

**Assurance of Student Learning
2019-2020**

Potter College of Arts and Letters

Department of Philosophy and Religious Studies

769 – Religious Studies

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Use this page to list learning outcomes, measurements, and summarize results for your program. Detailed information must be completed in the subsequent pages.

Student Learning Outcome 1: Students will be able to effectively collect and analyze evidence in the field of religious studies.

Instrument 1 | Direct: Analysis of Senior Seminar papers

Based on your results, circle or highlight whether the program met the goal Student Learning Outcome 1.

Met

Not Met

Student Learning Outcome 2: Students will be able to demonstrate effective written communication skills appropriate to religious studies.

Instrument 1 | Direct: Analysis of Senior Seminar papers

Based on your results, circle or highlight whether the program met the goal Student Learning Outcome 2.

Met

Not Met

Student Learning Outcome 3: Students will demonstrate global and/or intercultural learning in their written communication.

Instrument 1 | Direct: Analysis of Senior Seminar papers

Based on your results, circle or highlight whether the program met the goal Student Learning Outcome 3.

Met

Not Met

Program Summary (Briefly summarize the action and follow up items from your detailed responses on subsequent pages.)

In AY 2019–2020, 86% of Religious Studies Senior Seminar artifacts achieved a 3.5 out of 4.0 in all three Student Learning Outcomes. To establish continuity in the ASL process, we will use the same artifacts from the same course throughout AY 2020–2021, and the same individuals will carry out the assessment. We will conduct assessment at the end of the Spring semester rather than the beginning of the Fall semester. Our foci in the next assessment cycle are to incorporate peer-review to strengthen the conclusions students draw (SLO 1); to orient students toward high-quality online resources, so that they do not overly rely on hard copies, which may be infeasible amid the COVID-19 pandemic (SLO 2); and to revise the rubric for the subcategory “Curiosity” (SLO 3).

Student Learning Outcome 1

Student Learning Outcome	Students will be able to effectively collect and analyze evidence in the field of religious studies.		
Measurement Instrument 1	Direct: Analysis of Senior Seminar papers		
Criteria for Student Success	Drawing from AAC&U VALUES rubric for Inquiry and Analysis, criteria for student success is capstone level or upper milestone level with respect to topic selection, existing knowledge, research, and/or views, analysis, and conclusion.		
Program Success Target for this Measurement	80%	Percent of Program Achieving Target	<u>86%</u>
Methods	Direct: Artifacts from the senior seminar were collected from students in the course. (N=7) All identifiers were then removed. The papers were split among two full-time faculty so that each paper was read by two different reviewers. In the event there was a notable difference in the score between the two faculty members, a third faculty member read it and the score was average between the three readers.		
Based on your results, highlight whether the program met the goal Student Learning Outcome 1.		Met	Not Met
Actions			
In AY 2019–2020, 86% of Religious Studies Senior Seminar students achieved a 3.5 out of 4.0 in all four aspects of SLO 1. The range of grades was 2.88 to 3.83. Nevertheless, one trend was that students were better in their analyses than their conclusions, so we are focusing this year on students’ ability to contextualize their research findings, particularly what they have demonstrated and where their further research could take them, without overstating or underappreciating their results. To facilitate this, we will incorporate peer-review, since others are often better able to grasp the significance of one’s conclusions; peer-review will be submitted along with final papers.			
Follow-Up			
To establish continuity in the ASL process, we will use the same artifacts from the same course throughout AY 2020–2021, and the same individuals will carry out the assessment. We will read the peer-review reports along with the seminar papers in an attempt to ascertain whether the peer-review process facilitated nuanced extrapolations.			
Next Assessment Cycle Plan			
We will conduct assessment at the end of the Spring semester rather than the beginning of the Fall semester.			

Rubric for Student Learning Outcome 1: Students will be able to effectively collect and analyze evidence in the field of religious studies.

	Capstone (4)	Upper Milestone (3)	Lower Milestone (2)	Benchmark (1)
Topic selection	Identifies a creative, focused, and manageable topic within the study of religion that addresses potentially significant aspects of the topic.	Identifies a focused and manageable/doable topic within the study of religion that appropriately addresses relevant aspects of the topic.	Identifies a topic within the study of religion that while manageable/doable, is too narrowly focused and leaves out relevant aspects of the topic.	Identifies a topic within the study of religion that is far too general and wide-ranging as to be manageable and doable.
Existing Knowledge, Research, and/or Views	Synthesizes in-depth information from relevant sources representing various points of view/approaches.	Presents in-depth information from relevant sources representing various points of view/approaches.	Presents information from relevant sources representing limited points of view/approaches.	Presents information from irrelevant sources representing limited points of view/approaches.
Analysis	Organizes and synthesizes evidence to reveal insightful patterns, differences, or similarities related to focus.	Organizes evidence to reveal important patterns, differences, or similarities related to focus.	Organizes evidence, but the organization is not effective in revealing important patterns, differences, or similarities.	Lists evidence, but it is not organized and/or is unrelated to focus.
Conclusion	States a conclusion that is a logical extrapolation from the inquiry findings.	The conclusion arises specifically from and responds specifically to the inquiry findings.	States a general conclusion that, because it is so general, also applies beyond the scope of the inquiry findings.	States an ambiguous, illogical, or unsupported conclusion from inquiry findings.

Student Learning Outcome 2

Student Learning Outcome	Students will be able to demonstrate effective written communication skills appropriate to religious studies.		
Measurement Instrument 1	Direct: Analysis of Senior Seminar papers		
Criteria for Student Success	Drawing from AAC&U VALUES rubric for Written Communication, criteria for student success is capstone level or upper milestone level with respect to content development, sources and evidence, and control of syntax and mechanics.		
Program Success Target for this Measurement	80%	Percent of Program Achieving Target	<u>100%</u>
Methods	Direct: Artifacts from the senior seminar were collected from students in the course. (N=7) All identifiers were then removed. The papers were split among two full-time faculty so that each paper was read by two different reviewers. In the event there was a notable difference in the score between the two faculty members, a third faculty member read it and the score was average between the three readers.		
Actions	In AY 2019–2020, 86% of Religious Studies Senior Seminar students achieved a 3.5 out of 4.0 for in all three aspects of SLO 2. 100% achieved at least a 3. The range was 3.00–3.83. Regarding “sources and evidence,” the COVID-19 crisis reveals that we have relied too heavily on hard copies in the library’s Reference and Reserve sections. We are therefore retooling the Senior Seminar paper assignment so that students have better access to—and understanding of—high-quality, credible, and relevant <i>online</i> resources. Also, we are now offering the Senior Seminar each semester rather than once per year.		
Follow-Up	To establish continuity in the ASL process, we will use the same artifacts from the same course throughout AY 2020–2021, and the same individuals will carry out the assessment. For SLO 2, the focus will be on the quality and quantity of online resources cited in students’ Senior Seminar papers. The artifacts will remain anonymous, but we will also ascertain whether there is a notable difference in achievement between students taking the course in the Fall or the Spring.		
Next Assessment Cycle Plan	We will conduct assessment at the end of the Spring semester rather than the beginning of the Fall semester.		

Rubric for Student Learning Outcome 2: Students will be able to demonstrate effective written communication skills appropriate to religious studies.

	Capstone (4)	Upper Milestone (3)	Lower Milestone (2)	Benchmark (1)
Content Development	Uses appropriate, relevant, and compelling content to illustrate mastery of the subject, conveying the writer's understanding, and this shapes the whole work.	Uses appropriate, relevant, and compelling content to explore ideas within the context of the discipline and this shapes the whole work.	Uses appropriate and relevant content to develop and explore ideas through most of the work.	Uses appropriate and relevant content to develop simple ideas in some parts of the work.
Sources and Evidence	Demonstrates skillful use of high-quality, credible, relevant sources to develop ideas that are appropriate to philosophy and genre of the writing.	Demonstrates consistent use of credible, relevant sources to support ideas that are situated within philosophy and genre of the writing.	Demonstrates an attempt to use credible and/or relevant sources to support ideas that are appropriate for philosophy and genre of the writing.	Demonstrates an attempt to use sources to support ideas in the writing.
Control of Syntax and Mechanics	Uses graceful language that skillfully communicates meaning to readers with clarity and fluency, and is virtually error-free.	Uses straightforward language that generally conveys meaning to readers. The writing has few errors.	Uses language that generally conveys meaning to readers with clarity, although writing may include some errors.	Uses language that sometimes impedes meaning because of errors in usage.

Student Learning Outcome 3

Student Learning Outcome	Students will demonstrate global and/or intercultural learning in their written communication.		
Measurement Instrument 1	Direct: Analysis of Senior Seminar papers		
Criteria for Student Success	Drawing from AAC&U VALUES rubric for intercultural knowledge and competence and global learning, criteria for student success is capstone level or upper milestone level with respect to knowledge of cultural worldview frameworks, perspective taking, and curiosity.		
Program Success Target for this Measurement	80%	Percent of Program Achieving Target	<u>86%</u>
Methods	Direct: Artifacts from upper level seminars were collected from students in the course. All seniors in the course who were majors were included in the initial sample (N=7). All identifiers were then removed. The papers were split among two full-time faculty so that each paper was read by two different reviewers. In the event there was a notable difference in the score between the two faculty members, a third faculty member read it and the score was average between the three readers.		
Actions			
In AY 2019–2020, 86% of Religious Studies Senior Seminar students achieved a 3.5 out of 4.0 in all three aspects of SLO 3. Range was 2.83-4.00. For SLO 3, the lowest score was in the “curiosity” category. The language of that rubric stands in need of slight revision. The Senior Seminar complexifies the work of comparing religious traditions. The current rubric rightly extols students’ knowledge of complex cultural relations, yet the rubric rewards students for asking complex questions. Conversely, the course itself revolves around generating complex answers to simpler questions (e.g., with respect to C, might A and B be less similar than is often presumed? or vis-à-vis Z, might X and Y be more similar than is typically granted?). We suspect as well that this year’s relatively lower scores in SLO 3’s “curiosity” may correlate with the relatively lower scores in SLO 1’s “conclusion.” In other words, students may appear to overreach for conclusions at times, but that may partly be a function of our own assessment strategy.			
Follow-Up			
To establish continuity in the ASL process, we will use the same artifacts from the same course throughout AY 2020–2021, and the same individuals will carry out the assessment. These individuals will draft revisions to the ‘Curiosity’ rubric and present them to the department during Fall 2020. In any case, we will investigate the extent to which SLO 1’s ‘conclusion’ scores appear to correlate with SLO 3’s ‘curiosity’ scores in the ensuing assessment cycle.			
Next Assessment Cycle Plan			
We will conduct assessment at the end of the Spring semester rather than the beginning of the Fall semester.			

Rubric for Student Learning Outcome 3: Students will demonstrate global and/or intercultural learning in their written communication.

	Capstone (4)	Upper Milestone (3)	Lower Milestone (2)	Benchmark (1)
Perspective Taking	Evaluates and applies diverse perspectives to complex subjects in the face of multiple and even conflicting positions.	Synthesizes other perspectives (such as cultural, disciplinary, and ethical).	Identifies and explains multiple perspectives (such as cultural, disciplinary, and ethical).	Identifies multiple perspectives while maintaining a value preference for own positioning (such as cultural, disciplinary, and ethical).

Knowledge of cultural frameworks	Demonstrates sophisticated understanding of the complexity of elements important to other cultures and contexts in relation to history, values, politics, communication styles, economy, or beliefs and practices.	Demonstrates adequate understanding of the complexity of elements important to other cultures and contexts in relation to history, values, politics, communication styles, economy, or beliefs and practices.	Demonstrates partial understanding of the complexity of elements important to other cultures and contexts in relation to history, values, politics, communication styles, economy, or beliefs and practices.	Demonstrates surface understanding of the complexity of elements important to other cultures and contexts in relation to history, values, politics, communication styles, economy, or beliefs and practices.
Curiosity	Writing asks complex questions about other cultures, seeks out and articulates answers to these questions that reflect an understanding of different cultural or global perspectives.	Writing asks deeper questions about other cultures and contexts and seeks out answers to these questions.	Writing asks simple or surface questions about other cultures and contexts.	Writing reflects minimal interest in learning more about other cultures and contexts.