



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