

THE UNIVERSITY OF NORTH CAROLINA AT ASHEVILLE

FACULTY SENATE

Senate Document Number 5815S
Date of Senate Approval 03/19/15

Statement of Faculty Senate Action:

APC Document 50: Change the major and minor requirements for Religious Studies

Effective Date: Fall 2015

1. Delete: On page 257, under the entry for **Major in Religious Studies:**

- I. Required courses in the major—at least 35 hours, including: RELS 200, 280, 312, 313, 398, 490; one course from those listed under Religions of the West; one course from those listed under Religions of Asia; one course from those listed under Interdisciplinary Approaches to Religion; and 6 additional hours of electives chosen from other RELS courses or courses in the above categories. At least 18 of the required 35 hours must be at the 300-400 level. The department chair may approve additional courses when the subject matter is appropriate to Religious Studies.
- II. Required courses outside the major—None.
- III. Other departmental requirements—Completion of RELS 398 with a grade of C or better demonstrates major competency. Completion of RELS 490 with a grade of C or better demonstrates oral competency.

Religions of the West

CLAS	101	Latin I (4)
CLAS	103	Greek I (4)
CLAS	105	Hebrew I (3)
CLAS	250	Mythology (3)
CLAS	354	Greek and Roman Religion (3)
CLAS	365	Introduction to the Hebrew Bible (4)
HIST	388	Introduction to Islam (3)
LIT	365	Introduction to the Hebrew Bible (4)
PHIL	255	Medieval Philosophy (4)
POLS	329	Religion and Politics in the United States (4)
RELS	215	Judaism and Christianity in the Ancient World (3)
RELS	354	Greek and Roman Religion (3)
RELS	387	Religion and Culture of Judaism (3)
RELS	388	Introduction to Islam (3)
RELS	389	Jewish Women and Religion (3)

Religions of Asia

ASIA	313	Asian Philosophy (4)
PHIL	313	Asian Philosophy (4)
RELS	381	Religions of South Asia (3)
RELS	386	Buddhism (3)

Interdisciplinary Approaches to Religion

PHIL	303	Philosophy of Religion (4)
RELS	302	Sociology of Religion (4)
RELS	303	Philosophy of Religion (4)
RELS	330	Religion and Gender (4)
RELS	420	Religion and Southern Culture (3)
SOC	302	Sociology of Religion (4)

Add: On page 257, in place of deleted entry:

- I. Required courses in the major—at least 36 hours, including: RELS 200, 398, 492; one course from those listed under Religion and Western Culture; one course from those listed under Religions of Asia and Africa; one course from those listed under Interdisciplinary Approaches to Religion; and 12 hours of electives chosen from other RELS courses or from the list of approved courses. 20 of the required 36 hours must be at the 300-400 level. The department chair may approve additional courses when the subject matter is appropriate to Religious Studies.
- II. Required courses outside the major—None.
- III. Other departmental requirements—Completion of RELS 398 with a C or better demonstrates information literacy and major competencies. Completion of RELS 492 with a C or better demonstrates written and oral competencies.

Religion and Western Culture

CLAS	354	Greek and Roman Religion (3)
CLAS	365	Introduction to the Hebrew Bible (4)
HIST	388	Introduction to Islam (4)
LIT	365	Introduction to the Hebrew Bible (4)
PHIL	255	Medieval Philosophy (4)
PHIL	315	Islamic Philosophy (4)
POLS	329	Religion and Politics in the United States (4)
RELS	215	Judaism and Christianity in the Ancient World (4)
RELS	312	Religion in America to 1865 (4)
RELS	354	Greek and Roman Religion (3)
RELS	387	Religion and Culture of Judaism (4)
RELS	389	Jewish Women and Religion (4)
RELS	388	Introduction to Islam (4)

Religions of Asia and Africa

AFST	317	Africana Philosophy (4)
ASIA	313	Asian Philosophy (4)
PHIL	313	Asian Philosophy (4)
PHIL	317	Africana Philosophy (4)
RELS	280	Asian Religious Traditions (4)
RELS	326	Religion and Dance in South Asia (4)
RELS	342	African Religions in the Americas and the Caribbean (4)
RELS	381	Religions of South Asia (4)
RELS	386	Buddhism (4)

Interdisciplinary Approaches to Religion

CLAS	250	Mythology (3)
PHIL	303	Philosophy of Religion (4)
RELS	302	Sociology of Religion (4)
RELS	303	Philosophy of Religion (4)
RELS	330	Religion and Gender (4)
SOC	302	Sociology of Religion (4)

Approved electives

ASIA	100	Elementary Chinese I (4)
CLAS	101	Latin I (4)
CLAS	103	Greek I (4)
CLAS	105	Hebrew I (3)

Impact statement: These changes will have no negative impact on the department or the university and will not require the addition of any new faculty or other resources. The department will be able to deliver its curriculum while continuing to support LAC requirements.

Rationale: The Department of Religious Studies is revising its curriculum for the following reasons: (1) to adopt the 4 credit hour model as recommended by the Curriculum Review Task Force (CRTF) and necessitated in part by the fact that many departments with which we share crosslisted courses have already adopted such a model; (2) to incorporate the new requirements of the Liberal Arts Core Program, which makes evaluation of information literacy and discipline-specific writing the responsibility of departments; and (3) to streamline our course offerings in an effort to increase sustainability; and (4) to incorporate new courses and a new configuration of major and minor requirements that reflect recent faculty appointments.

Although the number of credit hours required of majors has been increased by one (from 35 to 36 hours), the number of specified courses required for the major has been reduced, thus giving students more options in course choices. RELS 200: Introduction to the Study of Religion will remain the gateway course, and we will continue to require two capstone courses (RELS 398 and RELS 492) for all majors. Since these courses focus on theory, methodology, and application, they offer appropriate foundations and skills for the academic study of religion. The remainder of the courses required for the major offer students a great deal of flexibility, although the arrangement by distribution requirements ensures that students are exposed to a breadth of religious traditions. Such flexibility is in keeping with the spirit of the CRTF recommendation that students be allowed more opportunities to explore “elective” courses. The tradition of the department – supported by the inherently multidisciplinary nature of the study of religion – to allow students the option of taking approved elective courses outside of the department for RELS credit offers a range of choices to majors in Religious Studies that underscores the objectives of a liberal arts education. We are also fortunate that two of our courses (RELS 387 and 389) are regularly taught by faculty outside of the department, and that five additional courses are crosslisted with other departments and also taught by outside faculty, so in any given semester 4-12 additional RELS credit hours are offered to students beyond those taught by departmental faculty.

Certification of major and oral competencies has not changed (through completion of RELS 398 and the Senior Seminar respectively with a C or better). Similarly, satisfying the requirement for information literacy will continue to be met by the successful completion of RELS 398. Writing competency will be demonstrated by completion of RELS 492 with a grade of C or better, although most 300-400 level courses will continue to require significant writing.

To ensure that student learning outcomes are met in knowledge of the major, critical thinking, information literacy, written communication, and oral communication, certain courses designated as addressing these skills will integrate content-oriented classroom lectures and discussions with associated “skills labs” to be offered by faculty. This table presents a model pathway toward graduation by Religious Studies majors under the 4 credit hour curriculum:

	Courses and semester offered	Competencies met	Major hours complete
First Year	RELS 200 (F/S) RELS 280 (F; recommended)	ARTS/DI requirement	4-8 hours
Second Year	RELS 200/300 distribution electives (F/S)		8-12 hours
Third Year	RELS 300/400 distribution electives (F/S) RELS 398 (S)	Major competency Information literacy	8-12 hours
Fourth Year	RELS 300/400 electives (F/S) RELS 492 (F)	Writing competency Oral competency	8-12 hours

Faculty load: The departmental faculty has been heavily invested in offering courses that met various requirements for the ILS Program; this will not change with the conversion to a four credit hour curriculum. Assuming that the faculty remains at its current strength of three full-time members teaching 12 credit hours each semester (with a one course release each year for the chair), we will be able to deliver the departmental curriculum each year as illustrated:

Faculty	Fall	Spring
Faculty member 1 (Chair)	RELS 200 RELS elective 4 additional credit hours	RELS elective 4 additional credit hours (4 hour course release)
Faculty member 2	RELS 280 (DI, ARTS) RELS elective 4 additional credit hours	RELS elective RELS 398 4 additional credit hours
Faculty member 3	RELS 200 RELS elective 4 additional credit hours	RELS 200 RELS 492 4 additional credit hours

The “additional credit hours” will be used for offering courses outside of the department (HUM, HON, LA 178) or for other RELS electives, including special topics courses. Note that RELS 280, which will be offered every fall semester, serves the LAC Program as both a DI and an ARTS course. Note that responsibility for offering our capstone courses (RELS 398 and 492) circulates among the faculty, with RELS 398 offered in the spring semester and at least one section of RELS 492 offered the following fall by the same instructor; the above chart offers only a single year’s “snapshot” of the curriculum. Potentially, each member of the departmental faculty could offer two courses outside of the department every year in support of the LAC and other programs.

2. Delete: On page 258, under the entry for **Minor in Religious Studies:**

18 hours distributed as follows: RELS 200 and 280; at least one course from those listed under Religions of the West; at least one course from those listed under Interdisciplinary Approaches to Religion; and 6 additional hours of electives chosen from among other RELS courses or the list of approved elective courses. At least 9 hours must be at the 300-400 level. The department chair may approve additional courses when the subject matter is appropriate to Religious Studies.

Add: On page 258, in place of deleted entry:

At least 20 hours distributed as follows: RELS 200; one course from those listed under Religion and Western Culture; one course from those listed under Religions of Asia and Africa; one course from those listed under Interdisciplinary Approaches to Religion; and at least one course chosen from RELS courses or from the list of approved courses. No more than 8 hours of approved electives may come from a single department outside of Religious Studies, and at least 12 hours must be at the 300-400 level. The department chair may approve additional courses when the subject matter is appropriate to Religious Studies.

Impact statement: These changes will have no negative impact on the department or the university and will not require the addition of any new faculty or other resources.

Rationale: This change to the minor simply reflects the changes that are necessitated by the conversion from a 3 to 4 credit hour curriculum, although, like the revised major, it is designed to offer students an array of course choices while ensuring some breadth in terms of content matter.