

## **Religious Studies Departmental Assessment Report**

### **Spring 2019**

The Assessment Committee's targeted feedback in response to our work for the 2018 report was generally favorable. While no areas were specifically identified as needing attention, some areas were evaluated as less than exemplary. We recognize the need to make some further refinements, and it appears that remaining issues of concern center on the need to provide more explicit discussion of direct measures used in guiding our decision-making.

For the most part, the department recognizes the need to incorporate direct measures into its assessment plan going forward and is in the process of doing so. At the same time, we remain confident that while the majority of our curricular revisions have relied upon indirect evidence, we would not classify this together with "weak" or "anecdotal" evidence of student development. Most of the indirect evidence we have used to make changes has been corroborated by several sources taken collectively (faculty discussion of student performances, capstone project grades assigned jointly, student self-reports in focus-group style interviews, course evaluations, an alumni survey, external consultant recommendations, research into national "best practices," etc.) In our view, the only ingredient missing from this approach has been the act of assigning values to a rubric that would provide an additional, "direct" means for capturing some of the substance of our active work in program evaluation.

Toward that end, we have taken steps to create a rubric that attempts to measure a variety of goals for the senior capstone course (see attached). This will represent a direct instrument we can apply to gauge the work of our senior majors in the upcoming years. We also have begun asking seniors during their exit interviews to supply some examples of things they have done to meet program learning goals, such that we are now able to assess directly the degree to which they are able to demonstrate different levels of achievement when prompted. We have now undertaken this process for two years, and will begin to track indexed student responses going forward.

In keeping with committee recommendations, we plan to complete our curricular map in 2019-20, and will use our findings to plan course scheduling and to make course revisions as needed to ensure students in the major will make progress through the curriculum and ultimately accomplish our intended learning goals.

Rubric Title: Religious Studies Departmental Learning Goal (related to capstone course): “Enhance student learning through a substantive senior project that involves integration and creative synthesis reflective of prior study and in preparation for personal life and professional careers after college.”

Category	Basic	Competent	Exemplary
Project Organization	<p>Topic is defined approximately within a broader area of interest.</p> <p>Minimal background knowledge is evident to perform analysis.</p> <p>Some appropriate sources for research related to project topic are identified.</p> <p>Limited planning for and execution of relevant applied work is conducted as appropriate.</p>	<p>A topic of appropriate scope has been identified for further research and development.</p> <p>Sufficient background knowledge from coursework provides a basis for further inquiry.</p> <p>A solid array of sources has been identified and consulted for use in the project.</p> <p>Sufficient groundwork for applied work planned with off-campus partners or participants has been established in a timely manner.</p>	<p>A well-defined, focused topic for research has been clearly articulated.</p> <p>More than sufficient background knowledge of content and methods relevant to the project is demonstrated.</p> <p>A select bibliography of works of instrumental value to the project has been generated.</p> <p>All necessary arrangements have been made to perform applied work with community partners, human subjects, or others in keeping with best practices.</p>
Analysis & Integration	<p>The main aims of the project are discernable.</p> <p>Rudimentary knowledge of appropriate source material is evident.</p> <p>Some effort to connect sources engaged is present.</p>	<p>The key objectives or main claims of the project are made explicit.</p> <p>Pertinent source materials are represented in the project and appropriately understood.</p> <p>Chosen sources have been integrated into the analysis.</p>	<p>The paper’s thesis or the project’s key objectives are clearly stated and reflect informed perspective on the issues at stake.</p> <p>Pertinent source materials and relevant scholarship are thoughtfully and clearly deployed.</p>

	Some implications or conclusions from the work may be inferred.	Conclusions or implications of the project are identified.	<p>Different works are skillfully related or assessed in light of one another to produce understanding.</p> <p>Clear conclusions are drawn and potentially significant implications of the project are identified.</p>
Presentation	<p>Public oral presentation is carried out, and with some supporting written or audiovisual materials.</p> <p>Aspects of the project can be described and some questions adequately addressed in interview with department faculty.</p> <p>Written work has been performed to meet acceptable levels of organization and clarity.</p> <p>An effort to adequately cite source materials has been made.</p>	<p>Public oral presentation is effectively made with the support of written and/or audiovisual materials.</p> <p>Key features of the project and its goals can be summarized and most questions adequately addressed in interview with department faculty.</p> <p>Written work has been revised to achieve solid levels of organization and clarity.</p> <p>Appropriate effort has been made to cite all sources in Chicago style.</p>	<p>Public oral presentation is well-organized, well-supported by accompanying materials, and engagingly and responsively presented.</p> <p>Aims and implications of project are effectively summarized and discussed with faculty in departmental interview.</p> <p>Written work is well-edited for organization and clarity of expression.</p> <p>All source materials are cited correctly in Chicago style.</p>
Future Preparation	<p>Engaged in limited reflection on interests developed in departmental courses.</p> <p>Engaged in limited reflection on knowledge, skills, and abilities cultivated in curricular and co-curricular experiences.</p> <p>Demonstrated some capacity for identifying transferable skills relevant to future endeavors.</p>	<p>Made solid effort to reflect upon persistent preoccupations in departmental courses providing insight into areas of interest.</p> <p>Identified general areas of knowledge as well as skills and abilities cultivated in curricular and co-curricular experiences.</p>	<p>Thoughtful reflection on departmental coursework has generated awareness of particular areas of interest or special concern.</p> <p>Able to identify specific forms of knowledge, skills, and abilities resulting from collegiate experiences.</p>

		Gained perspective on how knowledge, skills, and abilities may translate to future endeavors.	Able to articulate how forms of knowledge, skills, and abilities can translate to future endeavors.
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