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| **Assurance of Student Learning Report**  **2021-2022** | |
| *PCAL* | *History* |
| *Religious Studies (769)* | |
| *James Barker* | |

***Is this an online program***?  Yes  No

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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:** | | | |
| **Instrument 1** | **Direct: Papers from upper-level coursework including Senior Seminar** | | |
| **Based on your results, check whether the program met the goal Student Learning Outcome 1.** | | **Met** | **Not Met** |
| **Student Learning Outcome 2:** | | | |
| **Instrument 1** | **Direct: Papers from upper-level coursework including Senior Seminar** | | |
| **Based on your results, check whether the program met the goal Student Learning Outcome 2.** | | **Met** | **Not Met** |
| **Student Learning Outcome 3:** | | | |
| **Instrument 1** | **Direct: Papers from upper-level coursework including Senior Seminar** | | |
| **Based on your results, check 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 2020–2021 we met our goals for SLOs 2 and 3 but narrowly missed our goal for SLO 1. In AY 2021–2022 we were proud to demonstrate proficiency in all three SLOs, as we had done in AY 2019–2020. Last year we determined to broaden the scope of assessment artifacts beyond Senior Seminar final papers. Accordingly, this year we included papers from required, upper-level courses in a specific world religion. In so doing, we obviously and practically benefited by gaining a wider range of artifacts. A most fortuitous byproduct was that in some cases the assessment process itself provided new ideas for constructing various assignments to enhance students’ analytical skills, writing style, and global/intercultural understanding. These ‘best practices’ can be shared more widely with our colleagues, especially since we will have a new colleague in AY 2022–2023. | | | |

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| **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: Senior Seminar final paper and papers written in upper-level “Traditions” courses, viz. Christianity and Islam**  As the capstone course for the major, Senior Seminar (RELS 496) should be able to measure students’ ability to collect and analyze evidence. The same applies to intensive courses in one world religion. | | | | |
| **Criteria for Student Success** | Drawing from AAC&U VALUES rubric for Inquiry and analysis, successful students will have achieved capstone level (4/4) or upper milestone level (3/4) with respect to topic selection; existing knowledge, research, and/or views; analysis; and conclusion. | | | | |
| **Program Success Target for this Measurement** | | **80%** of students will have earned a 3/4 or 4/4 on the rubric for collecting and analyzing evidence. | **Percent of Program Achieving Target** | 100% of students earned a 3/4 or 4/4 on the rubric for collecting and analyzing evidence. | |
| **Methods** | Artifacts from the Senior Seminar as well as upper-level courses in Christianity and Islam were collected. All seniors who were majors were included in the sample (*n=5;* >20% of students enrolled in the program). All papers were then anonymized and independently assessed by two full-time faculty members, whose figures were averaged. There were no substantial differences between the two, so a third reviewer was not required. | | | | |
| **Based on your results, highlight whether the program met the goal Student Learning Outcome 1.** | | | | **Met** | **Not Met** |
| **Actions** (Describe the decision-making process and actions for program improvement. The actions should include a timeline.) | | | | | |
| In recent years we have focused almost exclusively on Senior Seminar papers for assessment. While these remain important artifacts, this year we broadened our scope to papers written in upper-level coursework. The diversity among artifacts proved beneficial to the assessment process. In AY 2021–2022, 100% of Religious Studies seniors achieved a 3 or 4 in each subcategory of SLO 1, thereby surpassing the program’s goal of 80%. The average for SLO 1 was 3.67 with a range of 3.0–3.94. All five students met the department’s goal, a welcome improvement from last year’s narrowly unmet goal (71% proficiency in SLO 1). This year, instructors intentionally aided students in choosing manageable topics and neither overstating nor understating their conclusions. We had intended to incorporate peer-review processes for students to work in groups and offer suggestions for the collection and analysis of evidence. Yet we were unable to implement this strategy widely, since a number of courses continued to be taught online due to the COVID pandemic. However, our longitudinal data suggest that instructors’ course design and direct instruction sufficiently equip students to achieve SLO 1. | | | | | |
| **Follow-Up** (Provide your timeline for follow-up. If follow-up has occurred, describe how the actions above have resulted in program improvement.) | | | | | |
| Next year’s assessment will continue collecting artifacts from a wider range of upper-level courses in the program. Faculty members will assess whether students maintained achievement in collecting and analyzing evidence, particularly the ability to organize and synthesize data. If peer-review strategies are implemented, then faculty will attempt to determine the extent to which these strategies strengthen the analytical components of learners’ written work. | | | | | |
| **Next Assessment Cycle Plan** (Please describe your assessment plan timetable for this outcome) | | | | | |
| We plan to conduct assessment again at the end of the Spring 2023 semester. The current program coordinator, James Barker, will be on sabbatical. Therefore, the new program coordinator, Sophia Arjana, will be responsible for collecting and providing data and information. We plan to use Senior Seminar papers when possible, but we plan to continue using papers from upper-level courses, particularly those in our “Traditions” category (e.g., Judaism, Christianity, Islam, Confucianism, or Daoism). | | | | | |

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

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|  | 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 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 unsupportable conclusion from inquiry findings. |

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| **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: Senior Seminar final paper and papers written in upper-level “Traditions” courses, viz. Christianity and Islam**  As the capstone course for the major, Senior Seminar (RELS 496) should be able to measure students’ ability to collect and analyze evidence. The same applies to intensive courses in one word religion. | | | | |
| **Criteria for Student Success** | Drawing from AAC&U VALUES rubric for Inquiry and analysis, successful students will have achieved capstone level (4/4) or upper milestone level (3/4) with respect to content development; sources and evidence; and control of syntax and mechanics. | | | | |
| **Program Success Target for this Measurement** | | **80%** of students will have earned a 3/4 or 4/4 on the rubric for written communication | **Percent of Program Achieving Target** | **80%** of students earned a 3/4 or 4/4 on the rubric for written communication. | |
| **Methods** | Artifacts from the Senior Seminar as well as upper-level courses in Christianity and Islam were collected. All seniors who were majors were included in the sample (*n=5;* >20% of students enrolled in the program). All papers were then anonymized and independently assessed by two full-time faculty members, whose figures were averaged. There were no substantial differences between the two, so a third reviewer was not required. | | | | |
| **Based on your results, circle or highlight whether the program met the goal Student Learning Outcome 2.** | | | | **Met** | **Not Met** |
| **Actions** (Describe the decision-making process and actions planned for program improvement. The actions should include a timeline.) | | | | | |
| In AY 2021–2022, 80% of Religious Studies majors achieved a 3 or 4 in each subcategory of SLO 2, thereby equaling the program’s goal. The average for SLO 2 was 3.58 with a range of 2.88–3.96. Recent assessments have highlighted the need to facilitate access to, and understanding of, high-quality, credible, and relevant sources. The COVID pandemic has raised that degree of difficulty, since so many students rely on online sources, and students typically have a more difficult time discerning reliability online. In the Senior Seminar, the instructor has devoted class time to cultivating this type of intellectual discernment. In other upper-level coursework, instructors have not only curated sources for students but also instructed learners in the various methodologies deployed and their concomitant strengths and weaknesses. The latter focus on methodology has greatly enhanced students’ written communication. | | | | | |
| **Follow-Up** (Provide your timeline for follow-up. If follow-up has occurred, describe how the actions above have resulted in program improvement.) | | | | | |
| Next year’s assessment will continue gathering artifacts from a wider scope of upper-level Religious Studies coursework. We will maintain vigilance vis-à-vis students’ use of reputable online sources but also encourage faculty members to highlight the theoretical and methodological approaches underlying the sources students use. | | | | | |
| **Next Assessment Cycle Plan** (Please describe your assessment plan timetable for this outcome) | | | | | |
| We plan to conduct assessment again at the end of the Spring 2023 semester. The current program coordinator, James Barker, will be on sabbatical. Therefore, the new program coordinator, Sophia Arjana, will be responsible for collecting and providing data and information. We plan to use Senior Seminar papers when possible, but we plan to continue using papers from upper-level courses, particularly those in our “Traditions” category (e.g., Judaism, Christianity, Islam, Confucianism, or Daoism). | | | | | |

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

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|  | 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, relevent, 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. |

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| **Student Learning Outcome 3** | | | | | |
| **Student Learning Outcome** | Students will be able to demonstrate global and/or intercultural learning in their written communication. | | | | |
| **Measurement Instrument 1** | **Direct: Senior Seminar final paper and papers written in upper-level “Traditions” courses, viz. Christianity and Islam**  As the capstone course for the major, Senior Seminar (RELS 496) should be able to measure students’ ability to collect and analyze evidence. The same applies to intensive courses in one word religion. | | | | |
| **Criteria for Student Success** | Drawing from AAC&U VALUES rubric for Inquiry and analysis, successful students will have achieved capstone level (4/4) or upper milestone level (3/4) with respect to perspective taking; knowledge of cultural frameworks; and intellectual curiosity. | | | | |
| **Program Success Target for this Measurement** | | **80%** of students will have earned a 3/4 or 4/4 on the rubric for global and/or intercultural learning. | **Percent of Program Achieving Target** | **80%** of students earned a 3/4 or 4/4 on the rubric for global and/or intercultural learning. | |
| **Methods** | Artifacts from the Senior Seminar as well as upper-level courses in Christianity and Islam were collected. All seniors who were majors were included in the sample (*n=5;* >20% of students enrolled in the program). All papers were then anonymized and independently assessed by two full-time faculty members, whose figures were averaged. There were no substantial differences between the two, so a third reviewer was not required. | | | | |
| **Based on your results, circle or highlight whether the program met the goal Student Learning Outcome 3.** | | | | **Met** | **Not Met** |
| **Actions** (Describe the decision-making process and actions for program improvement. The actions should include a timeline.) | | | | | |
| In AY 2021–2022, 80% of Religious Studies majors achieved a 3 or 4 in each subcategory of SLO 3, thereby equaling the program’s goal. The average for SLO 3 was 3.48 with a range of 2.5–3.83. In AY 2019–2020, we asked whether students might be overreaching in their conclusions (based on SLO 1) because they were asking too complicated a question (based on SLO 3). However, those concerns have been alleviated by quantitative and qualitative assessment in both AY 2020–2021 and AY 2021–2022. | | | | | |
| **Follow-Up** (Provide your timeline for follow-up. If follow-up has occurred, describe how the actions above have resulted in program improvement.) | | | | | |
| Next year’s assessment will continue gathering artifacts from a wider scope of upper-level Religious Studies coursework. If artifacts from some courses consistently yield slightly higher milestones compared to other courses, then faculty will convene to share best practices. | | | | | |
| **Next Assessment Cycle Plan** (Please describe your assessment plan timetable for this outcome) | | | | | |
| We plan to conduct assessment again at the end of the Spring 2023 semester. The current program coordinator, James Barker, will be on sabbatical. Therefore, the new program coordinator, Sophia Arjana, will be responsible for collecting and providing data and information. We plan to use Senior Seminar papers when possible, but we plan to continue using papers from upper-level courses, particularly those in our “Traditions” category (e.g., Judaism, Christianity, Islam, Confucianism, or Daoism). | | | | | |

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

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|  | 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. |

