**Potter College of Arts & Letters**

**Western Kentucky University**

**745-2345**

# REPORT TO THE UNIVERSITY CURRICULUM COMMITTEE

Date: January 27, 2011

The Potter College of Arts & Letters submits the following items for consideration:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Type of Item** | **Description of Item & Contact Information** |
| Action | **Proposal to Create a New Course**  RELS 408 Religion and Ecology  Contact: Isabel Mukonyora, [bella.mukonyora@wku.edu](mailto:bella.mukonyora@wku.edu), 745-5754 |
| Action | **Proposal to Revise a Program**  447 Minor in Religious Studies  Contact: Eric Bain-Selbo, [eric.bain-selbo@wku.edu](mailto:eric.bain-selbo@wku.edu), 745-5744 |
| Action | **Proposal to Revise a Program**  769 Major in Religious Studies  Contact: Eric Bain-Selbo, [eric.bain-selbo@wku.edu](mailto:eric.bain-selbo@wku.edu), 745-5744 |

Proposal Date: September 1, 2010

**Potter College of Arts and Letters**

**Department of Philosophy and Religion**

**Proposal to Create a New Course**

**(Action Item)**

Contact Persons: Eric Bain-Selbo, [eric.bain-selbo@wku.edu](mailto:eric.bain-selbo@wku.edu), x55744 and Isabel Mukonyora, [bella.mukonyora@wku.edu](mailto:bella.mukonyora@wku.edu), x55745

**1. Identification of proposed course:**

* 1. Course prefix (subject area) and number: RELS 408
  2. Course title: Religion and Ecology
  3. Abbreviated course title: RELIGION AND ECOLOGY
  4. Credit hours and contact hours: 3
  5. Type of course: Seminar
  6. Prerequisites/corequisites: One course in Religious Studies or permission of instructor.
  7. **Course catalog listing:** The study of different religious perspectives on ecology.

**2. Rationale:**

* 1. This course proposal is a response to an international trend whereby universities are developing courses aimed at helping students understand the role of religion in shaping attitudes to the environment. With lessons on ecology selected from disciplines such as philosophy, history, and science, this course will help students develop analytical skills for examining theories relating religion to facts about the destruction of the environment, climate change and related problems.
  2. **Projected enrollment in the proposed course:** 20, based on enrollment numbers in other courses taught in the department at this level and the enrollment in the course when offered as a special topics course.
  3. **Relationship of the proposed course to courses now offered by the department:** This course will make students aware of what different religions say about life and its destruction on Earth. It builds upon the scholarly critiques of different religions, philosophy and science that come from content areas taught in a number of department courses, particularly the “traditions” courses at the 300 level.
  4. **Relationship of the proposed course to courses offered in other departments:** This course will contribute to the Minor in Environmental Studies and WKU’s curricular internationalism. Here are examples of courses that address related topics: Geog 444 Environmental Ethics in Geography; Geog 455 Global Environmental Change; ENV 360 Air Pollution Control; Hist 479 Topics in World History; Folk 340 Peoples and Cultures of Latin America, Folk/AFAM 350 Peoples and Cultures of Africa; and Anth 440 Anthropology of Religion. The proposed course will be distinguished by the focus on religion.
  5. **Relationship of the proposed course to courses offered in other institutions:** This course follows the example of ENVST 307 Yale University’s Forestry and Religious Studies; RELS 389 Tufts University’s Religion and Ecology, RELS 311 University of Toronto’s World Religions and Ecology; RELS 339 University of Florida’s Spiritual Ecology; RELS 296 University of Vermont Religion and Ecology. The American Academy of Religions’ International Forum of Religion and Ecology is involved in getting its members to develop similar courses in as many universities around the world as possible.

**3. Discussion of proposed course:**

**3.1 Students will**

* examine scholarly perspectives of world religions as they pertain to the environment and related issues;
* reflect on religious worldviews that shape attitudes to the environment;
* engage in dialogue with different religious viewpoints relevant to understanding topical debates on climate change;
* link theoretical to experiential modes of learning.
  1. **Content outline:**

**The course will examine**

* the growing number of theories and facts concerning the destruction of the environment;
* modern critiques of religion and science concerned with the preservation of life on planet earth;
* different religious ideas used by scholars to advance learning about the meaning of life on earth;

**3.3** **Student expectations and requirements:**  
 Students will have regular assignments to help them cover a variety of   
 religious texts on religion and the environment. They will also

be required to take part in student-led seminar classes, and to

write research papers.

**3.4** **Tentative texts and course materials:**

*Readings will be selected from the following books:-*

Albanese, Catherine. *Nature Religions in America: From the Algonkian Indians to the*

New Age. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1990.

Apffel-Marglin, F. & Marglin, Stephen A. (eds.) *Decolonizing Knowledge: From*

*Development to Dialogue.* Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1996.

Ba Kader, Abou Bakr Ahmed. *Environmental Protection in Islam.* Washington, DC. Island Press, 1995.

Ball, Ian et.al. *The Earth Beneath: A Critical Guide to Green Theology.* London: SPCK, 1995.

Barnhill, David and Roger Gottlieb, (eds.) *Deep Ecology and World Religions: New Essays on Sacred Ground. Albany, NY:* SUNY, 2001.

Berry Wendell, (ed). *Sex, Economy, Freedom, and Community*. New York: Pantheon, 1993.

Boff, Leonardo. *Cry of the Earth, Cry of the Poor*. Maryknoll, New York: Orbis, 1997.

Buun, Ole and Arne Kalland (eds.) Asian *Perceptions of Nature: A Critical Approach.*   
Richmond Surrey: Nordic Institute of Asian Studies, 1995.

Chapple, Christopher Key & Tucker, Mary Evelyn, eds. *Hinduism and Ecology: The Intersection of Earth, Sky and Water.* Cambridge Mass: Harvard University Press, 2000

Cobb, John B. *Sustainability: Economics, Ecology and Justice*. Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 1992.

Dale, Jamieson (Ed). *A Companion to Environmental Philosophy.* London: Blackwell, 2001.

Goodenough, Ursula. *The Sacred Depths of Nature*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1998.

Gottlieb, Roger, S. (ed). *The Oxford Handbook of Religion and Ecology.* New York: Oxford University Press, 2006.

Kearns, Laurel & Keller, Catherine (Eds). *Ecospirit: Religions and Philosophies for the Earth*. New York: Fordham University Press 2007

Linzey, Andrew. *Animal Theology.* Urbana, III: University of Illinois Press, 1995.

McFague, Sallie. *Life Abundant: Rethinking Theology and Economy for a Planet in Peril.* Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 2001.

\_\_\_\_\_. *Models of God: Theology for an Ecological, Nuclear Age.* Philadelphia: Fortress, 1987.

McGrath, Alister. *The Reenchantment of Nature: The Denial of Religion and the Ecological Crisis.* New York NY: Doubleday, 2002.

McKibben, Bill. *The Comforting Whirlwind: God, Job and the Scale of Creation*. Grand Rapids Michigan: Eerdmans, 1994.

Primavesi, Anne. *Gaia and Climate Change: A Theology of Gift Events.* London and New York: Routledge, Taylor & Francis Group, 2009.

Radford-Reuther, Rosemary. *Gaia and God: An Ecofeminist Theology of Earth Healing.* San Francisco: Harper, 1992.

\_\_\_\_\_. *Integrating Ecofeminisim, Globalization and World Religion*. Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield, 2005.

\_\_\_\_\_. (Ed). *Women Healing Earth: Third World Women on Ecology, Feminism and Religion.* Maryknoll NY: Orbis, 1996.

Russell, Colin. *The Earth, Humanity and God: The Templeton Lectures, Cambridge.* London: UCL Press, 1994.

Southwick, Charles H. *Global Ecology in Human Perspective.*  New York: Oxford University Press, 1996.

Taylor, Bron Raymond. *Ecological Movements: The Global Emergence of Radical and Popular Environmentalism. Albany NY*: State University of New York Press, 1995.

Tucker, Evelyn. *Worldly Wonder: Religions Enter Their Ecological Phase.* Chicago, IL: Open Court, 2003.  
  
\_\_\_\_\_ & Grim, John A (Eds). *Worldviews and Ecology: Religion, Philosophy and the Environment.* Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 1994.

Wallace, Mark. *Christianity and Ecology* eds., Dieter T. Hessel and Rosemary Radford-Reuther, Cambridge Mass: Harvard Press, 2000.

**4. Resources:**

* 1. Library resources: Sufficient.
  2. Computer resources: Sufficient.

**5. Budget implications:**

* 1. Proposed method of staffing: Current, full-time faculty.
  2. Special equipment needed: N/A
  3. Expendable materials needed: N/A
  4. Laboratory materials needed: N/A

**6. Proposed term for implementation:** 201030

**7. Dates of prior committee approvals:**

Religious Studies Program: September 15, 2010

Department of Philosophy and Religion: September 22, 2010

Potter College Curriculum Committee December 2, 2010

Undergraduate Curriculum Committee \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

University Senate \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**Attachment: Bibliography, Library Resources Form**, **Course Inventory Form**

Proposal Date: August 15, 2008

**Potter College of Arts & Letters**

**Department of Philosophy and Religion**

**Proposal to Revise A Program**

**(Action Item)**

Contact Person: Eric Bain-Selbo, [eric.bain-selbo@wku.edu](mailto:eric.bain-selbo@wku.edu), 745-5744

**1. Identification of program:**

* 1. Current program reference number: 447
  2. Current program title: Minor in Religious Studies
  3. Credit hours: 21

**2. Identification of the proposed program changes:** There are four changes being proposed: 1) dividing the “Traditions” requirement into two categories, with students being required to take at least one course from each category; 2) adding courses outside the program to serve as “Electives” for the minor (though requiring that at least 6 hours of electives be in RELS courses); 3) adding RELS 311 to the “Religious Texts” category; 4) deleting the wording in the elective category that pertains to the study of languages.

**3. Detailed program description:**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Current Program | Proposed Program |
| The minor in religious studies (reference number 447) requires a minimum of 21 hours. At least 12 hours must be taken in courses numbered 300 or above.  I. Religious Texts (3 hours)  RELS 100: The New Testament OR  RELS 101: The Old Testament/Hebrew Scriptures OR  RELS 300: The Life of Jesus OR  RELS 301: Life and Teaching of Paul  II. Traditions (9 hours)  RELS 302: Buddhist Religious Traditions  RELS 303: Hindu Religious Traditions  RELS 304: Judaic Religious Traditions  RELS 305: Christian Religious Traditions  RELS 306: Islamic Religious Traditions  RELS 307: Native American Religious Traditions  RELS 308: East Asian Religious Traditions  III. Electives (9 hours)  Electives may be selected from among the total offerings in RELS, **including additional courses in I-II and up to 6 hours of departmentally-approved language courses and up to 3 hours of departmentally-approved study abroad courses.** | The minor in religious studies (reference number 447) requires a minimum of 21 hours. At least 12 hours must be taken in courses numbered 300 or above.  I. Religious Texts (3 hours)  RELS 100: The New Testament OR  RELS 101: The Old Testament/Hebrew Scriptures OR  RELS 300: The Life of Jesus OR  RELS 301: Life and Teaching of Paul **OR**  **RELS 311: The Qur’an**  II. Traditions (9 hours; **at least one course from each category**)  **Category A**  RELS 302: Buddhist Religious Traditions  RELS 303: Hindu Religious Traditions  RELS 307: Native American Religious Traditions  RELS 308: East Asian Religious Traditions  **Category B**  RELS 304: Judaic Religious Traditions  RELS 305: Christian Religious Traditions  RELS 306: Islamic Religious Traditions  III. Electives (9 hours; **at least 6 hours must be in RELS courses**)  Electives may be selected from among the total offerings in RELS. **Electives also may be selected from the following pre-approved list (or other courses approved by the Department Head) as well as from departmentally-approved language and study abroad courses.**  **ANTH 446: Anthropology of Religion**  **ART 316: Medieval Art and Architecture**  **ART 407: Islamic Art and Architecture**  **ENG 396: Mythology**  **ENG 487: Dante**  **HIST 318: Age of the Reformation**  **HIST 407: The Crusades: West Meets East**  **PHIL 310: Science, Religion and Contemporary Life**  **PHIL 329: Concepts of God, Good and Evil**  **PHIL 341: Reason and the Divine in Hellenism and**  **Late Antiquity**  **PHIL 342: Renaissance and Renewal in the Middle**  **Ages**  **PSY 485: Psychology of Religion**  **SOCL 322: Religion in Society** |

**4. Rationale for the proposed program change:** 1) There has been a concern in the program that students could complete the requirements for the minor without substantively engaging religions outside the Abrahamic traditions. The proposed change to the “Traditions” category alleviates that concern by requiring students to study at least one tradition or set of traditions outside the Abrahamic traditions. 2) In many ways, religious studies is intrinsically an interdisciplinary field of study. The change to our “Electives” category reflects this fact, allowing students to use courses from across the campus to complete their program. 3) RELS 311 was developed during the last academic year. The faculty in the Religious Studies program has determined that it can help students develop the skills of textual analysis that are the goal of the “Religious Texts” category of the Religious Studies curriculum. Thus, we propose that the course be included as an option in that category. 4) The wording about the study of language is a carry over from years ago. We do not want to discourage appropriate language work offered by the department, so we want to eliminate the restriction to six hours.

**5. Proposed term for implementation and special provisions (if applicable):** 201130

**6. Dates of prior committee approvals:**

Religious Studies Program: September 1, 2010

Department of Philosophy and Religion September 22, 2010

Potter College Curriculum Committee December 2, 2010

Undergraduate Curriculum Committee \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

University Senate \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**Attachment: Program Inventory Form**

Proposal Date: August 15, 2010

**Potter College of Arts & Letters**

**Department of Philosophy and Religion**

**Proposal to Revise A Program**

**(Action Item)**

Contact Person: Eric Bain-Selbo, [eric.bain-selbo@wku.edu](mailto:eric.bain-selbo@wku.edu), 745-5744

**1. Identification of program:**

* 1. Current program reference number: 769
  2. Current program title: Major in Religious Studies
  3. Credit hours: 30

**2. Identification of the proposed program changes:** There are four changes being proposed: 1) dividing the “Traditions” requirement into two categories, with students being required to take at least one course from each category; 2) adding courses outside the program to serve as “Electives” for the major (though requiring that at least 9 hours of electives be in RELS courses); 3) adding RELS 311 to the “Religious Texts” category; 4) deleting the wording in the elective category that pertains to the study of languages.

**3. Detailed program description:**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Current Program | Proposed Program |
| The major in religious studies (reference number 769) requires a minimum of 30 semester hours and leads to a Bachelor of Arts degree. At least 15 hours must be in courses numbered 300 or above, with at least 6 hours at the 400-level. A minor or second major is required.  I. Religious Texts (3 hours)  RELS 100: The New Testament OR  RELS 101: The Old Testament/Hebrew Scriptures OR  RELS 300: The Life of Jesus OR  RELS 301: Life and Teaching of Paul  II. Traditions (9 hours)  RELS 302: Buddhist Religious Traditions  RELS 303: Hindu Religious Traditions  RELS 304: Judaic Religious Traditions  RELS 305: Christian Religious Traditions  RELS 306: Islamic Religious Traditions  RELS 307: Native American Religious Traditions  RELS 308: East Asian Religious Traditions  III. Senior Seminar (3 hours)  RELS 496  IV. Electives (15 hours)  Electives may be selected from among the total offerings in RELS, **including additional courses in I-II and up to 6 hours of departmentally-approved language courses and up to 6 hours of departmentally-approved study abroad courses.** | The major in religious studies (reference number 769) requires a minimum of 30 semester hours and leads to a Bachelor of Arts degree. At least 15 hours must be in courses numbered 300 or above, with at least 6 hours at the 400-level. A minor or second major is required.  I. Religious Texts (3 hours)  RELS 100: The New Testament OR  RELS 101: The Old Testament/Hebrew Scriptures OR  RELS 300: The Life of Jesus OR  RELS 301: Life and Teaching of Paul **OR**  **RELS 311: The Qur’an**  II. Traditions (9 hours; **at least one course from each category**)  **Category A**  RELS 302: Buddhist Religious Traditions  RELS 303: Hindu Religious Traditions  RELS 307: Native American Religious Traditions  RELS 308: East Asian Religious Traditions  **Category B**  RELS 304: Judaic Religious Traditions  RELS 305: Christian Religious Traditions  RELS 306: Islamic Religious Traditions  III. Senior Seminar (3 hours)  RELS 496  IV. Electives (15 hours; **at least 9 hours must be in RELS courses**)  Electives may be selected from among the total offerings in RELS. **Electives also may be selected from the following pre-approved list (or other courses approved by the Department Head) as well as from departmentally-approved language and study abroad courses.**  **ANTH 446: Anthropology of Religion**  **ART 316: Medieval Art and Architecture**  **ART 407: Islamic Art and Architecture**  **ENG 396: Mythology**  **ENG 487: Dante**  **HIST 318: Age of the Reformation**  **HIST 407: The Crusades: West Meets East**  **PHIL 310: Science, Religion and Contemporary Life**  **PHIL 329: Concepts of God, Good and Evil**  **PHIL 341: Reason and the Divine in Hellenism and**  **Late Antiquity**  **PHIL 342: Renaissance and Renewal in the Middle**  **Ages**  **PSY 485: Psychology of Religion**  **SOCL 322: Religion in Society** |

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**5. Proposed term for implementation and special provisions (if applicable):** 201130

**6. Dates of prior committee approvals:**

Religious Studies Program September 1, 2010

Department of Philosophy and Religion September 22, 2010

Potter College Curriculum Committee December 2, 2010

Undergraduate Curriculum Committee \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

University Senate \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**Attachment: Program Inventory Form**