

What to do to get your course approved for RTC 1

July 23, 2009

Thank you for your willingness to develop courses to satisfy the RTC 1 requirement. These two pages provide instructions to help you understand the new RTC 1 course and develop your assignments and course proposal for approval.

The RTC 1 Course Description

The first course in RTC aims to enhance critical reflection on religious belief and practice. It introduces students to the basic approaches by which scholars seek to understand what religion reveals about human beings—their societies, traditions, convictions, and aspirations. It provides an opportunity for students to enrich their understanding of their own religious lives and to better comprehend the diverse local and global communities of which they are a part. By attending to the cognitive and affective dimensions of human experience, this component of the Core supports Knowledge of Global Cultures, Complexity, Critical Thinking, and Religious Reflection.

Things the course should cover

The RTC 1 course should:

- introduce basic approaches to the study of religion
- offer students the opportunity to reflect on their own beliefs and religious experience as well as those of others
- explore the central religious ideas and practices from several traditions or within one
- cover at least two globally distinct regions (e.g., not just the U.S., but U.S. and Asia; not just the ancient Near East, but ANE and Europe)

Of course, you'll have other topics you'll want to cover as well, but these are the features expected for a Core RTC 1 course. In your syllabus or cover sheet, you DON'T need to explain how your course does these things for the committee's benefit; we'll be focusing on how the *learning objectives* are embedded in the *course assignments* (the next section). We just offer these features to help you create or transform your courses.

Things your assignments should assess

This is where the rubber meets the road. The committee will be looking at the descriptions of your assignments in your syllabus to see that you have ONE assignment for each objective (or perhaps one assignment that does both; what you don't have to do is have many assignments per objective). Please describe the assignments fully enough so that we can see that all these elements are present, and reference the relevant learning objective(s) in parentheses at the end.

Core Learning Objective	What the Committee Is Looking For
Students will be able to describe and compare the central religious ideas and practices from several traditions or within one, and from at least two globally distinct regions.	Be sure that your assignment asks students to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • describe and compare • central religious ideas and practices • from several traditions or within one • AND that the comparison is between central religious ideas/practices from at least two globally distinct regions (two religions from 2 globally distinct regions but both in the Bay Area wouldn't fit; the regions really have to be distinct).
Students will be able to use critical approaches to reflect on their own beliefs and the religious dimensions of human existence.	Here, the key features are that students have an opportunity to demonstrate that they <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • can use critical approaches • to reflect on their OWN beliefs/practices and those of others.

How to submit your syllabus for approval¹

Submit the following to the Office of Undergraduate Studies (ugradstudies@scu.edu) with a copy to your department chair. Electronic submissions are preferred. Here are this year's deadlines:

- October 30, 2009
- January 29, 2010
- March 30, 2010

The following sections must be included in all submissions:

1. Cover Sheet

- Date application submitted
- Course title
- Faculty Name and Department
- Core Area or Requirement (it's RTC 1). *If this course will be part of a Pathway, please provide the tentative Pathway title.*
- Undergraduate Bulletin Description. For *new or transformed courses* please provide a new or revised Bulletin description of no more than two sentences. If there is no change to the description, please state "No Change."

2. Student Learning Assessment Plan

Briefly indicate which course activities and graded assignments (e.g., papers, projects, exams, and presentations) map to each learning objective for the Core area. The committee prefers that you do this IN YOUR SYLLABUS rather than in a separate document by providing the following information for your students:

- a statement of the Core learning objectives (if you number or letter them, you can refer to them more easily when you describe your assignments; feel free to cut and paste from above)
- an "Assessment and Grading" section in your syllabus that includes
 - a description of each assignment with its "weight" in the overall grade and, in parentheses at the end, the Core learning objective(s); the description should make clear the relevant elements of the learning objective
 - a grade scale (e.g., A = 94%-100%, A- = 90%-93%, etc.)
 - a statement of how the students will receive feedback from you and have a chance to improve their performance (e.g., remarks on papers, meetings)
 - a statement of how the overall success of the course will be evaluated (e.g., mid-term evaluations, end-of-term numerical and narrative evaluations, SALG).

3. Tentative Syllabus

The syllabus should contain the usual content for a course in your college/school and department, including a statement of the Academic Integrity and Disability Accommodation Policies.

Need an example or two?

We've posted examples at the Core Web site: <http://www.scu.edu/provost/ugst/core2009/> (if you're reading this document online, you can click on that url to go to the page). Just scan down the right-hand column until you see RTC 1.

¹ This information is adapted from the "Syllabus Approval Guidelines" on the SCU Core 2009 Web site, last updated December 2008. It's a good idea to double-check that site to see if there have been any changes since then <http://www.scu.edu/provost/ugst/core2009/pdf/upload/Syllabus-Approval-Form_Final-December-2008-2.pdf>.