

## Reed, Katie

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**From:** Vankeerbergen, Bernadette  
**Sent:** Monday, February 29, 2016 3:21 PM  
**To:** Smith, Randy; Reed, Katie  
**Cc:** Fink, Steven; Jenkins, Mary Ellen; Daly, Marymegan  
**Subject:** Revision to Religious Studies BA  
**Attachments:** Religious Studies Major Revision Proposal 2-3-16.docx; RS Advising Sheet 1-26-16.docx; RS sample program 1-26-16.docx; Curriculum Map for Religious Studies Major 1-28-16.docx; Religious Studies BA revision-A&HPanel letter.pdf

Dear Randy and Katie,

Please find attached a revision to the Religious Studies BA. The changes were fully approved by the ASC Curriculum Committee (ASCC ) on Friday, February 26, 2016.

We are now advancing the revision to the Religious Studies BA for review by CAA. The attached documents are: (1) proposed revision to the major, (2) revised advising sheet, (3) sample program, (4) revised curriculum map, and (5) Arts and Humanities Panel cover letter to ASCC.

Please let me know if you have any questions.

Best regards,  
Bernadette



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Religious Studies Major Revision Proposal  
December 2, 2015, revised January 26, 2016, finalized January 28, 2016

This is a revision of the existing major in Religious Studies, administered by the Department of Comparative Studies

## **1. General Information**

This is a revision of the existing major in Religious Studies. Its name is Religious Studies. Students will receive a BA with a major in Religious Studies. The proposed implementation date is July 1, 2016 or beginning of AU 16 semester (whichever is appropriate). The academic units responsible for administering the program are the Department of Comparative Studies and the College of Arts & Sciences.

## **2. Rationale**

This is a revision of the existing Religious Studies major. The existing major had two subplans, "Religions and Cultures" and "Study of Religions." During our annual assessment exercise in Spring 2014, the Department of Comparative Studies observed a serious drop in majors in Religious Studies. This prompted an expansion of our regular assessment process that encompassed focus groups and a broad survey of current and former majors. Along with data that emphasized strengths in the major, this assessment uncovered a trend in student responses that indicated frustration with the complexity of and inconsistencies in the course offerings and an awareness that one of the subplans could not be completed under current staffing limitations. This major revision is intended to respond to that data by:

- a) Replacing the two subplans with one plan that combines the strengths of the previous two.
- b) Ensuring that we can regularly offer the classes our students need
- c) Easing student flow through the major
- d) Increasing student/faculty interaction outside the classroom
- e) Creating an Advisory Board consisting of faculty from across the College of Arts and Sciences that will oversee the major and ensure cross-departmental cooperation with regular course offerings.

This major combines the strengths of the two subplans by maintaining the theoretical and methodological foundations of "Religions and Cultures" with the required exposure to a broad range of past and present religious traditions that characterized "Study of Religions." These broad knowledge bases then become the foundation for the later Comparative/Interdisciplinary courses that cover multiple traditions or themes. The plan establishes a progression of intellectual awareness and sophistication that culminates in a capstone course where students develop an interdisciplinary comparative research project.

A typical path through the new Religious Studies major would begin with a student taking one of our popular GE courses and discovering the department's approach to religious studies. Most commonly, students begin their study of religions by focusing on those traditions already known to them. RS 2370, Introduction to Comparative Religion, should pique their curiosity about the broader range of religious traditions and practices. Majors will go on to complete between 9 and 15 hours on individual religious traditions. Taking advantage of this major's cross-departmental offerings, these classes could draw on the expertise of colleagues in Classics, History, Philosophy, and NELC. As they develop their knowledge base about particular traditions, majors in Religious Studies will also be acquiring theoretical and methodological skills central to the field of Religious Studies via their required core courses, RS 3972 (formerly 4972) Theory and Method in the Study of Religion and CS 3990 Approaches to Comparative Studies. Interspersed with those courses will be classes that emphasize the comparative and interdisciplinary aspects of Religious Studies (9-15 credit hours). Taking Comparative Studies 4990 in their senior year, majors in Religious Studies should be prepared to develop an in-depth research project that brings together their skills and knowledge bases in a comparative and interdisciplinary fashion.

Students who complete a major in Religious Studies will have acquired a broad and deep awareness of the range of religious traditions past and present. They will be aware of some of the methodological difficulties that confront any scholar of religion. They will be able to study religion comparatively and critically in a range of cultural and historical contexts. Finally, they will be able to identify and appreciate the role that religion plays in other aspects of culture and society. As our world becomes increasingly tied together, such in-depth understanding of religious traditions, their histories, and current interactions becomes vitally important. The research skills that these majors develop along the way can be transferred to the complex problems of a global society.

A complex interdisciplinary cross-departmental major like Religious Studies benefits from an Advisory Board that is explicitly charged with overseeing the major and coordinating cross-departmental cooperation to ensure regular course offerings needed by the students.

#### *Specific Changes from the Existing Religious Studies Major*

- Elimination of the "Study of Religions" and the "Religions and Cultures" tracks while combining their strengths into one major that will rely on one consistently offered set of courses.
  - The Cross-Cultural Distribution requirement is retained from the "Study of Religions" track, ensuring broad knowledge of the world's religious traditions.

- The Comparative and Interdisciplinary requirement is retained from the “Religions and Cultures” track, ensuring attention to emerging practices and cultural questions.

The creation of an Advisory Board consisting of faculty from across the College of Arts and Sciences that will oversee the major and coordinate cross-departmental cooperation to ensure regular course offerings needed by the students. The Advisory Board will consist of two faculty members each from the departments of Classics, CS, History and NELC (the departments in which the most teaching of religion is done); one ‘at large’ member from another department who is active in the teaching of religion; the director of the Center for the Study of Religion (ex officio); and the coordinator of the major (ex officio). This Advisory Board will monitor the progress of students through the major; will assess and remove obstacles to students completing the major with reasonable speed; will enhance offerings both in terms of subject matter covered (i.e., to ensure that the cultures, time periods and approaches that are covered are appropriately broad) and in terms of the quality of material covered; will keep an eye on enrollment levels and, when appropriate; will develop ways of attracting additional majors. It additionally will try to help coordinate offerings amongst the participating departments.

- All Religious Studies majors will have a faculty advisor assigned to them. This advisor will help the student create a coherent program of study and increase faculty/student interaction outside the classroom.

### **3. Goals/Objectives and Evaluation of Program**

Religious Studies Program Goals:

Goal 1: Students will attain a broad knowledge of the world’s religions.

Goal 2: Students will understand some of the methodological challenges facing any scholar of religion.

Goal 3: Students will develop an understanding of religion and how to study it comparatively and critically in a range of cultural and historical contexts.

Goal 4: Students will develop multi-disciplinary skills to appreciate the role religion plays in social and cultural production (in terms of art, literature, politics, society).

Our existing assessment plan measures the success of this program by reviewing capstone papers, evaluating answers to embedded questions, evidence from other assignments in the classes, surveying our majors, and reviewing discursive course evaluations. One of the stimuli for this major revision derives from that plan. It showed that a significant percentage of our students were unable to complete the subplan they preferred. Many entered the capstone course unprepared for the work that course demanded and, as a result produced papers that did not effectively address the program goals. Given the evident success of the existing assessment plan and its ability to identify problems in the program, we are submitting the same plan to accompany this revision. This plan is already implemented. The relevant section from this year’s report follows.

## Plan/Report Details – Religious Studies – BA

### Goal 1: Students attain a broad knowledge of the world’s religions.

<p><b>Methods: Means/Methods</b></p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) Introductory courses in Religious Studies provide students with broad knowledge of a wide variety of religions. CS 2370 (Introduction to Comparative Religion) is required of all majors, but other courses complement that content and add new perspectives. Assessment of this goal, therefore, is best achieved near graduation, by which time all students should have encountered a truly expansive comprehension of the world’s religions.</li> <li>2) Ongoing assessment of student learning takes place during regular course work. These means include tests, in-class discussions, and writing assignments.</li> <li>3) Ongoing assessment will be supplemented at the end of each academic year by an examination of final papers in the capstone course (CS 4990 or CS 4970). These papers should provide evidence of the students’ full understanding of the world’s religions.</li> </ol>
<p><b>Criteria</b></p>	<p>Criteria include effective completion of test answers, demonstration of broad knowledge during in class discussions, and course-specific writing assignments. Capstone projects will confirm the expansion and development of this understanding.</p>
<p><b>Planned Use</b></p>	<p>In faculty discussion of curriculum development. Revision of major is in process.</p>
<p><b>Implementation Schedule</b></p>	<p>Assessment of this goal will be continuous throughout RS courses and completed at the end of each student’s capstone year.</p>
<p><b>Evidence</b></p>	<p>Evidence drawn from oral and written assignments in courses, evaluation of capstone papers, survey responses, and review of discursive course evaluations.</p>
<p><b>Met Minimum Criteria?</b></p>	<p>Yes</p>
<p><b>Met Criteria for Excellence?</b></p>	<p>Partially met.</p>
<p><b>Review of Findings</b></p>	<p>After one year of this new major, students majoring in Religious Studies demonstrate a strong knowledge of the traditional religions (Hinduism, Buddhism, Christianity,</p>

	Islam, Judaism). Knowledge of less well-known religions is spotty, depending on courses taken.
<b>Changes Made</b>	Addition of survey responses, addition of review of discursive course evaluations.
<b>Assessment of Changes Made</b>	Review of discursive course evaluations links course goals to program goals and measures student sense of the achievement of these goals.
<b>Next Steps</b>	Revision of major is in process

**Goal 2: Students will understand some of the methodological challenges facing any scholar of religion.**

<b>Methods: Means/Methods</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) Courses in Religious Studies offered by the Department of Comparative Studies consistently foreground methodological issues. CS 2370 (Introduction to Comparative Religion) is required of all majors, but other courses complement that content and add new perspectives. Although ongoing, assessment of this goal is best achieved near graduation, by which time all students should have developed some understanding of the methodological issues.</li> <li>2) Ongoing assessment of student learning takes place during regular course work. These means include tests, in-class discussions, and writing assignments.</li> <li>3) Ongoing assessment will be supplemented at the end of each academic year by an examination of final papers in the capstone course (CS 4990 or CS 4970). These papers should provide evidence of the students' understanding of methodological issues.</li> </ol>
<b>Criteria</b>	Criteria include effective completion of test answers, demonstration of broad knowledge during inclass discussions, and course-specific writing assignments. Capstone projects will confirm the expansion and development of this understanding.
<b>Planned Use</b>	In faculty discussion of curriculum development. Revision of major is in process.
<b>Implementation Schedule</b>	Assessment of this goal will be continuous throughout RS courses and completed at the end of each student's capstone year.

<b>Evidence</b>	Evidence drawn from oral and written assignments in courses, and evaluation of capstone papers, survey responses and review of discursive course evaluations.
<b>Met Minimum Criteria?</b>	Yes
<b>Met Criteria for Excellence?</b>	Largely met. This is a strength of the major
<b>Review of Findings</b>	After one year of this major, capstone papers demonstrate a clear attention to this goal and many display master of it. Discursive course evaluations indicate that this goal is shared widely in individual course goals.
<b>Changes Made</b>	Addition of review of discursive evaluations
<b>Assessment of Changes Made</b>	Review of discursive course evaluations links course goals to program goals and measures student sense of the achievement of these goals.
<b>Next Steps</b>	Revision of the major is in process.

**Goal 3: Students will develop an understanding of religion and how to study it comparatively and critically in a range of cultural and historical contexts.**

<b>Methods: Means/Methods</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) Courses in Religious Studies offered by the Department of Comparative Studies consistently foreground comparative approaches across cultural and historical contexts. CS 2370 (Introduction to Comparative Religion) is required of all majors, but other courses complement that content and add new perspectives. Although ongoing, assessment of this goal is best achieved near graduation, by which time all students should have developed some understanding of comparative and critical approaches to religion in cultural and historical contexts.</li> <li>2) Ongoing assessment of student learning takes place during regular course work. These means include tests, in-class discussions, and writing assignments.</li> <li>3) Ongoing assessment will be supplemented at the end of each academic year by an examination of final papers in the capstone course (CS 4990 or CS 4970). These papers should provide evidence of the students' understanding of comparative and</li> </ol>
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	critical approaches to religion in cultural and historical contexts.
<b>Criteria</b>	Criteria include effective completion of test answers, demonstration of broad knowledge during in class discussions, and course-specific writing assignments. Capstone projects will confirm the expansion and development of this understanding.
<b>Planned Use</b>	In faculty discussion of curriculum development. Revision of major is in process.
<b>Implementation Schedule</b>	Assessment of this goal will be continuous throughout RS courses and completed at the end of each student's capstone year.
<b>Evidence</b>	Evidence drawn from oral and written assignments in courses, and evaluation of capstone papers, survey responses and review of discursive course evaluations.
<b>Met Minimum Criteria?</b>	Yes
<b>Met Criteria for Excellence?</b>	Largely met
<b>Review of Findings</b>	After one year of this major, students generally display a solid understanding of comparative and critical approaches to religion in cultural and historical context. This is perhaps the hallmark of our program and these issues are emphasized in every course. Although levels of sophistication vary, every capstone paper in Religious Studies gives evidence of this understanding.
<b>Changes Made</b>	Addition of review of discursive evaluations
<b>Assessment of Changes Made</b>	Review of discursive course evaluations links course goals to program goals and measures student sense of the achievement of these goals.
<b>Next Steps</b>	Revision of the major is in process

**Goal 4: Students will develop multi-disciplinary skills to appreciate the role religion plays in social and cultural production (in terms of art, literature, politics, society).**

<b>Methods: Means/Methods</b>	1) <b>SEE NOTE BELOW.</b> Courses in Religious Studies offered by the Department of Comparative Studies consistently foreground interdisciplinary skills and the role that religion plays in other forms of social and cultural production. Although ongoing in individual courses, assessment of this goal is best achieved near graduation, by which time all
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	<p>students should have developed these skills enough to display them effectively.</p> <p>2) Ongoing assessment of student learning takes place during regular course work. These means include tests, in-class discussions, and writing assignments.</p> <p>3) Ongoing assessment will be supplemented at the end of each academic year by an examination of final papers in the capstone course (CS 4990 or CS 4970). These papers should provide evidence of the students' interdisciplinary skills in their comprehension of religion's impact on other forms of social and cultural production.</p>
<b>Criteria</b>	Criteria include effective completion of test answers, demonstration of broad knowledge during in class discussions, and course-specific writing assignments. Capstone projects will confirm the expansion and development of this understanding.
<b>Planned Use</b>	In faculty discussion of curriculum development. Revision of major is in process.
<b>Implementation Schedule</b>	Assessment of this goal will be continuous throughout RS courses and completed at the end of each student's capstone year.
<b>Evidence</b>	Evidence drawn from oral and written assignments in courses, and evaluation of capstone papers, survey responses and review of discursive course evaluations.
<b>Met Minimum Criteria?</b>	Yes
<b>Met Criteria for Excellence?</b>	Partially met
<b>Review of Findings</b>	This goal is emphasized in some areas of the curriculum more than others. Student demonstration of competency in this area is, therefore, more erratic.
<b>Changes Made</b>	Addition of review of discursive course evaluations.
<b>Assessment of Changes Made</b>	Review of discursive course evaluations links course goals to program goals and measures student sense of the achievement of these goals. This review makes clear that students taking courses offered by the Department of Comparative Studies are aware of this goal and largely believe that it is being met in these courses.
<b>Next Steps</b>	Revision of the major is in process.

#### **4. Relationship to Other Programs / Benchmarking**

This is a revision of the existing major in Religious Studies. There will be no new overlap with any other programs or departments within the university. As an interdisciplinary major, successful completion of the program requires students to incorporate classes from other departments into their plan, and many of our courses are cross-listed. These pre-existing arrangements will continue in the advised major. There are no direct transfer opportunities for this major. The only consultants that participated in the revision of this major were members of the faculty, staff, and current and former students of the program. We anticipate that the initial set of students who enroll in the revised major will draw essentially from the same sources as the current major, but our aspiration is that the greater clarity of the structure, the improved regularity of necessary course offerings, and goals of the revision will help to attract a larger percentage of those students who will benefit from our curriculum. With proper communication and promotion, the special qualities of this major should attract high-ability humanities-oriented students from leading feeder high schools as well as OSU colleges outside ASC.

#### **5. Student Enrollment.**

During the first year, we anticipate no change in the number of students who add our major. In 2014-15, 17 students added the major. We anticipate that, given proper communication and promotion, the number of majors will rise back to the level of those in the RS concentration of the Comparative Studies major before semester conversion. In 2012-13, the major added 29 students.

#### **6. Curricular Requirements**

Advising sheets, curriculum maps and sample plans are included with this proposal.

The minimum number of hours required for completion of the major is 36. The total number of credit hours earned by the typical major in Comparative Studies is 121.

No courses in other departments are required to complete this major. It is expected, however, that every student will take at least some of their major coursework outside of Comparative Studies.

The Religious Studies major is interdisciplinary and cross-departmental by design. Typically, students will take between 6 and 21 credit hours across the College of Arts and Sciences and, occasionally across multiple colleges, at both lower and upper division levels.

We require all our majors to write at least a major senior paper. A senior thesis is highly recommended.

- Describe the major as it would appear in the appropriate college bulletin.

## **Religious Studies**

### **7. Transition Policy**

Students currently enrolled in the Religious Studies Major will be allowed to choose whether or not to complete their major under the old plan or to switch to this new plan. This decision will be made in conjunction with their faculty advisor and communicated to the member of the advising staff assigned to the Department of Comparative Studies.

## Advising Sheet for Religious Studies

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Student ID \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_ Email \_\_\_\_\_ Faculty Advisor \_\_\_\_\_

1) **Core Courses** (12 Credit Hours):

Course	Title	Semester	Credit
RS 2370	Introduction to Comparative Religion		
RS 3972	Theory and Method in the Study of Religion		
CS 3990	Approaches to Comparative Studies or a comparable alternative based on the advisor's approval		
CS 4990 or 4970	Senior Seminar in Comparative Studies or Religious Studies Capstone		

2) **Individual Religious Traditions courses** (9-15 Credit hours)

Students should take courses in at least three different traditions and/or geographic regions (Substitutions may be made subject to advisor's approval). For example: a course in Christianity, Judaism or Islam; a course in South Asian or East Asian religions; and a course in indigenous, ancient, or newly emergent religions.

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| ARABIC 5701 The Qur'an in Translation<br>CLAS 3401 Ancient Greek Religion<br>CLAS 3403 Magic in the Ancient World<br>CLAS 3405 Christians in the Greco-Roman World<br>CLAS 3408 Ancient Roman Religion<br>CS 4822 Native American Identity<br>HA 3005 Christian Art<br>HIST 2220 Introduction to the History of Christianity<br>HIST 2221/CLAS 2221 Introduction to the New Testament: History and Literature<br>HIST 2351 Early Islamic Society, 610-1258<br>HIST 2376 Islamic Central Asia<br>HIST 3227 Gnostics and Other Early Christian Heresies<br>HIST 3229 History of Early Christianity<br>HIST 3245 The Age of Reformation<br>HIST 3407 Paul and his Influence in Early Christianity<br>HIST 3219 Historical Jesus<br>JS 2201 Intro to Jewish Culture, Thought and Practice | MedRen 2666 Witchcraft and Magic in the Middle Ages and Renaissance<br>NELC 3501 Introduction to Islam<br>NELC 3230 Introduction to Shi's Beliefs and History<br>NELC 3502 Islamic Civilization through the Ages<br>NELC 3508 Sufism<br>NELC 5578 Islamic Law and Society<br>NELC XXXX The Anthropology of Islam [This course is in development and should be approved by the start of the 16-17 academic year.]<br>PHIL 2120 Asian Philosophy<br>RS 2210 The Jewish Mystical Tradition (to become 3210)<br>RS 3671 Religions of India<br>RS 3673 The Buddhist Tradition<br>RS 3677 Asian Religions in America<br>RS 3675 Religions of Mesoamerica<br>RS 4872 Varieties of Christianity<br>RS 4874 New Age and New Religious Movements<br>RS 5871 The Japanese Religious Tradition |
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Course	Title	Semester	Credit


3) **Comparative/ Interdisciplinary courses: 9-15 credit hours**

These include comparative and interdisciplinary courses covering multiple traditions and/or themes.

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| CLAS 3403 Magic in the Ancient World                                     | RS 3671 Religions of India                                   |
| CS/ IS 4873 Contemporary Religious Movements in a<br>Global Perspective  | RS 3677 Asian Religions in America                           |
| HEB 5806 Studies in Biblical Law   | RS 3678 Religion and American Culture                        |
| HIST 3214 Women, Gender, and Sexuality in the<br>History of Christianity | RS /HIST 3680 Religion and Law in Comparative<br>Perspective |
| PHIL 2120 Asian Philosophy   | RS 4871 Religion and American Politics                       |
| RS 2102.01 Literature and Religion                                       | RS 4874 New Age and New Religious Movements                  |
| RS 2102.02 Comparative Sacred Texts                                      | RS 4875 Gender, Sexuality and Religion                       |
| RS 2670 Science and Religion   | RS 3877 (4877) Myth and Ritual                               |
| RS 2677 Religion and Environmentalism                                    | RS 4878 Rites, Ritual and Ceremony                           |
|  | RS 5871 The Japanese Religious Tradition                     |

Course	Title	Semester	Credit

4) **Research course:**

For those enrolling in Comparative Studies 4990 for their capstone course, at least one course from section 2 or 3 must be a research course approved by the student's advisor.

Course	Title	Semester	Credit

## **Religious Studies sample program**

### **I. CORE COURSES: 12 credit hours**

RS 2370 Introduction to Comparative Religion  
RS 4972 Theory and Method in the Study of Religion  
CS 3990 Approaches to Comparative Studies, or a comparable alternative based  
on the advisor's approval  
CS 4990 Senior Seminar in Comparative Studies or RS 4970 Religious Studies  
Capstone

### **II. COURSES ON INDIVIDUAL RELIGIOUS TRADITIONS: 9-15 credit hours**

1. a course in Christianity, Judaism or Islam, such as:

HIST 3229 History of Early Christianity  
NELC 3508 Sufism

2. a course in South Asian or East Asian religions, such as:

RS 3671 Religions of India

3. a course in indigenous, ancient, or newly emergent religions, such as:

RS 4874 New Age and New Religious Movements  
CLAS 3401 Ancient Greek Religion

### **III. COMPARATIVE/ INTERDISCIPLINARY COURSES: 9-15 credit hours**

See page 2 of the advising sheet for a long list of courses that count in this category.  
These include comparative and interdisciplinary courses covering multiple traditions  
and/or themes, such as:

CLAS 3403 Magic in the Ancient World  
CS/ IS 4873 Contemporary Religious Movements in a Global Perspective  
HEB 5806 Studies in Biblical Law

## Curriculum Map for Religious Studies Major

Program Learning Goals for the Religious Studies Major

Goal 1: Students will attain a broad knowledge of the world's religions.

Goal 2: Students will understand some of the methodological challenges facing any scholar of religion.

Goal 3: Students will develop an understanding of religion and how to study it comparatively and critically in a range of cultural and historical contexts.

Goal 4: Students will develop multi-disciplinary skills to appreciate the role religion plays in social and cultural production (in terms of art, literature, politics, society).

\*Beg=Beginning; Int=Intermediate; Adv=Advanced

<b>CURRICULUM MAP FOR RELIGIOUS STUDIES MAJOR</b>				
Learning Goals:	<u>Goal 1:</u> Students will attain a broad knowledge of the world's religions.	<u>Goal 2:</u> Students will understand some of the methodological challenges facing any scholar of religion.	<u>Goal 3:</u> Students will develop an understanding of religion and how to study it comparatively and critically in a range of cultural and historical contexts.	<u>Goal 4:</u> Students will develop multi-disciplinary skills to appreciate the role religion plays in social and cultural production (in terms of art, literature, politics, society).
<b>Core Courses (12 Credit Hours)</b>				
2370 Introduction to Comparative Religion	beg	beg	beg	beg
3972 (currently 4972) Theory and Method in the Study of Religion	int	int	int	int
3990 Approaches to Comparative Studies, or comparable alternative based on advisor's approval	int	int	int	int
4990 or 4970 Senior Seminar in Comparative Studies or Religious Studies Capstone	adv	adv	adv	adv
<b>Individual Religious Traditions courses (9-15 Credit hours)</b>				
ARABIC 5701 The Qur'an in Translation	adv	adv	adv	adv
CLAS 3401 Ancient Greek Religion	int	int	int	int

CLAS 3403 Magic in the Ancient World	int	int	int	int
CLAS 3405 Christians in the Greco-Roman World	int	int	int	int
CLAS 3408 Ancient Roman Religion	int	int	int	int
CS 4822 Native American Identity	adv	adv	adv	adv
HA 3005 History of Christian Art	int	int	int	int
HIST 2220 Introduction to the History of Christianity	beg	beg	beg	beg
HIST 2221 Introduction to the New Testament	beg	beg	beg	beg
HIST 2351 Early Islamic Society, 610-1258	beg	beg	beg	beg
HIST 2376 Islamic Central Asia	beg	beg	beg	beg
HIST 3227 Gnostics and Other Early Christian Heresies	int	int	int	int
HIST 3229 History of Early Christianity	int	int	int	int
HIST 3245 The Age of Reformation	int	int	int	int
HIST 3218 Paul and his Influence in Early Christianity	int	int	int	int
HIST 3219 Historical Jesus	int	int	int	int
JS 2201 Introduction to Jewish Culture, Thought and Practice	beg	beg	beg	beg
NELC 3501 Introduction to Islam	int	int	int	int
NELC 3230 Introduction to Shi's Beliefs and History	int	int	int	int
NELC 3502 Islamic Civilization through the Ages	int	int	int	int
NELC 3508 Sufism	int	int	int	int
NELC 5578 Islamic Law and Society	adv	adv	adv	adv
NELC XXXX The Anthropology of Islam [Course is in development and should be approved	adv	adv	adv	adv



before start of 16-17 Academic year]				
PHIL 2120 Asian Philosophy	beg	beg	beg	beg
RS 2210 The Jewish Mystical Tradition	beg	beg	beg	beg
RS 3671 Religions of India	int	int	int	int
RS 3673 The Buddhist Tradition	int	int	int	int
RS 3677 Asian Religions in America	int	int	int	int
RS 3675 Religions of Mesoamerica	int	int	int	int
RS 4872 Varieties of Christianity	adv	adv	adv	adv
RS 4874 New Age and New Religious Movements	adv	adv	adv	adv
<b>Comparative/ Interdisciplinary courses: 9-15 credit hours</b>				
CLAS 3403 Magic in the Ancient World	int	int	int	int
CS/ IS 4873 Contemporary Religious Movements in a Global Perspective	adv	adv	adv	adv
HEB 5806 Studies in Biblical Law	adv	adv	adv	adv
HIST 3214 Women, Gender, and Sexuality in the History of Christianity	int	int	int	int
PHIL 2120 Asian Philosophy	beg	beg	beg	beg
RS 2102.01 Literature and Religion	beg	beg	beg	beg
RS 2102.02 Comparative Sacred Texts	beg	beg	beg	beg
RS 2670 Science and Religion	beg	beg	beg	beg
RS 2677 Religion and Environmentalism	beg	beg	beg	beg
RS 3671 Religions of India	int	int	int	int
RS 3677 Asian Religions in America	int	int	int	int
RS 3678 Religion and American Culture	int	int	int	int
RS /HIST 3680 Religion and Law in Comparative Perspective	int	int	int	int
RS 4871 Religion and American Politics	adv	adv	adv	adv

RS 4874 New Age and New Religious Movements	adv	adv	adv	adv
RS 4875 Gender, Sexuality and Religion	adv	adv	adv	adv
RS 3877 (currently 4877) Myth and Ritual	adv	adv	adv	adv
RS 4878 Rites, Ritual and Ceremony	adv	adv	adv	adv
RS 5871 The Japanese Religious Tradition	adv	adv	adv	adv



February 23, 2016

Dear Meg,

On Tuesday, January 12, 2016 the Arts and Humanities Panel of the ASC Curriculum Committee reviewed the proposed revision to the BA Religious Studies. During their annual assessment exercise in Spring 2014, the Department of Comparative Studies observed a serious drop in majors in Religious Studies, which prompted a more detailed look at the problem. They found a trend in student responses that indicated frustration with the complexity of and inconsistencies in the course offerings and an awareness that one of the sub-plans could not be completed under current staffing limitations. This major revision responds to these findings by:

- a) replacing the two sub-plans with one plan that combines the strengths of the previous two;
- b) ensuring that they can regularly offer the classes students need;
- c) easing student flow through the major;
- d) increasing student/faculty interaction outside the classroom;
- e) creating an Advisory Board consisting of faculty from across the College of Arts and Sciences that will oversee the major and ensure cross-departmental cooperation with regular course offerings.

In the revised major students begin with RS 2370: *Introduction to Comparative Religion*, and then go on to complete between 9 and 15 hours on individual religious traditions, taking advantage of courses in Classics, History, Philosophy, and NELC. As they develop their knowledge base about particular traditions, majors in Religious Studies will also be acquiring theoretical and methodological skills central to the field of Religious Studies via their required core courses, RS 3972 (formerly 4972): *Theory and Method in the Study of Religion* and CS 3990: *Approaches to Comparative Studies*. Interspersed with those courses will be classes that emphasize the comparative and interdisciplinary aspects of Religious Studies (9-15 credit hours). In Comparative Studies 4990 in their senior year, majors in Religious Studies should develop an in-depth research project that brings together their skills and knowledge bases in a comparative and interdisciplinary fashion.

At this meeting the Panel unanimously approved the revision with two contingencies (to describe who will be on the Advisory Board and what the function of the board will be and to make recommended adjustments to the advising sheet. When the proposal was resubmitted, these changes had been made along with additional changes (removal of a course [2099], reduction of the required hours from 13 to 12, addition of an alternative option for 3990, and information about the research requirement for 4990), and the major was unanimously approved on February 23, 2016.

Sincerely,

*Janice M. Aski*  
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