned from the responsibility on May 7, 2010. At that point in time, Grant Snider took over the responsibility of drafting the report.

A. Program Goals

1. According to the original curriculum forms, “Graduates with a minor in Religious Studies will be able to demonstrate a working knowledge of the religious and philosophical thoughts and institutions of the world, consistent with the diversity of its cultures, including philosophical, religious, psychological, cultural, historical, and geographical relationships among nations and peoples.” A survey sent to students/graduates as part of the APR process listed the following outcomes:
 - Articulate and interpret the development of Eastern and Western Religions
 - Critically examine social and cultural presuppositions relevant to religion
 - Explore the self and situate it within society
 - Apply the philosophical method of examination to central issues of human action and interaction
 - Discuss religious and philosophical conceptions of existence and human action
 - Think, perceive, experience, and value in new ways.
2. Professor David Aiken was the primary creator of the minor.
3. The goals, as stated above, are essential in preparing FSU students for life and career in a complex global environment, where a familiarity with the religions and values of other cultures can be critically important for community, region, and marketplace.
4. *Not applicable.* This is the minor’s first APR.

5. The goals of the Religious Studies Minor mirror the broader goals and values of FSU, the philosophy of General Education, and the mission of the Department of Humanities. Embedded in the FSU mission is the charge that we prepare students for “a rapidly changing global economy and society.” Of course, these rapid changes are taking place in the context of long-established and deeply influential religious traditions. Many current challenges and tensions in the world arise from the perceived differences in religious beliefs. One could make a case that very few other minors could better prepare our students for working in situations where the boundaries between the local and global are blurred.

Additionally, the third goal of FSU’s General Education Program states that students should gain “a better understanding of themselves. It also widens the horizons of their experience by offering them a better understanding and appreciation of some of the best of human achievement.” Again, the Religious Studies Minor can provide students with a more precise self-understanding through contrasting one’s own values, especially deeply felt religious ones, to the values shared by a diversity of traditions and people.

Finally, the goals of the Religious Studies Minor are supportive of the Department’s own mission statement (itself tightly mingled with that of the university): “The Humanities Department cultivates students’ development of consciousness of self and society through reflection on how communication, history, humanities, and the arts are integral to a successful career, responsible citizenship, and lifelong learning.”

B. Program Visibility and Distinctiveness

1. The Religious Studies minor is distinctive among minors in religion at other Michigan universities because our program requires two courses in the history of philosophy, ethics, or mythology. In other words, our program has the potential to provide students a greater sense of the interconnections between religion and philosophy—thus providing an even wider understanding of the intellectual traditions entangled in the development of religious thought.
2. The program has the potential to attract students, in major part, because of the excellent reputations of those faculty members who support the courses. Professors Aiken, Walker, Morris, Groves, and Gray are among the most popular faculty members in the department. Also, Professor Aiken has a strong relationship with the Honors Program, and he regularly runs Study Away courses. The faculty reputations combined with the proximity to quality students in the Honors and Study Away Programs all contribute to the quality of the students who enter the minor.

3. There are other regional universities that offer either a minor or a major in religion. Central Michigan University offers a major but apparently no minor. Eastern Michigan University offers a minor in philosophy but does not appear to offer either a religious studies minor or to have many courses in the philosophy of religion. Western Michigan University does offer a major and minor in Comparative Religions (and a graduate level program); however, their approach tends to be more historical or sociological than our own.
 - a. Our program shares a similar desire to study religion in a comparative fashion while also dedicating specific courses to Eastern and Western Religions. Our program differs in that we do not offer as many single-focus courses (for example, other than our RELG 425: Christianity course, we do not have individual courses dedicated to Islam, the Jewish Tradition, or African Religions to name a few.
 - b. By comparing our program to other regional programs, we can see that we may have less to offer our students in the way of single-focus in-depth courses that address a diversity of religious traditions or themes. This issue has been a part of many “hallway” discussions among the Humanities Area faculty. If we were to develop such courses, our students would benefit from the opportunity to study a topic in greater depth than our current survey courses permit.
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C. Program Relevance:

Currently, we do not believe students attend Ferris on the basis of this minor alone. Little has been done to promote the minor to potential FSU students. It is assumed, therefore, that most students in the program discover its existence while taking another course as part of their general education requirements. While the limited response rate to the student/graduate survey tempers the results, those who did respond generally indicate that the minor is doing a solid job of providing students the opportunity to study topics “relevant” to their lives, of “engendering self-awareness,” and giving students an opportunity to “explore the self and situate it within society.” The program would like to have more feedback from its students, so that more reliable conclusions might be drawn.

1. How well does the program meet student expectations? *The survey results generally indicated that students are very satisfied with the program, although there is some indication that they would prefer even more courses from which to choose.*
2. How is student sentiment measured? *Professor David Aiken sent an email survey to 26 current or former students who have declared or finished the minor. Five of those students completed and returned the survey.*

D. Program Value

1. Describe the benefit of the program to the University

*As Ferris has expanded its original mission, growing into a more comprehensive institution, the Religious Studies Minor provides—as do many of the minors in the Department of Humanities—more traditional programmatic offerings. Ferris can attract potential students interested in a career but not at the sacrifice of a well-rounded education in which reflective and probing questions are explored—questions with relevance to the essential values of students. Ferris will graduate students who are prepared for quality work and for meaningful intellectual and emotional lives. Indeed, in the co-authored *Leaving Us To Wonder: An Essay on the Questions Science Can't Ask*, a biologist and a philosopher have the following to say regarding the balance of scientific/practical thinking with meditative/philosophical thinking: “we must not ask how we should live our lives given a set of facts and theories, but how such facts and theories can contribute to living well” (Werner and Ramsey, 95). Given our emphasis on creating an ethical community through the work we do here at FSU, the outcomes associated with the Religious Studies minor can help students enlist their practical and scientific skills in the project of living ethically within diverse communities.*

2. Describe the benefit of the program to the students enrolled in the program

As one student wrote in response to our survey, “I found myself being enriched and challenged in a way a degree purely scientific couldn't achieve.”

3. What is the value of the program to employers? Explain how this value is determined

The Religious Studies Minor does not typically lead to direct employment; however, the required intellectual skills of the minor (reflecting, analyzing, evaluating, and communicating complex issues from a variety of perspectives) are of great value to most employers.

4. Describe the benefit of the program to entities external to the University

Some of the faculty members associated with the minor have served on editorial boards of professional journals, and one faculty member served as an ethical advisor on a CDC project preparing for a pandemic in Michigan. More could be done to archive and document our involvement with the community.

5. What services for extra-university general public groups have students provided?

No data as been collected on this item.

Section 2: Collection of Perceptions

In response to this section, Professor David Aiken sent an email survey to both current and past students associated with the minor. This list of 26 students was generated from tracking records now being kept for all of the minors housed in the Department of Humanities. (Students seeking minors from our department are tracked as to whether they have completed the minor, are making progress but not yet completed, or whether they are no longer making progress.) Of the 26 students emailed, five returned the survey. The low response rate does present a challenge to the representativeness of the responses. Additionally, both current students and graduates were emailed the same survey. On the positive side, students from different majors responded: Integrated Studies, History, Environmental Biology, English Literature, and Sociology. Also, even among the few respondents certain trends could be identified, like the desire for more variety in course offerings. (See appendix for complete results).

A. Graduate follow-up survey

While both the graduate survey and student evaluation survey were identical in format, some feedback was clear. Students would like to see additional course offerings: Goddess religions, metaphysics, Native American, Islam, Buddhism, mysticism, or paganism. Here is the complete set of responses to the survey:

Religious Minor Graduate/Student Survey

Total number of surveys: 5

What year are you in school?

3 responded "senior"

1 responded "other"

1 did not respond

What year did you graduate?

1 responded "2010"

1 responded summer 2009"

3 did not respond

What is your major/what degree did you graduate with?

1 responded "BIS"

1 responded "History BA"

1 responded "Environmental Biology"

1 responded "English Literature"

1 responded "Sociology BA"

Please indicate any additional degrees you obtained.

5 responded "N/A"

Please list any additional education you have received since you graduated from Ferris. Do you plan to pursue any additional education the future?

Student #1: I plan to go to graduate school for Athletic Training, in the mean time I am taking classes for that and training to be an EMT, which I may also move on to Paramedic Training at a later time.

Student #2: Possibly attend graduate school.

Student #3: I plan to pursue at least a master's degree and if I eventually get the motivation, a Ph.D.

Student #4: I plan on going to graduate school in 5 years or so and getting my masters in English Lit.

Student #5: Currently pursuing a 2 year Bachelor of Philosophy (B.Phil.) at Sacred Heart Major Seminary and then plan to go on for a Master of Divinity (M. Div.) in my ultimate plans to be ordained a priest in the Roman Catholic Church.

Are you currently employed? If so where and in what position?

Student #1: Student worker in the Athletic Department.

Student #2: Yes- not school related.

Student #3: Wendy's as a coworker; Flite library as a student worker.

Student #4: Yes, I work at a local library doing multiple tasks from checking books into recommending books.

Student #5: N/A

Did you choose to minor in Religious Studies prior to beginning at Ferris?

5 students responded "no".

What year were you when you declared your Religious Studies Minor?

2 students replied "senior"

2 students replied "junior"

1 student replied "sophomore"

On a scale from 1-5, 5 being very well and 1 being not at all, please indicate how well you feel you are able to do the following compared to before you began your study of Religious Studies at Ferris.

Articulate and interpret the development of Western Religions:

2 students responded "5"

2 students responded "4"

1 student responded "3"

Critically examine social and cultural presuppositions relevant to religion:

2 students responded "5"

2 students responded "4"

1 student responded "3"

Explore the self and situate it within society:

3 students responded "5"

2 students responded "4"

Apply the philosophical method of examination to central issues of human action and interaction:

2 students responded "5"

2 students responded "4"

1 student responded "2"

Discus religious and philosophical conceptions of existence and human action:

3 students responded "5"

1 student responded "4"

1 student responded "3"

Think, perceive, experience, and value new ways:

3 students responded "5"

2 students responded "4"

Please indicate on the same scale, 5 being very well and 1 being not at all, how well you feel your philosophy minor did the following:

Provide a diversity of perspectives on Religious Studies:

1 student responded "5"

2 students responded "4"

1 student responded "1"

1 student did not respond

Engendered self awareness and enriched your life:

4 students responded "5"

1 student did not respond

Provide ample classes to allow for you to diversify and personalize your degree:

2 students responded "4"

1 student responded "3"

1 student responded "2"

1 student did not respond

Allowed you to study topics relevant to your life:

2 students responded "5"

1 student responded "4"

1 student responded "2"

1 student did not respond

Please describe areas of Philosophy and/or Religious Studies you wish you have studied more in depth at Ferris.

Student #1: Goddess focused religions, new age religions, maybe a little cult religious stuff. Definitely metaphysics. I like to see how things work, not just why they came to be what they are in a general sense. To study the people behind the why and what they do, that is more interesting than um...utopia in mythology.

Student #2: Native American (both North and South American) religious and philosophical views.

Student #3: Sociology of Religion; Mysticism; Islamic Culture and Religion; Buddhism and Tibet; Languages of the Bible; Sacred Art and Architecture; Introduction to Theology; Religion in the USA; Philosophy of God; Aesthetics; Metaphysics; philosophy of Religion.

Student #4: Especially in America, we are seeing the rise of what are being called Pagan religions. It would be interesting to have classes pertaining to these religions and how they fit into the social and political structures of American culture. More in depth classes of Buddhism and Hinduism as well as Confucianism would be appreciated as well.

Student #5: World mythologies, and perhaps a better understanding on Eastern religion as a whole.

If Ferris offered a bachelors degree in Philosophy and/or Religious Studies, please indicate on a scale of 1-5 how likely you would have been to obtain this degree (1 is not at all, 5 is yes, for sure):

3 students responded "5"

1 student responded "4"

1 student responded "3"

Please explain your choice and describe under what circumstances you would have considered a bachelors degree in Philosophy and/or Religious Studies:

Student #1: More variety in the class subjects and readings. No offense meant, but one professor runs every class exactly the same and it's like nothing new is learned sometimes. I really liked studying a specific religion in some kind of depth, just not looking at the overall picture.

Student #2: I became interested in studying philosophy and religions after my first year at Ferris. Had Ferris offered a bachelors, I would have pursued it, but I did not want to transfer schools in order to do so.

Student #3: I was originally Pre-Pharmacy but switched within 5 weeks at Ferris because I was contemplating the seminary at the time. I switched to Sociology but would have switched to Religious Studies or Philosophy if was available as a major.

Student #4: My philosophy and religions minors were something I fell into by chance doing my required tenure in Eastern Religions. However, if bachelors in either of these quadrants had been available to me, I would have dual majored in a heartbeat. After those initial classes in basic religions and philosophy, I found myself being enriched and challenged in a way a degree purely scientific couldn't achieve. From the time spent in classes such as ethics and logic, I feel I am better prepared for dealing with a more diverse group of people as I enter the scientific community. So for me to dual major and have the options of further enriching my life as well as progressing towards my life's goals would be a choice I wouldn't have to think about for very long.

Student #5: I think that it would be a good idea to have a Religious/Philosophy program as to better prepare those who wish to go all the way for a masters in the future. Most major universities have them, and I would like to see FSU become more culturally/intellectually diverse in its teaching and not so technical/medical. There should be a healthy mix of both for a well rounded university.

B. Employer follow-up survey

Not applicable

C. Student evaluation of program

Information is the same as in the Graduate Survey above.

D. Relevant faculty perceptions

Faculty who teach courses related to the minor were emailed regarding their perceptions. There appears to be a wide-spread acknowledgement that we could use additional courses in the curriculum, and faculty are interested in developing those courses.

E. Advisory committee perceptions

There is no advisory committee for the Religious Studies minor at this time.

Section 3: Program Profile

While the University does not provide such data for minor programs, the Department of Humanities recently began conducting its own internal tracking for all minor programs. According to our database, as of 10-23-09, three students have completed the minor, 21 are making progress toward completion, and two students appear to have stopped making progress. One student is from the College of Business, three are from Allied Health, and 22 are Arts and Sciences

A. Profile of students

- a. Student Demographic Profile

Insufficient information

- b. Quality of Students

Insufficient information

- c. Employability of Students

Insufficient information. Our survey indicates, however, four of the five respondents specifically mentioned that they planned to pursue graduate studies in some field; two of who clearly indicated religion or philosophy. One student plans to train to be an Emergency Medical Technician and Athletic Trainer.

B. Enrollment

1. *There are 21 students making progress toward completing the minor.*
2. *As this is the first APR for the program, no comparison can be made; however, according to University documents, productivity in RELG courses has remained above the University average for the past three years. Granted, non-minors take these courses, but the overall enrollment trend appears strong.*
3. *No data at this time*
4. *All students who apply are admitted*
5. *Does not apply*
6. *The program does not have specific enrollment targets at this time.*

C. Program Capacity

1. *Given that the faculty who teach the RELG courses also teach in other areas, like PHIL, FILM, HUMN, and ARTH, and given that high demand for on-line RELG and PHIL, our courses are running at capacity. Any increase in enrollment in general education RELG courses or in the minor would require an increase in staffing. Thus, technically we are already at capacity.*
2. *Currently, there are 21 students making progress toward graduation.*

D. Retention and Graduation

No data at this time

E. Access

- 1. The program is open to all, and some of the courses are offered in an on-line format. Courses are offered during all semesters and at a variety of times.*
- 2. Because RELG 215, 325, and 326 are regularly taught on-line, the faculty need to have up-to-date technology, and the department and college have tried to facilitate those technology needs. The biggest concern is that faculty load is at a maximum capacity.*
- 3. Given that our students come to us from a range of majors, offering courses in the evening or on-line presents students with a variety of options to complete the minor.*
- 4. Other than faculty being spread thin in terms of teaching load, no other factors negatively impact the program.*

F. Curriculum (see appendix for check-sheet and sample syllabi)

- 1. The current program requirements are designed to give students a broad understanding of major religions. Students must take the following courses:*

RELG 215: Comparative Religions

RELG 325: Eastern Religion

RELG 326: Western Religion

RELG 425: Christianity

Electives are designed to further contextualize the knowledge gained through the required courses. Students are then required to choose six credits from among these classes:

PHIL 115: Intro to Philosophy

PHIL 203: History of Western Philosophy 1

PHIL 204: History of Western Philosophy 2

PHIL 216: Intro to Ethics

HUMN 327: Mythology

- 2. All of the required and elective courses for the minor count toward general education.*
- 3. RELG 325 and 326 have a prerequisite of ENGL 150; RELG 425 has a pre-requisite of ENGL 250 and either RELG 215 or RELG 325 or RELG 326.*
- 4. Not applicable. This is the first APR.*

5. *No official curriculum revisions are under current review.*
6. *It is possible that the creation of a major in Philosophy and Religious Studies could be created in the next three to five years, or that additional single-topic courses might be added to the curriculum.*

G. Quality of Instruction

- a. Describe and comment on trends in student mastery of the essentials of the subject area.
No data has been collected on this item.
- b. Discuss student and alumni perceptions of the quality of instructions.
The survey responses referenced earlier in this report, and found in the appendix, indicate the students and alumni generally appreciate the quality of the program.
- c. What collaborative departmental and individual efforts have been made to improve the learning environment and to use or add appropriate technology.
Some of the faculty members have made use of the resources/classes provided through the Faculty Center for Teaching and Learning, like sessions on designing effective writing assignments.
- d. In what types of professional development have faculty participated?
The faculty have been quite active in professional development, by attending and presenting at conferences, by publishing articles (and working on book-length manuscripts), and by travelling abroad.
- e. What efforts have been made to increase interaction of students with faculty and peers?
Faculty members have hosted social events for the students, have taken students to hear lectures at other institutions, have travelled abroad with students, and/or worked with students interested in learning Greek.
- f. Discuss the extent to which teaching and learning in this program are informed by current research and practice regarding inclusive pedagogy and curriculum.
No data has been collected on this item.
- g. What effects have these activities had on the quality of teaching and learning in the program?
No data has been collected on this item.

H. Composition and Quality of Faculty (does the program have designated sections/faculty?)

The Humanities faculty are an intellectually diverse and talented group, and as such, they teach in a variety of areas: Film, Philosophy, Art History, Humanities, Religion, Women and Gender Studies, etc.

- a. Describe how such course sections and faculty are determined or selected.

Schedules are drafted in a collaborative fashion, drawing upon past enrollment needs and balanced with anticipated growth in certain areas (on-line, general education, etc.)

- b. Describe any diversity goals of the program.

No such goals exist at this time.

- c. Orientation: describe and assess the orientation process

Not applicable at this time, since no new faculty member has been hired to support this minor; however, all of our new full-time faculty hired into the department go through the New Faculty Orientation provided by the University.

- d. Reward structure:

- i. Describe the reward structure in the program as it relates to program faculty.

Because all faculty associated with the minor are members of the FFA, compensation is dictated by the current collective bargaining agreement.

- ii. Does the existing salary structure have an impact on the program's ability to recruit and retain quality faculty?

No data has been collected on this item.

- iii. Is the reward structure currently in place adequate to support faculty productivity in teaching, research, and service?

The Department of Humanities typically has approximately \$17,000 to distribute annually for faculty development activities, and the HUMN Area faculty are frequent recipients of these funds.

- iv. Is enhancing diversity and inclusion a component of the reward structure?

Not at this time.

I. Degree Program Cost and Productivity Data

- a. Submit institutional studies data. Comment on the data

No data collected, other than productivity reports.

J. Assessment and Evaluation: Describe and evaluate the program's assessment mechanisms.

- a. What measures are used to evaluate whether or not the program is meeting its goals?

The Religious Studies minor currently has no formal assessment plan in place, other than the Academic Program Review process, which is deemed to be sufficient review of the program at this time.

- b. How are the rigor, breadth, and currency of the degree requirements and curriculum assessed?

Through the survey of student perceptions generated as part of the APR.

- c. Based on the measures, describe the extent to which the goals are being reached. *The student survey indicates that students feel they are making good progress on many of the outcomes; however, one student marked a “3” on the prompt which read “critically examine social and cultural presuppositions relevant to religion.” Also, one student marked a “2” on “apply the philosophical method to examination to central issues of human action and interaction.” Since the response rate was so low, and since only one person in each of these cases marked a lower score, the results are inconclusive yet point in a generally positive direction regarding overall satisfaction.*

Section 4: Conclusions

A. Relationship to FSU Mission

The goals of the Religious Studies Minor mirror the broader goals and values of FSU, the philosophy of General Education, and the mission of the Department of Humanities. Embedded in the FSU mission is the charge that we prepare students for “a rapidly changing global economy and society.” Of course, these rapid changes are taking place in the context of long-established and deeply influential religious traditions. Many current challenges and tensions in the world arise from the perceived differences in religious beliefs. One could make a case that very few other minors could better prepare our students for working in situations where the boundaries between the local and global are blurred.

B. Program Visibility and Distinctiveness

The minor is somewhat distinctive because there is the requirement to select from a range of courses (the History of Philosophy, for example) that other such programs do not require; however, this distinction is not made visible to potential students.

C. Program Value

The value of the program to the overall mission of the University is high because it offers a curriculum that the students in the program value personally, and it provides general education courses to students in face-to-face and on-line formats.

D. Enrollment

While enrollment in the required courses is at capacity, because they serve a large general education need, there is room for additional enrollment in courses like RELG 425: Christianity or HUMN 327: Mythology.

E. Characteristics, Quality, and Employability of Students

More information on this point needs to be collected. Anecdotally, faculty are pleased with the quality of the students and their level of engagement.

F. Quality of Curriculum and Instruction

More direct measures of student learning should be created, so that the program has more data to study on this point; nonetheless, the general consensus among the faculty is that the quality of the instruction and curriculum is high. Student surveys did not dispute this perception. Still, the program would benefit from the creation of additional single-focus courses in subjects like Buddhism, African Religions, etc.

G. Composition and Quality of the Faculty

Faculty members in this program engage in scholarship and service at an incredible level, attending and presenting at conferences—some internationally—they publish articles in professional journals, and they spend a lot of time working closely with students.

Religious Minor Graduate Survey

Total number of surveys: 5

What year are you in school?

3 responded "senior"
1 responded "other"
1 did not respond

What year did you graduate?

1 responded "2010"
1 responded summer "2009"
3 did not respond

What is your major/what degree did you graduate with?

1 responded "BIS"
1 responded "History BA"
1 responded "Environmental Biology"
1 responded "English Literature"
1 responded "Sociology BA"

Please indicate any additional degrees you obtained.

5 responded "N/A"

Please list any additional education you have received since you graduated from Ferris. Do you plan to pursue any additional education the future?

Student #1: I plan to go to graduate school for Athletic Training, in the mean time I am taking classes for that and training to be an EMT, which I may also move on to Paramedic Training at a later time.

Student #2: Possibly attend graduate school.

Student #3: I plan to pursue at least a master's degree and if I eventually get the motivation, a Ph.D.

Student #4: I plan on going to graduate school in 5 years or so and getting my masters in English Lit.

Student #5: Currently pursuing a 2 year Bachelor of Philosophy (B.Phil.) at Sacred Heart Major Seminary and then plan to go on for a Master of Divinity (M. Div.) in my ultimate plans to be ordained a priest in the Roman Catholic Church.

Are you currently employed? If so where and in what position?

Student #1: Student worker in the Athletic Department.

Student #2: Yes- not school related.

Student #3: Wendy's as a coworker; Flite library as a student worker.

Student #4: Yes, I work at a local library doing multiple tasks from checking books into recommending books.

Student #5: N/A

Did you choose to minor in Religious Studies prior to beginning at Ferris?

5 students responded "no".

What year were you when you declared your Religious Studies Minor?

2 students replied "senior"

2 students replied "junior"

1 student replied "sophomore"

On a scale from 1-5, 5 being very well and 1 being not at all, please indicate how well you feel you are able to do the following compared to before you began your study of Religious Studies at Ferris.

Articulate and interpret the development of Western Religions:

2 students responded "5"

2 students responded "4"

1 student responded "3"

Critically examine social and cultural presuppositions relevant to religion:

2 students responded "5"

2 students responded "4"

1 student responded "3"

Explore the self and situate it within society:

3 students responded "5"

2 students responded "4"

Apply the philosophical method of examination to central issues of human action and interaction:

2 students responded "5"

2 students responded "4"

1 student responded "2"

Discuss religious and philosophical conceptions of existence and human action:

3 students responded "5"

1 student responded "4"

1 student responded "3"

Think, perceive, experience, and value new ways:

3 students responded "5"

2 students responded "4"

Please indicate on the same scale, 5 being very well and 1 being not at all, how well you feel your philosophy minor did the following:

Provide a diversity of perspectives on Religious Studies:

1 student responded "5"

2 students responded "4"

1 student responded "1"

1 student did not respond

Engendered self awareness and enriched your life:

4 students responded "5"

1 student did not respond

Provide ample classes to allow for you to diversify and personalize your degree:

2 students responded "4"

1 student responded "3"

1 student responded "2"

1 student did not respond

Allowed you to study topics relevant to your life:

2 students responded "5"

1 student responded "4"

1 student responded "2"

1 student did not respond

Please describe areas of Philosophy and/or Religious Studies you wish you have studied more in depth at Ferris.

Student #1: Goddess focused religions, new age religions, maybe a little cult religious stuff. Definitely metaphysics. I like to see how things work, not just why they came to be what they are in a general sense. To study the people behind the why and what they do, that is more interesting than um...utopia in mythology.

Student #2: Native American (both North and South American) religious and philosophical views.

Student #3: Sociology of Religion; Mysticism; Islamic Culture and Religion; Buddhism and Tibet; Languages of the Bible; Sacred Art and Architecture; Introduction to Theology; Religion in the USA; Philosophy of God; Aesthetics; Metaphysics; philosophy of Religion.

Student #4: Especially in America, we are seeing the rise of what are being called Pagan religions. It would be interesting to have classes pertaining to these religions and how they fit into the social and political structures of American culture. More in depth classes of Buddhism and Hinduism as well as Confucianism would be appreciated as well.

Student #5: World mythologies, and perhaps a better understanding on Eastern religion as a whole.

If Ferris offered a bachelors degree in Philosophy and/or Religious Studies, please indicate on a scale of 1-5 how likely you would have been to obtain this degree (1 is not at all, 5 is yes, for sure):

3 students responded "5"

1 student responded "4"

1 student responded "3"

Please explain your choice and describe under what circumstances you would have considered a bachelors degree in Philosophy and/or Religious Studies:

Student #1: More variety in the class subjects and readings. No offense meant, but one professor runs every class exactly the same and it's like nothing new is learned sometimes. I really liked studying a specific religion in some kind of depth, just not looking at the overall picture.

Student #2: I became interested in studying philosophy and religions after my first year at Ferris. Had Ferris offered a bachelors, I would have pursued it, but I did not want to transfer schools in order to do so.

Student #3: I was originally Pre-Pharmacy but switched within 5 weeks at Ferris because I was contemplating the seminary at the time. I switched to Sociology but would have switched to Religious Studies or Philosophy if was available as a major.

Student #4: My philosophy and religions minors were something I fell into by chance doing my required tenure in Eastern Religions. However, if bachelors in either of these quadrants had been available to me, I would have dual majored in a heartbeat. After those initial classes in basic religions and philosophy, I found myself being enriched and challenged in a way a degree purely scientific couldn't achieve. From the time spent in classes such as ethics and logic, I feel I am better prepared for dealing with a more diverse group of people as I enter the scientific community. So for me to dual major and have the options of further enriching my life as well as progressing towards my life's goals would be a choice I wouldn't have to think about for very long.

Student #5: I think that it would be a good idea to have a Religious/Philosophy program as to better prepare those who wish to go all the way for a masters in the future. Most major universities have them, and I would like to see FSU become more culturally/intellectually diverse in its teaching and not so technical/medical. There should be a healthy mix of both for a well rounded university.

Religious Studies Minor Graduate Survey

What year are you in school? (Please Circle) Freshman Sophomore Junior Senior Other: X

or, What year did you graduate from Ferris? 2010

What is your major? BIS

or, What degree did you graduate with? BIS

Did/do you have another minor(s)? French

Please indicate any additional degrees you obtained.

N/A

Please list any additional education you have received since you graduated from Ferris (J.D., M.S., etc)? Do you plan to pursue any additional education in the future?

I plan to go to graduate school for Athletic Training, in the mean time I am taking classes for that and training to be an EMT, which I may also move on to Paramedic Training at a later time.

Are you currently employed? If so where and in what position?

Student worker in the Athletic Department

Did you choose to minor in Religious Studies prior to beginning at Ferris? (Please circle one) Yes No

What year were you when you declared your Religious Studies minor? (Please circle one)

Freshman Sophomore Junior Senior Other: _____

On a scale of 1-5, 5 being very well and 1 being not at all, please indicate how well you feel you are able to do the following compared to before you began your study of Religious Studies at Ferris (please circle):

1. Articulate and interpret the development of Western Religions.

1 2 3 4 5

2. Critically examine social and cultural presuppositions relevant to religion.

1 2 3 4 5

3. Explore the self and situate it within society.

1 2 3 4 5

4. Apply the philosophical method of examination to central issues of human action and interaction.

1 2 3 4 5

5. Discuss religious and philosophical conceptions of existence and human action.

1 2 3 4 5

6. Think, perceive, experience, and value in new ways.

1 2 3 4 5

Please indicate on the same scale, 5 being very well and 1 being not at all, how well you feel your philosophy minor did the following (please circle):

1. Provided a diversity of perspectives on Religious Studies.

1 2 3 4 5

2. Engendered self-awareness and enriched your life.

1 2 3 4 5

3. Provided ample classes to allow for you to diversify and personalize your degree.

1 2 3 4 5

~~4. Allowed you to study topics relevant to your life.~~

1 2 3 4 5

Please describe areas of Philosophy and/or Religious Studies you wish you could have studied more in depth at Ferris.

Goddess focused religions, new age religions, maybe a little cult religious stuff. Definitely metaphysics. I like to see how things work, not just why they came to be and what they are in a general sense. To study the people behind the why and what they do, that is more interesting than um...utopia in mythology.

If Ferris offered a bachelors degree in Philosophy and/or Religious Studies, please indicate on a scale of 1-5 how likely you would have been to obtain this degree (1 is not at all, 5 is yes, for sure) (please circle):

1 2 3 4 5

Please explain your choice and describe under what circumstances you would have considered a bachelors degree in Philosophy and/or Religious Studies.

More variety in the class subjects and readings. No offense meant, but one professor runs every class exactly the same and it's like nothing new is learned sometimes. I really liked studying a specific religion in some kind of depth, not just looking at the overall picture.



Religious Studies Minor Graduate Survey

What year are you in school? (Please Circle) Freshman Sophomore Junior ***(Senior)*** Other: _____

or, What year did you graduate from Ferris? _____

What is your major? History BA

or, What degree did you graduate with? _____

Did/do you have another minor(s)? Philosophy

Please indicate any additional degrees you obtained.

Please list any additional education you have received since you graduated from Ferris (J.D., M.S., etc)? Do you plan to pursue any additional education in the future?

Possibly attend graduate school

Are you currently employed? If so where and in what position?

Yes—not school related

Did you choose to minor in Religious Studies prior to beginning at Ferris? (Please circle one) Yes ***(No)***

What year were you when you declared your Religious Studies minor? (Please circle one)

Freshman Sophomore ***(Junior)*** Senior Other:

On a scale of 1-5, 5 being very well and 1 being not at all, please indicate how well you feel you are able to do the following compared to before you began your study of Religious Studies at Ferris (please circle):

1. Articulate and interpret the development of Western Religions.

1 2 3 **4** 5

2. Critically examine social and cultural presuppositions relevant to religion.

1 2 3 **4** 5

3. Explore the self and situate it within society.

1 2 3 **4** 5

4. Apply the philosophical method of examination to central issues of human action and interaction.

1 2 3 4 **5**

5. Discuss religious and philosophical conceptions of existence and human action.

1 2 3 4 5

6. Think, perceive, experience, and value in new ways.

1 2 3 4 5

Please indicate on the same scale, 5 being very well and 1 being not at all, how well you feel your philosophy minor did the following (please circle):

1. Provided a diversity of perspectives on Religious Studies.

1 2 3 4 5

2. Engendered self-awareness and enriched your life.

1 2 3 4 5

3. Provided ample classes to allow for you to diversify and personalize your degree.

1 2 3 4 5

4. Allowed you to study topics relevant to your life.

1 2 3 4 5

Please describe areas of Philosophy and/or Religious Studies you wish you could have studied more in depth at Ferris.

Native American (Both North and South American) religious and philosophical views.

If Ferris offered a bachelors degree in Philosophy and/or Religious Studies, please indicate on a scale of 1-5 how likely you would have been to obtain this degree (1 is not at all, 5 is yes, for sure) (please circle):

1 2 3 4 5

Please explain your choice and describe under what circumstances you would have considered a bachelors degree in Philosophy and/or Religious Studies.

I became interested in studying philosophy and religions after my first year at Ferris. Had Ferris offered a bachelors, I would have pursued it, but I did not want to transfer school in order to do so.

Religious Studies Minor Graduate Survey

What year are you in school? (Please Circle) Freshman Sophomore Junior Senior Other: _____
or, What year did you graduate from Ferris? Summer 2009

What is your major? _____
or, What degree did you graduate with? Bachelor of Arts in Sociology

Did/do you have another minor(s)? Health, Illness and Society
Please indicate any additional degrees you obtained.

Please list any additional education you have received since you graduated from Ferris (J.D., M.S., etc)? Do you plan to pursue any additional education in the future?

Currently pursuing a 2 year Bachelor of Philosophy (B.Phil.) at Sacred Heart Major Seminary and then plan to go on for a Master of Divinity (M. Div.) in my ultimate plans to be ordained a priest in the Roman Catholic Church.

Are you currently employed? If so where and in what position?

Did you choose to minor in Religious Studies prior to beginning at Ferris? (Please circle one) Yes No

What year were you when you declared your Religious Studies minor? (Please circle one)

Freshman Sophomore Junior Senior Other: _____

On a scale of 1-5, 5 being very well and 1 being not at all, please indicate how well you feel you are able to do the following compared to before you began your study of Religious Studies at Ferris (please circle):

1. Articulate and interpret the development of Western Religions.

1 2 3 4 5

2. Critically examine social and cultural presuppositions relevant to religion.

1 2 3 4 5

3. Explore the self and situate it within society.

1 2 3 4 5

4. Apply the philosophical method of examination to central issues of human action and interaction.

1 2 3 4 5

5. Discuss religious and philosophical conceptions of existence and human action.

1 2 3 4 5

6. Think, perceive, experience, and value in new ways.

1 2 3 4 5

Please indicate on the same scale, 5 being very well and 1 being not at all, how well you feel your philosophy minor did the following (please circle):

1. Provided a diversity of perspectives on Religious Studies.

1 2 3 4 5

2. Engendered self-awareness and enriched your life.

1 2 3 4 5

3. Provided ample classes to allow for you to diversify and personalize your degree.

1 2 3 4 5

4. Allowed you to study topics relevant to your life.

1 2 3 4 5

Please describe areas of Philosophy and/or Religious Studies you wish you could have studied more in depth at Ferris.

Sociology of Religion; Mysticism; Islamic Culture and Religion; Buddhism and Tibet; Languages of the Bible; Sacred Art & Architecture; Introduction to Theology; Religion in the USA; Philosophy of God; Aesthetics; Metaphysics; Philosophy of Religion

If Ferris offered a bachelors degree in Philosophy and/or Religious Studies, please indicate on a scale of 1-5 how likely you would have been to obtain this degree (1 is not at all, 5 is yes, for sure) (please circle):

1 2 3 4 5

Please explain your choice and describe under what circumstances you would have considered a bachelors degree in Philosophy and/or Religious Studies.

I was originally Pre-Pharmacy but switch within 5 weeks at Ferris because I was contemplating the seminary at the time. I switched to Sociology but would have switched to Religious Studies or Philosophy if it was available as a major.

Religious Studies Minor Graduate Survey

What year are you in school? (Please Circle) Freshman Sophomore Junior Senior Other: _____

or, What year did you graduate from Ferris? _____

What is your major? Environmental Biology

or, What degree did you graduate with? _____

Did/do you have another minor(s)? Philosophy and a partial minor in German

Please indicate any additional degrees you obtained.

Please list any additional education you have received since you graduated from Ferris (J.D., M.S., etc)? Do you plan to pursue any additional education in the future?

I plan to pursue at least a master's degree and if I eventually get the motivation, a Ph.D

Are you currently employed? If so where and in what position?

Wendy's as a coworker; Flite library as a student worker

Did you choose to minor in Religious Studies prior to beginning at Ferris? (Please circle one) Yes No

What year were you when you declared your Religious Studies minor? (Please circle one)

Freshman Sophomore Junior Senior Other: _____

On a scale of 1-5, 5 being very well and 1 being not at all, please indicate how well you feel you are able to do the following compared to before you began your study of Religious Studies at Ferris (please circle):

1. Articulate and interpret the development of Western Religions.

1 2 3 4 5

2. Critically examine social and cultural presuppositions relevant to religion.

1 2 3 4 5

3. Explore the self and situate it within society.

1 2 3 4 5

4. Apply the philosophical method of examination to central issues of human action and interaction.

1 2 3 4 5

5. Discuss religious and philosophical conceptions of existence and human action.

1 2 3 4 5

6. Think, perceive, experience, and value in new ways.

1 2 3 4 5

Please indicate on the same scale, 5 being very well and 1 being not at all, how well you feel your philosophy minor did the following (please circle):

1. Provided a diversity of perspectives on Religious Studies.

1 2 3 4 5

2. Engendered self-awareness and enriched your life.

1 2 3 4 5

3. Provided ample classes to allow for you to diversify and personalize your degree.

1 2 3 4 5

4. Allowed you to study topics relevant to your life.

1 2 3 4 5

Please describe areas of Philosophy and/or Religious Studies you wish you could have studied more in depth at Ferris.

Especially in America, we are seeing the rise of what are being called Pagan religions. It would be interesting to have classes pertaining to these religions and how they fit into the social and political structures of American culture. More in depth classes of Buddhism and Hinduism as well as Confucianism would be appreciated as well.

If Ferris offered a bachelors degree in Philosophy and/or Religious Studies, please indicate on a scale of 1-5 how likely you would have been to obtain this degree (1 is not at all, 5 is yes, for sure) (please circle):

1 2 3 4 5

Please explain your choice and describe under what circumstances you would have considered a bachelors degree in Philosophy and/or Religious Studies.

My philosophy and religions minors were something I fell into by chance doing my required tenure in Eastern Religions. However, if a bachelors in either of these quadrants had been available to me, I would have dual majored in a heartbeat. After those initial classes in basic religions and philosophy, I found myself being enriched and challenged in a way a degree purely scientific couldn't achieve. From the time spent in classes such as ethics and logic, I feel I am better prepared for dealing with a more diverse group of people as I enter the scientific community. So for me to dual major and have the options of furthering enriching my life as well as progressing towards my life's goals would be a choice I wouldn't have to think about for very long.

Religious Studies Minor Graduate Survey

What year are you in school? (Please Circle) Freshman Sophomore Junior Senior Other: _____

or, What year did you graduate from Ferris? _____

What is your major? English Literature _____

or, What degree did you graduate with? _____

Did/do you have another minor(s)? Humanities _____

Please indicate any additional degrees you obtained.

Please list any additional education you have received since you graduated from Ferris (J.D., M.S., etc)? Do you plan to pursue any additional education in the future?

I plan on going to graduate school in 5 years or so and getting my masters in English Lit. _____

Are you currently employed? If so where and in what position?

Yes, I work at a local library doing multiple tasks from checking books in to recommending books.

Did you choose to minor in Religious Studies prior to beginning at Ferris? (Please circle one) Yes No

What year were you when you declared your Religious Studies minor? (Please circle one)

Freshman Sophomore Junior Senior Other: _____

On a scale of 1-5, 5 being very well and 1 being not at all, please indicate how well you feel you are able to do the following compared to before you began your study of Religious Studies at Ferris (please circle):

1. Articulate and interpret the development of Western Religions.

1 2 3 4 5

2. Critically examine social and cultural presuppositions relevant to religion.

1 2 3 4 5

3. Explore the self and situate it within society.

1 2 3 4 5

4. Apply the philosophical method of examination to central issues of human action and interaction.

1 2 3 4 5

5. Discuss religious and philosophical conceptions of existence and human action.

1 2 3 4 5

6. Think, perceive, experience, and value in new ways.

1 2 3 4 5

Please indicate on the same scale, 5 being very well and 1 being not at all, how well you feel your philosophy minor did the following (please circle):

1. Provided a diversity of perspectives on Religious Studies.

1 2 3 4 5

2. Engendered self-awareness and enriched your life.

1 2 3 4 5

3. Provided ample classes to allow for you to diversify and personalize your degree.

1 2 3 4 5

4. Allowed you to study topics relevant to your life.

1 2 3 4 5

Please describe areas of Philosophy and/or Religious Studies you wish you could have studied more in depth at Ferris.

World mythologies, and perhaps a better understating on Eastern religion as a whole.

If Ferris offered a bachelors degree in Philosophy and/or Religious Studies, please indicate on a scale of 1-5 how likely you would have been to obtain this degree (1 is not at all, 5 is yes, for sure) (please circle):

1 2 3 4 5

Please explain your choice and describe under what circumstances you would have considered a bachelors degree in Philosophy and/or Religious Studies.

I think that it would be a good idea to have a Religious/Philosophy program as to better prepare those who wish to go all the way for a masters in the future. Most major universities have them, and I would like to see FSU become more culturally/intellectually diverse in its teachings and not so technical/medical. There should be a healthy mix of both for a well rounded university.

RELIGIOUS STUDIES MINOR

FERRIS STATE UNIVERSITY - COLLEGE OF ARTS AND SCIENCES

ADVISOR: Dr. David Aiken

PHONE: (231) 591-3615 E-MAIL: aikend@ferris.edu CAMPUS ADDRESS: JOH 122

Why Choose the Religious Studies Minor?

The purpose of a minor in Religious Studies is to introduce our students to the religious and philosophical thoughts and institutions of the world, both ancient and modern. To understand the religious and philosophical component of human experience has enormous value, and is of great importance, in our world; for it enriches our understanding of ourselves and our culture, and expands our understanding of the experience and culture of others by introducing us to the experiences and cultures of the world.

Admission Requirements

This Religious Studies minor is open to any student admitted to Ferris State and pursuing a baccalaureate degree. The minor is designed to complement any Ferris major program.

Graduation Requirements

An academic minor may only be awarded upon completion of a baccalaureate degree at Ferris State.

Required Courses

RELG 215	Comparative Religion	3
RELG 325	Eastern Religion	3
RELG 326	Western Religion	3
RELG 425	Christianity	3

Electives: Choose 6 credits from the following:

PHIL 115	Introduction to Philosophy	3
PHIL 203	History of Western Philosophy 1	3
PHIL 204	History of Western Philosophy 2	3
PHIL 216	Intro to Ethics	3
HUMN 327	Mythology	3

Dr. John Scott Gray
Office: JOH 110
Office Hours: TBA
Office Phone: 3515
Email: Grayj14@ferris.edu
and taipan@teacher.com

Ferris State University
Course Syllabus
RELG 215 – Comparative Religions – Spring 2010
Section #VL1 – Online
3 Semester Credits

1. CATALOG DESCRIPTION:

This course is a comparative approach to the study of world religions. We will consider religion critically, from the perspective of diverse philosophical themes. The specific focus of this course is neither eastern nor western in particular. It gives us the additional opportunity to study other religions of the world, such as African religions, Native American religions, and primitive religions.

2. PRE-REQUISITES:

None

3. GENERAL EDUCATION REQUIREMENTS MET:

Cultural Enrichment and Global Consciousness

4. GENERAL EDUCATION OBJECTIVES:

According to <http://www.ferris.edu/htmls/academics/gened/cultstudentcriteria.html>, GenEd student outcome objectives for category C (Cultural Enrichment) are:

- Have an increased ability to interpret cultural works as a part of a culture.
- Be able to justify those interpretations with an understanding of the interpretive process.
- Be able to look at works or historical events from different perspectives.
- Be better able to make and justify valuing (aesthetic and ethical) distinctions.
- Exhibit improved distinctions in perception, craft, and/or life choices.
- Have increased knowledge of the techniques or methodology of a discipline in the humanities.
- Have increased knowledge about some aspects of cultures.
- Better understand themselves as part of cultures with rich historical perspectives.
- Be able to gain increased self understanding through works of culture.
- Have an increased inclination to engage in the humanities (whether reading a work of literature, attending a play, reading a biography, or listening to quality music) as a way of better understanding themselves and their world or enhancing the quality of their lives.

According to <http://www.ferris.edu/htmls/academics/gened/globstudentcriteria.html>, GenEd student outcome objectives for a Global Consciousness course are:

- identify various regions, features or countries other than North America;
 - describe distinctive geographic, economic, cultural, linguistic, or historical features of a region, culture, or society other than North America;
 - articulate geographic, economic, cultural, linguistic and/or historical relationships among diverse nations and peoples;
 - comment accurately about current events in at least one country or region other than North America;
 - describe a method for developing an understanding of geographic, economic, cultural, linguistic, and/or historical contexts of a country or region anywhere in the world;
- Ferris graduates should develop a more positive perspective and understanding of the importance of global consciousness.

5. SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES:

Students will:

1. Demonstrate knowledge of the major world religions
2. Learn and be able to use the vocabulary of religion
3. Demonstrate the ability to read and understand studies of religion
4. Learn the basic patterns of religions
5. Become familiar with a variety of cultural and religious traditions
6. Understand the relationships between religion and civilization
7. Distinguish among the major world religions, their myths and beliefs
8. Develop an understanding of cross-cultural relationships

6. PRIMARY METHOD OF INSTRUCTION:

Discussion, Student Presentation and Lecture

7. MAJOR COURSE TOPICS:

- 1) The nature and character of religion
- 2) Primal religions and religions of antiquity
- 3) Buddhism
- 4) Taoism
- 5) Confucianism
- 6) Judaism
- 7) Islam
- 8) Christianity
- 9) Hinduism

8. TEXTS:

Nielson, et. al. *Religions of the World*, 3rd Edition. (St. Martin's Press, New York, NY), 1993.

Robert E. Van Voorst. *Anthology of World Scriptures*, 6th Edition, (Thomson/Wadsworth, Belmont, CA), 2008.

9. TENTATIVE SCHEDULE OF ASSIGNMENTS

See Online Course Calendar

10. METHOD OF DETERMINING STUDENT GRADE:

Discussion Posts (30%)
Three Exams (10% each – 30% total)
Eight Quizzes (10% total)
Live Discussions (10%)
Religious Text Reviews (10% total)
Secondary Religion Presentation (10% total)

For descriptions of these assignments, see the graded assignment explanation sheet on the course homepage.

Graded Assignments

Discussion Posts (30%)

The first and most important portion of your final grade is the weekly discussion posts. Over the course of the term you will need to complete at least 45 posts. These posts include your first two introductory posts, done between the start of class and January 15th. They also include three posts every week (including the first week). These weeks start at noon on Wednesday and end at noon the following Wednesday, so the first set of three posts is due on Wednesday, January 20th. Your first set of discussion board posts must be completed by noon on that day. These posts DO NOT include your two introductory posts completed the first couple of days. Each week you should complete one original post (roughly 200-300 words) and two replies to the discussion posts of others (roughly 150-200 words). These posts can be directly related to the readings for that week, can bridge across our two textbooks, or can tie issues from those readings to other events in the world. Questions are encouraged as part of a good discussion post (i.e. I wonder why so many people have held such a wide range of religious beliefs throughout history?) if that question is followed by an attempt to start an answer (i.e., I am not sure, but perhaps people tend to feel overwhelmed by the awesome size and diversity of our world. For example, consider the seasons of the year....). Reply posts cannot simply state agreement or disagreement (either with the main post or other already posted replies), but must advance the discussion by indicating why the poster feels the way they do (giving reasons or evidence in support). Each week's set of posts will be graded on a ten point scale that takes into account length, depth, thoughtfulness, clarity, language use and relationship to the ongoing discussion. Do NOT use email lingo/shorthand, but instead compose your posts as if they were in-class essays to be turned in. You are expected to be engaged with your classmates both by writing entries that thoughtfully consider the issues raised in my notes, the readings, as well as in your carefully reading and consideration of the posts of others, and this factor is taken into account when calculating your entry grades.

Three Exams (10% each – 30% total)

The exams will include short answer and essay questions requiring you to reflect on the material that we have covered, as well as primary themes that are discussed throughout the term.

Eight Quizzes (10%)

You will have eight short quizzes during the term, usually available on a Thursday morning and due by noon on Sunday. You only have one chance to take each timed quiz (usually between thirty minutes to one hour), so do the best that you can. Each quiz will be made up of roughly five to ten questions, ranging from true/false to short answer. The quizzes are open book.

Live Discussion (10%)

During the semester there will be five opportunities to enter into a live chat discussion with the rest of the class. I have scheduled each chat on a different day and time to accommodate a wide array of schedules. You are only required to attend two of the five chats, but if you can attend more than the required two, your additional sessions will count as extra credit toward your final grade. Each session will last an hour and a half, of which you will need to be present and participating for a minimum of half of that time (at least 45 minutes). The scheduled chat sessions are:

Thursday, Feb 4, 9:30-11:00 pm
Saturday, February 21, 3-4:30 pm
Monday, March 15, 7-8:30 pm
Tuesday, April 13, 9-10:30 am
Sunday, May 2, 1-2:30 pm

Religious Primary Text Reviews (10%)

On weeks without quizzes this assignment calls upon you to write a one to two page description of the short passage (picking a passage from the primary text reading that is roughly 100 words in length) that you believe captures the heart of that religious perspective. You must point out the passage, explain its meaning, its significance to the religion as a whole, and why you believe it is the central passage in the primary reading.

Secondary Religion Presentation (10%)

Each student will be required to conduct an online presentation outlining a religious perspective not covered in class. In this presentation you are required to teach the class about that religion by providing answers to a questioner provided by me as well as a top ten list of the most essential ideas/concepts from that religion. I will provide a list of options and you will email me your top five selections from that list.

NOTE ON PLAGIARISM: STUDENTS ARE EXPECTED TO DO THEIR OWN WORK. PLAGIARISM IS THE PRESENTATION OF OTHERS' WORK OR IDEAS AS ONE'S OWN WORK. DO REMEMBER THAT REFERENCES TO THE PRIMARY TEXT (EITHER DIRECT QUOTES OR PARAPHRASING) SHOULD BE CITED, EITHER WITH IN-TEXT DOCUMENTATION, FOOTNOTES OR ENDNOTES. PLEASE REMEMBER THAT A FAILING GRADE WILL BE ASSIGNED FOR PLAGIARIZED WORK. PLEASE SEE ME IF YOU HAVE ANY QUESTIONS ABOUT PLAGIARISM.

Faculty Name: Dr. David Aiken
Course Title: RELG 325: Eastern Religions
Semester: Fall 2008
Room Number: Str. 136
Meeting Times: TR 1500-1615

OFFICE HOURS TR 14-15, MW 14-15, AFTER CLASS AND BY APPOINTMENT. I may be contacted in the following ways: office--JOH 122, ext.--x3615, and email--aikend@ferris.edu.

Course Number: RELG 325
Credit Hours: 3

Course Prerequisites: ENG 150

GenEd Status: This course fulfills the criteria for the following General Education category: C, G. GenEd teaching goals and objectives for these categories may be consulted at:
<http://www.ferris.edu/htmls/academics/gened/Learningoutcomes.html>.

Course Description: This course is a survey of Non-European Religions with a focus on Asia. We will begin the semester with a rapid summary of the Western religious heritage and a review of the various mechanisms of salvation, redemption, heaven and hell, but the fundamental focus of this course is to consider similar types of mechanisms in the various religions of the Eastern world.

Course Materials (Mandatory):

1. The Bhadavad Gita, Penguin Classics; 0140441212
2. Ramayana. Penguin Press; ISBN 0140187006 (Indian Epic)
3. Anthology of World Scriptures: Eastern Religions, R. E. Van Voorst; Wadsworth; ISBN 0495170607
4. The Story of my Experiments with Truth: Mohandas K. Gandhi Autobiography; Dover Publications; ISBN 0486245934
5. The Sacred and the Profane: The Nature of Religion; Mircea Eliade (Trask Translator) : ISBN: 015679201X, Harcourt, 1972

GRADES:

Final grades are based on the 90/80/70 scale. The following make up your Final Grade:

• REGULAR class attendance and participation = 28 classes @ ca. 30 pts per class:	840 possible points
• Impromptu Reading Quizzes:	*
• Presentations (2x200):	400
• Essays, Short Papers, Journals, or Book or Film Reports (2x200 pts):	400

	1640 possible points

Finals Week: For specific final exam dates for this class, go to [https://wwws.ferris.edu/webforstudents/...](https://wwws.ferris.edu/webforstudents/) and include at the end the current semester/year.

BOOK REPORT (x1)

- Title must be selected by date indicated on calendar; book report (ca. 5 pages minimum) must be turned in on/by the last day of class. Questions to be answered in the report: 1)

What do you understand to be the general philosophical and/or religious theme of the author; 2) Do you find his general argument persuasive? 3) Explain and defend your position. You may choose among the following titles; other titles must be cleared with instructor.

- ✚ Zen and the Art of Motorcycle Maintenance (Persig).
- ✚ Sophie's World (Gaardner).
- ✚ Life of Pi.
- ✚ Tao of Pooh.
- ✚ Dancing Wu Li Masters.
- ✚ Atlas Shrugged (Rand).
- ✚ On the Road or Dharma Bums (Kerouac).
- ✚ Candide (Voltaire).
- ✚ The Teachings of Don Juan; Second Ring of Power; Journey to Ixtlan (Carlos Castaneda).
- ✚ Lord of Light, Roger Zelazny
- ✚ Letter to a Christian Nation (Sam Harris)
- ✚ Fahrenheit 451
- ✚ A Clockwork Orange
- ✚ Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep
- ✚ The Immortals
- ✚ 'Repent, Harlequin' said the Tick-Tock Man (Ellison)
- ✚

FILM REPORTS (x2)

- Film Report (1) must be turned in by midterm; Film Report (2) must be turned in on/by final class. Each report must be a minimum of (1) typed page. Questions to be answered in the report: 1) What do you understand to be the general philosophical or religious theme or argument of the film; 2) Do you find this general argument persuasive? 3) Explain and defend your position. You may choose among the following titles; other titles must be cleared with instructor.

- ✚ Lost Horizon (Capra).
- ✚ Altered States (w/ William Hurt).
- ✚ Bronco Billy (Eastwood).
- ✚ The Unforgiven (Eastwood).
- ✚ I (Heart) Huckabees (Dustin Hoffman)
- ✚ Director Stanley Kubrick (any film).
- ✚ Director Ingmar Bergman (any film).
- ✚ 21 Grams (w/ Sean Penn).
- ✚ The Meaning of Life (Monty Python).
- ✚ The Matrix.
- ✚ Atwood's A HANDMAID'S TALE
- ✚ Gattaca
- ✚ The Time Machine
- ✚ Fight Club
- ✚ Blade Runner
- ✚ Children of Men
- ✚ Soylent Green
- ✚ V for Vendetta
- ✚ Lord of the Flies
- ✚

Journals: If you choose to keep a journal this semester, at least part of your grade will be based on your journal. Write at least three entries per week dealing with the assigned class material. Entries should be dated and at least 150 words long. Your journal can also include unstructured reflections on the course material. It should have a minimum of forty entries. Journals will be collected December 7. If I cannot read the writing, the notebook will be failed. In the notebooks I will be looking for

- ✓ organization of ideas,
- ✓ articulate expression of those ideas,
- ✓ a certain degree of personal growth in terms of the ideas considered in this class,
- ✓ and for increasing complexity and sophistication of thought with respect to those ideas.

NOTA BENE

LIFE IS NEGOTIABLE, except for the following...

ALL WORK MUST BE TYPEWRITTEN. HANDWRITTEN WORK WILL NOT BE ACCEPTED. All work must include proper heading, with course & section number, time class meets, and name & date.

COURSE CALENDAR: Please consult for specific assignment and reading due dates.

ATTENDANCE – Until the end of the ninth week of class, students with more than four unexcused absences will receive an automatic “F” in the class. Afterwards, these absences will be penalized 30 points each on the final grade. An “absence” is one of the following: missing class, missing a scheduled appointment without notice, arriving at class more than ten minutes after it has begun, leaving class early without prior arrangement with the instructor. Attendance is required.

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EXTRA CREDIT WORK may be negotiated dependent on the circumstances.

PLEASE DO NOT EAT DURING CLASS.

Faculty Name: Dr. David Aiken
Course Title: **Relg 326: WESTERN RELIGIONS**
Semester: Fall 2008
Room Number: Str. 226
Meeting Times: TR 16:30-17:45

OFFICE HOURS TR 14-15, MW 14-15, AFTER CLASS AND BY APPOINTMENT. I may be contacted in the following ways: office--JOH 122, ext.--x3615, and email--aikend@ferris.edu.

Course Number: RELG 326, Section 001

Credit Hours: 3

Course Prerequisites:

GenEd Status: This course fulfills the criteria for the following General Education category: C. GenEd teaching goals and objectives for this category may be consulted at <http://www.ferris.edu/htmls/academics/gened/Learningoutcomes.html>.

Course Description: In this course we will focus on the European traditions and cultures that gave rise to a distinctly western religious heritage. We shall begin the semester with a rapid cultural history of the West to establish a western religious context, then look at some problems associated with various theories of religious and historical interpretation, then we shall consider specifically the religions of Judaism, the Greeks, and Christianity (cursory Islam).

Required Class Texts: Please buy the correct edition.

1. Scriptures of the West, Fieser & Powers; McGraw-Hill; ISBN 0070210225
2. Five Stages of Greek Religion; Gilbert Murray; Dover Publications; Reprint edition (2003); ISBN 0486425002
3. James B. Pritchard, The Ancient Near East, (ANET) vol. I (An Anthology of Texts and Pictures) Princeton University Press. ISBN: 0691002002.
4. Mark S. Smith, The Early History of God, Eerdmans Publishing Co., 2002 (ISBN 080283972x)

Grades: Final grades are based on the 90/80/70 scale. The following make up your Final Grade:

• REGULAR class attendance and participation = 28 classes @ ca. 30 pts per class:	840 possible points
• Impromptu Reading Quizzes:	*
• Presentations (2x200):	400
• Essays, Short Papers, Journals, or Book or Film Reports (2x200 pts):	400

	1640 possible points

Finals Week: For specific final exam dates for this class, go to [https://www.ferris.edu/webforstudents/...](https://www.ferris.edu/webforstudents/) and include at the end the current semester/year.

BOOK REPORT (x1)

- Title must be selected by date indicated on calendar; book report (ca. 5 pages minimum) must be turned in on/by the last day of class. Questions to be answered in the report: 1) What do you understand to be the general philosophical and/or religious theme of the

author; 2) Do you find his general argument persuasive? 3) Explain and defend your position. You may choose among the following titles; other titles must be cleared with instructor.

- ✚ Zen and the Art of Motorcycle Maintenance (Persig).
- ✚ Sophie's World (Gaardner).
- ✚ Life of Pi.
- ✚ Tao of Pooh.
- ✚ Dancing Wu Li Masters.
- ✚ Atlas Shrugged (Rand).
- ✚ On the Road or Dharma Bums (Kerouac).
- ✚ Candide (Voltaire).
- ✚ The Teachings of Don Juan; Second Ring of Power; Journey to Ixtlan (Carlos Castaneda).
- ✚ Lord of Light, Roger Zelazny
- ✚ Letter to a Christian Nation (Sam Harris)
- ✚ Fahrenheit 451
- ✚ A Clockwork Orange
- ✚ Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep
- ✚ The Immortals
- ✚ 'Repent, Harlequin' said the Tick-Tock Man (Ellison)
- ✚

FILM REPORTS (x2)

- Film Report (1) must be turned in by midterm; Film Report (2) must be turned in on/by final class. Each report must be a minimum of (1) typed page. Questions to be answered in the report: 1) What do you understand to be the general philosophical or religious theme or argument of the film; 2) Do you find this general argument persuasive? 3) Explain and defend your position. You may choose among the following titles; other titles must be cleared with instructor.

- ✚ Lost Horizon (Capra).
- ✚ Altered States (w/ William Hurt).
- ✚ Bronco Billy (Eastwood).
- ✚ The Unforgiven (Eastwood).
- ✚ I (Heart) Huckabees (Dustin Hoffman)
- ✚ Director Stanley Kubrick (any film).
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- ✚ Gattica
- ✚ The Time Machine
- ✚ Fight Club
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Faculty Name: Dr. David Aiken
Course Title: RELG 425 - Christianity
Semester: Winter 2007
Room Number: STR 226
Meeting Times: MW 18:00-20:50

OFFICE HOURS TR 12:30-13:30, and after my last class at 19:15 (by appointment); W 17:00-18:00; AND BY APPOINTMENT. I may be contacted in the following ways: office--JOH 122, ext.--x3615, and email--aikend@ferris.edu.

Course Number: RELG 425, Section 001.

Credit Hours: 3

Course Prerequisites: ENGL 250

GenEd Status: This course fulfills the criteria for the following General Education category: C.

GenEd teaching goals and objectives for this category may be consulted at:

<http://www.ferris.edu/htmls/academics/gened/Learningoutcomes.html>.

Course Description: Text intensive. A critical study of Christianity in the light of other religions and cultures of the Western world, in RELG 425 we will study the literatures of the ancient Near East, Judaism, and Hellenism as a background to Christianity, and consider the cultural, historical, philosophical, and doctrinal evolution of Christianity in light of its Semitic origins and Greek language of expression.

RELG 425: CHRISTIANITY, has defined the following teaching/learning objectives:

1. To familiarize the student with the various contemporary aspects of western history, culture, and world view, which are intimately linked to the heritage of Christianity.
2. To bring the student to understand the link between the religious traditions of the world, and the types of social and political beliefs that have arisen directly as a result of those traditions.

Course Materials:

- A Bible (preferably the New Oxford Study Bible RSV)
- The Oresteia, Aeschylus, (Fagles), Penguin Classics, ISBN 0140443339
- Mark S. Smith, The Origins of Biblical Monotheism, Oxford University Press, 2001, (ISBN 0195167686)
- C.G. Jung, Answer to Job, Princeton University Press, ISBN: 0691017859
- Julian Handout
- The Disappearance of God, Richard Elliott Friedman, HarperSanFrancisco; Reissue edition (December 13, 1996), ISBN: 006062258X
- Dostoevsky, The Grand Inquisitor, Hackett, 0872201937
- TWILIGHT OF THE IDOLS OR, HOW TO PHILOSOPHIZE WITH A HAMMER; THE ANTI-CHRIST; Friedrich Nietzsche; ISBN 0140445145; Penguin Classic

Grades: Final grades are based on the 90/80/70 scale. The following make up your Final Grade:

REGULAR class attendance and participation (28 classes)	50%
• Readings (=participation)	
Research Essays (X4)	40%
• Book Report (x1)	5%
• Film Report (x2)	5%

Finals Week: For specific final exam dates for this class, go to [https://www.ferris.edu/webforstudents/...](https://www.ferris.edu/webforstudents/) and include at the end the current semester/year.

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- ✚ Atlas Shrugged (Rand).
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