

What to do to get your course approved for RTC 2

July 23, 2009

Thank you for your willingness to develop courses to satisfy the RTC 2 requirement. These two pages provide instructions to help you understand the new RTC 2 course and develop your assignments and course proposal for approval.

The RTC 2 Course Description

The second course in RTC invites students to deeper engagement with the study of religion through the application of multidisciplinary or interdisciplinary approaches to complex religious phenomena, past and present. By providing multiple, integrated perspectives, this course seeks to enrich students' appreciation for the diversity of human religious expression. This course, which may be either lower or upper division, is to be taken only after completion of RTC 1. It would be an appropriate place to continue the Core's current openness to courses offered by faculty from a variety of disciplines, such as those in the humanities. This component of the Core supports Complexity, Critical Thinking, and Religious Reflection.

Things the course should cover

The RTC 2 course should:

- approach the study of religious phenomena through multidisciplinary or interdisciplinary means
- focus on complex and diverse religious phenomena
- integrate critical inquiry and reflection on beliefs

Of course, you'll have other topics you'll want to cover as well, but these are the features expected for a Core RTC 2 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 the critical piece. 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 more than one; there's no need to 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 analyze complex and diverse religious phenomena (such as architecture and art, music, ritual, scriptures, theological systems, and other cultural expressions of religious belief).	Be sure that your assignment asks students to: analyze <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • complex religious phenomena • diverse religious phenomena (from more than one of the sorts of categories offered to the left).
Students will be able to integrate and compare several different disciplinary approaches to a coherent set of religious phenomena.	Here, the key features are that students have an opportunity to demonstrate that they <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • can use methods from at least two different disciplines • and can apply them SIMULTANEOUSLY to one set of phenomena (that's the "integrate") • noting the different methods and results (that's the "compare").
Students will be able to clarify and express beliefs in light of their critical inquiry into the religious dimensions of human existence.	The Core envisions religious reflection as a key goal for the RTC courses, so you'll need an assignment that allows students to <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • clarify and express their OWN beliefs • in dialogue with the critical thinking they're doing about things religious.

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 2). *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 2.

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>.