

Assessment Rubric for Senior Thesis in Religious Studies

Learning Goals, Student Learning Objectives (SLOs) and Assessment: Measuring Student Success

Student Name: _____
 Reader Name: _____
 Term: _____

The Religious Studies Department has formulated the following three goals of its students in the major:

- 1) To understand the basic elements of one or more religious traditions;
- 2) To integrate an understanding of religion with other realms of human knowledge and experience; and
- 3) To apply theoretical and methodical approaches to the study of religion.

Senior theses are analyzed using the rubric below to assess students' performance within the context of the Department's six Student Learning Objectives. These rubrics are modified from those obtained from the Association of American Colleges and Universities.

Learning Outcomes	Capstone (High Pass) 4	High Milestone (Pass) 3	Milestone (Pass) 2	Benchmark or N/A 1	Score
1. Inquiry and Analysis Value Rubric, Existing Knowledge, Research, and/or Views.¹ Graduates will be able to demonstrate an understanding of the texts, beliefs, and practices of more than one religious tradition.	Synthesizes in-depth information from relevant sources representing various texts, beliefs, and practices of more than one religious tradition (if subject is intentionally comparative).	Presents in-depth information from relevant sources representing various texts, beliefs, and practices of more than one religious tradition.	Presents information from relevant sources representing limited texts, beliefs, and practices.	Presents information from irrelevant sources representing limited texts, beliefs, and practices.	
2. Critical Thinking Value Rubric, Explanation of Issues. Graduates will be able to trace the historical development of at least one religious tradition from its origins to the present.	Issue/problem to be considered critically is stated clearly and described comprehensively, delivering all relevant information necessary for full historical understanding.	Issue/problem to be considered critically is stated, described, and clarified so that historical understanding is not seriously impeded by omissions.	Issue/problem to be considered critically is stated but description leaves some terms undefined, ambiguities unexplored, boundaries undetermined, and/or historical backgrounds unknown.	Issue/problem to be considered critically is stated without clarification or description.	
3. Inquiry and Analysis Value Rubric, Analysis. Graduates will be able to identify and analyze the intersections between religious traditions and major social and cultural issues (e.g., politics, gender, ethnicity, race, ethics).	Organizes and synthesizes evidence to reveal insightful patterns, differences, or similarities related to focus.	Organizes evidence to reveal important patterns, difference, or similarities related to focus.	Organizes evidence, but the organization is not effective in revealing important patterns, differences, and similarities.	Lists evidence, but it is not organized and/or is unrelated to focus.	

¹ This rubric is applicable only if the thesis topic is comparative and thus meets the specificities of the SLO. Otherwise, comparative success should be evaluated within the nuances of a single religion, or a "Not Applicable" is acceptable.

Learning Outcomes	Capstone (High Pass) 4	High Milestone (Pass) 3	Milestone (Pass) 2	Benchmark or N/A 1	Score
<p>4. Written Communication Value Rubric, Sources and Evidence. Graduates will be able work with multiple sources of information (e.g., textual, performative, material, philosophical) used in the study of religion.</p>	Demonstrates skillful use of high-quality, credible, relevant sources to develop ideas that are appropriate for the discipline and genre of the study of religion.	Demonstrates consistent use of credible, relevant sources to support ideas that are situated within the discipline and genre of the study of religion.	Demonstrates an attempt to use credible and/or relevant sources to support ideas that are appropriate for the discipline and genre of the study of religion.	Demonstrates an attempt to use sources to support ideas in the writing.	
<p>5. Inquiry and Analysis Value Rubric, Design Process. Graduates will show proficiency in a variety of disciplinary approaches to the study of religion (e.g., historical, philosophical, anthropological).</p>	All elements of the methodology or theoretical framework are skillfully developed. Appropriate methodology or theoretical frameworks may be synthesized from across disciplines or from relevant sub-disciplines.	Critical elements of the methodology or theoretical framework are appropriately developed, however, more subtle elements are ignored or unaccounted for.	Critical elements of the methodology or theoretical framework are missing, incorrectly developed, or unfocused.	Inquiry design demonstrates a misunderstanding of the methodology or theoretical framework.	
<p>6. Written Communication Value Rubric, Genre and Disciplinary Conventions. Graduates will be able to analyze and assess religious phenomena through the use of critical theories (e.g., literary criticism, gender theory, post-modern and post-colonial analysis).</p>	Demonstrates detailed attention to and successful execution of a wide range of analytical conventions particular to Religious Studies, including literary criticism, gender theory, post-modern and post-colonial analysis, where appropriate.	Demonstrates consistent use of important analytical conventions particular to Religious Studies, such as literary criticism, gender theory, post-modern and post-colonial analysis.	Follows expectations appropriate to Religious Studies for basic organization, content, and presentation.	Attempts to use a consistent system appropriate to Religious Studies for basic organization and presentation.	