



ACADEMIC AFFAIRS COMMITTEE

November 6, 2026

ACADEMIC PROGRAM SUSPENSION

REQUEST:

Approval for academic program suspensions for: Religious Studies (Bachelor of Arts)-769.

FACTS:

The Faculty have made the decision regarding closing admissions to the Religious Studies (Bachelor of Arts) program due to low or declining enrollment. History of Religion concentration within the History Major was created to draw on the disciplinary expertise of both the History and Religious Studies faculty. The Academic Program Coordinator, Department Chair, Dean, and Provost support this program suspension decision. WKU will continue to support current students through completion of their program.

BUDGETARY IMPLICATIONS:

Closing these academic programs to new admissions will have a neutral impact on the University Budget because of the efficiencies created by greater utilization of faculty in higher demand programs.

RECOMMENDATION & IMPLEMENTATION DATE:

President Timothy C. Caboni recommends approval of the above listed academic program suspension to be implemented Spring 2027.

MOTION:

Approval to suspend **Religious Studies (Bachelor of Arts)-769** with implementation in Spring 2027.

769: RELIGIOUS STUDIES, BACHELOR OF ARTS

In Workflow

- 1. HIST Approval (audra.jennings@wku.edu)
- 2. AR Dean (merrall.price@wku.edu)
- 3. Provost (robert.fischer@wku.edu; rheanna.plemons@wku.edu; crissy.priddy@wku.edu)
- 4. SACSCOC (rheanna.plemons@wku.edu; crissy.priddy@wku.edu)
- 5. Board of Regents
- 6. CPE (rheanna.plemons@wku.edu)
- 7. Program Inventory (jessica.dorris@wku.edu; jennifer.hammonds@wku.edu)

Approval Path

- 1. 2026-07-30T21:26:30Z
Audra Jennings (audra.jennings): Rollback to Initiator
- 2. 2026-07-30T21:28:04Z
Audra Jennings (audra.jennings): Approved for HIST Approval
- 3. 2026-07-31T12:55:01Z
Merrall Price (merrall.price): Rollback to HIST Approval for AR Dean
- 4. 2026-07-31T15:30:56Z
Audra Jennings (audra.jennings): Approved for HIST Approval
- 5. 2026-07-31T15:59:39Z
Merrall Price (merrall.price): Approved for AR Dean
- 6. 2026-08-13T16:33:10Z
Rheanna Plemons (rheanna.plemons): Approved for Provost
- 7. 2026-09-23T03:00:35Z
Rheanna Plemons (rheanna.plemons): Approved for SACSCOC

History

- 1. May 25, 2021 by Rheanna Plemons (rheanna.plemons)
- 2. Jul 7, 2021 by Jessica Dorris (jessica.dorris)
- 3. Sep 27, 2021 by Jennifer Hammonds (jennifer.hammonds)
- 4. Jul 20, 2022 by Ryan Wilson (ryan.wilson)
- 5. Jun 30, 2023 by Merrall Price (merrall.price)
- 6. Jun 5, 2024 by Audra Jennings (audra.jennings)
- 7. Jul 25, 2024 by Ryan Wilson (ryan.wilson)

Date Submitted: 2026-07-30T21:27:30Z

Viewing: 769 : Religious Studies, Bachelor of Arts

Last approved: Thu, 25 Jul 2024 18:41:42 GMT

Last edit: 2026-07-31T15:30:44Z

Changes proposed by: adr86607

Proposed Action

Active

Contact Person

Name	Email	Phone
Audra Jennings	audra.jennings@wku.edu	2707454665

Term of Implementation

2026-2027

Program Reference Number

769

Review Type

Expedited

Academic Level

Undergraduate

Program Type

Major

Degree Types

Bachelor of Arts

Department

History

College

Arts & Letters

Program Name (eg. Biology)

Religious Studies, Bachelor of Arts

Will this program have concentrations?

No

CIP Code

38.0201 - Religion/Religious Studies.

Will this program lead to teacher certification?

No

Delivery Mode**Is 25% or more of this program offered at a location other than main campus?**

No

Is 50% or more of this program offered by distance education (online asynchronous, online synchronous, connected classrooms, etc.)?

No

Do you plan to offer 100% of this program online?

No

If no, enter the percentage of the program that will be taught online.

10%

Do you plan to offer 100% of this program face-to-face?

Yes

Do you plan to offer at least 25% of this program as a direct assessment competency-based educational program?

No

Rationale**Rationale for the program proposal?**

The Religious Studies program and faculty joined the Department of History in July 2021. Since that time, the faculty of the Department of History, including Religious Studies program faculty, have been discussing curriculum, program structure and sustainability, recruitment, and overall department organization. The faculty of the Department of History met via Zoom on 24 September 2025 to consider how we might create a more sustainable future for Religious Studies at WKU. Twenty-one members of the department's faculty attended the meeting.

The department determined to take two steps: 1) Submit a program revision proposal creating a History of Religion concentration in the History major, which will draw on the disciplinary expertise of both our History and Religious Studies faculty, and 2) Close the Religious Studies major after approval of the above revision has accepted at all levels.

This approach will ensure that students continue to have the opportunity to pursue Religious Studies at the major and minor level, while fully integrating Religious Studies into the History BA program.

The faculty voted (21-0) in favor the following motion:

Close the Religious Studies major contingent upon the approval at all levels of the revision of the History BA Program adding a History of Religion Concentration.

The revised History Major which includes a concentration in History of Religion, drawing on both Religious Studies courses and History courses, received full approval at the end of the 2025-2026 academic year.

This change will allow us to redeploy and refocus existing faculty course rotations to support growth areas within the department and several new initiatives with strong potential for growth, particularly for engaging non-traditional learners and those outside of our immediate recruitment area.

No faculty or staff will lose jobs as a result of this change. In fact, our aim with this revision is develop stronger course enrollments, engage new audiences, and eliminate the need for faculty to teach courses out of load and for administrators to cancel under-enrolled courses.

Religious Studies program faculty will continue to teach Religious Studies courses that will serve the History of Religion concentration in the History BA, the Religious Studies minor, and general education. They will also begin to offer religious history courses for our growing History MA. Moreover, we are in conversations about combining other programs and developing still others to create interdisciplinary programs that will also draw on Religious Studies faculty members' expertise. Integrating the Religious Studies BA into the History BA will allow the department to eliminate, after the teach out, courses such as the Religious Studies Senior Seminar and redirect faculty time toward growing enrollment in the History of Religion concentration of the History BA and our new online option for the History BA, meeting the demands of our growing MA, and supporting new growth areas.

See attached documents for additional detail.

Additional Attachments

Final Teach-Out-Rotation-BAReligious Studies.docx
Final-RELS-Teachout-Plan-8-2026.docx

Reviewer Comments

Audra Jennings (audra.jennings) (Thu, 30 Jul 2026 21:26:30 GMT): Rollback: Attachments

Merrall Price (merrall.price) (Fri, 31 Jul 2026 12:55:01 GMT): Rollback: As requested.

Key: 172

EMERITUS APPOINTMENTS

REQUEST:

Approval of faculty emeritus status for Dr. Darlene Applegate, Dr. Julie Shadoan, Dr. Wayne Pope, Dr. Joel Lenoir, Dr. Rong Yang, and Dr. Lester Pesterfield.

FACTS:

Listed below are faculty members who have been recommended by tenured faculty, department chair, and college dean to be awarded emeritus status. They have served the university for at least ten years and have had distinguished records of achievement and service.

Potter College of Arts & Letters

Dr. Darlene Applegate, Professor, Department of Folk Studies and Anthropology, Emeritus

Dr. Julie Shadoan, Professor, Department of Political Science, Emeritus

Dr. Wayne Pope, Professor, Department of Music, Emeritus

Ogden College of Science and Engineering

Dr. Joel Lenoir, Professor, School of Engineering and Applied Sciences, Emeritus

Dr. Rong Yang, Associate Professor, School of Engineering and Applied Sciences, Emeritus

Dr. Lester Pesterfield, Professor, Department of Chemistry, Emeritus

BUDGETARY IMPLICATIONS:

No funds needed.

RECOMMENDATION:

President Timothy C. Caboni recommends awarding the above individuals emeritus status.

MOTION:

Approval of emeritus status awarded for the recommended individuals.