RELIGION MAJOR - B.A.

Primary Faculty, Rockland: Dr. Larry Poston

Mission
The Religion major is designed to prepare students intellectually, emotionally, and spiritually for personal encounters with adherents of the major world religions as well as of the smaller groupings known as alternative religious movements. Intellectually, students will be equipped with a working knowledge of the histories, worldviews, doctrinal beliefs, and ritual practices of these peoples. Emotionally, students will be prepared to meet such persons fearlessly, empathetically, and compassionately. Spiritually, students will be able to recognize and evaluate similarities to and differences from their own faith, thereby enhancing their Christian experience.

Student Learning Goals
In keeping with Nyack College’s Core Values of Social Relevance, Academic Excellence, Global Engagement, Intentional Diversity, and Personal Transformation, the Religion Major seeks to fulfill the following goals for its students. By the final semester of his/her senior year, it is intended that each Religion major will:
1. Demonstrate familiarity with the basic concepts, themes, and approaches involved in comparative religious studies.
2. Be able to discuss in an organized and transferable manner the chief characteristics of and define the chief concepts involved in “primal religion.”
3. Be able to discuss in an organized and transferable manner the basic historical development of the religions of Hinduism, Buddhism, Jainism, Sikhism, Zoroastrianism, Daoism, Confucianism, Shinto, Judaism, Islam, and Christianity in its Roman Catholic, Eastern Orthodox, and Protestant forms.
4. Be able to discuss in an organized and transferable manner the basic doctrinal beliefs of each of the above-mentioned religions.
5. Be able to discuss in an organized and transferable manner the basic rituals and practices of each of the above-mentioned religions.
6. Be able to restate textual concepts from written literature dealing with comparative religious studies in his/her own words and select data accurately.
7. Be able to discuss in an organized and transferable manner the theories and postulates—including implications for his/her personal faith—of approximately twelve leading sociologists of religion.
8. Be able to discuss in an organized and transferable manner the theories and postulates—including implications for his/her personal faith—of approximately eight psychologists of religion.
9. Be able to discuss in an organized and transferable manner the effects of his/her social environment upon his/her personal faith and be able to make Biblically-informed decisions with respect to:
   a. His/her general participation in the social order of his/her country (i.e., his/her behavior “on the street”).
   b. His/her development of “family values.”
   c. His/her involvement in the institutional church.
   d. His/her convictions regarding a proper – read “Biblical” – socio-economic status.
   e. His/her views of race, ethnicity, and gender roles.
   f. His/her role as a Christian in the political process.
   g. His/her intake of and attitude toward audio-visual media.
   h. His/her understanding of the differences existing between “secularism” and “secularization,” “pluralism” and “pluralization,” and “privatism” and “privatization” (as essentially defined by Berger and Guinness).

10. Be able to discuss in an organized and transferable manner the effects of his/her psychological make-up upon his/her personal faith and be able to make Biblically-informed decisions with respect to:
   a. The distinction between “internal-personal” approaches to spirituality and “external-institutional” approaches.
   b. The distinction between the religious conversion process as described by the New Testament and the processes found in other religious systems.
   c. The development of his/her religious life, called in Christianity the process of “sanctification”:
   d. The observations of James Fowler with regard to “Stages of Faith.”
   e. The current search for and occurrences of the phenomenon known as “revival.”
   f. The current interest in the “supernatural,” “signs and wonders,” and “the miraculous” in general.
   g. The internal and emotional aspects of the approach to religion known as “mysticism.”
   h. The benefits and disadvantages of the states of asceticism and celibacy.

11. Be able to discuss in an organized and transferable manner five approaches that Christians have historically taken to the non-Christian religions.

12. Have produced at least ten essays of significant length dealing with some of the most basic questions involved in the study of non-Christian religions from the standpoint of evangelical Christianity.

13. Be able to initiate and lead discussions regarding issues of religious significance.

14. Be able to recite from memory at least fifty passages from the Bible and show how the content of those passages reflect upon the various topics covered in the courses.
15. Have developed a resume or *curriculum vitae* for the purpose of “marketing” himself/herself in an appropriate field related to his/her undergraduate education.

16. Have developed a set of short-term and long-term goals, as well as other instruments, pertinent to a productive and satisfying “life after college.”

**Program Assessment**

The following assessments are used to assess program effectiveness:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assessment</th>
<th>Context</th>
<th>Program Location</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Book Content Tests</td>
<td>Psych. And Soc. Of Religion, New Age and Occult, East Asian Religions, South Asian Religions, Islam, History of Judaism, Islam in the West, Catholicism And Orthodoxy, Alternative Religious Movements in Amer., History of Christianity</td>
<td>Sophomore, Junior, or Senior years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research Paper(s)</td>
<td>World Religions, Islam, History of Judaism</td>
<td>Sophomore, Junior, or Senior years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cumulative Final Exams, incl. Scripture Memory</td>
<td>All classes (except for Topics in Religious Studies—Senior Seminar)</td>
<td>Sophomore, Junior, or Senior years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Portfolio, incl. resume, evaluation of all REL classes, short-term goals, long-term goals</td>
<td>Topics in Religious Studies—Senior Seminar</td>
<td>Senior year</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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Assessment results are evaluated on an annual basis for program improvement. No individual student is identified in the evaluation of the program data. Results for past years are reported below with percentage of students in each performance category.
Religion

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Expectations</th>
<th>Expectations (Pass)</th>
<th>Expectations (Fail)</th>
<th>Meet Expectations (Fail)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Book Analyses 08-09</td>
<td>70%</td>
<td>28%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Book Content Tests 08-09</td>
<td>32%</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research Papers 08-09</td>
<td>43%</td>
<td>44%</td>
<td>6.5%</td>
<td>6.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cumulative Final Exam, incl. Scripture Memory 08-09</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>57%</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Portfolio 08-09</td>
<td>85%</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The Religion major is designed to meet the needs of students who desire to understand the subject of religion from a comparative perspective. The program includes courses which consider the major religions of the world (Christianity, Islam, Hinduism, Buddhism, and Judaism), alternative religious movements, the New Age Movement, and occult religion from historical, phenomenological, sociological, psychological, philosophical, and theological points of view.

The program is suited for those who intend to enter a pastoral or missionary ministry and who anticipate attending seminary upon graduation from Nyack College. It is designed to satisfy the recommendations of the Association of Theological Schools for admission to study at the seminary level.

It is also designed as a foundational program for those who wish to pursue graduate work in the field of Comparative Religious Studies. It is not, however, recommended for those students who intend to enter the Christian ministry without taking further professional or graduate study.

126 credit hours, distributed as follows, are required for the Bachelor of Arts degree:

**Liberal Arts and Science Core Component** ........................................... 37

**Foreign Language Component** ............................................................. 12

2 years (4 semesters) of the same language

**Bible and Ministry Minor Curriculum** ............................................... 15

**Major Field Component (30 credits)**

BIb 365 - Romans .......................................................................................... 3
REL 310 - Psychology and Sociology of Religion (Worldview requirement) .... 3
REL 314 - World Religions .......................................................................... 3
REL 342 - History of Christianity .............................................................. 3

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### Religion

- **REL 441 - Philosophy of Religion** .................................................. 3
- **REL 470 - Topics in Religious Studies** ............................................. 3
- Electives from upper level Religion courses ....................................... 12

**Miscellaneous/Liberal Arts Elective Component (32 credits)**
- Miscellaneous electives ................................................................. 26
- Liberal arts electives .................................................................... 6

**Total credits required** ........................................................................ 126

### Religion Major Suggested Program Plan

#### FIRST YEAR: Fall
- PMN 101-Intro to Spiritual Form .................................................. .2
- INT 112-Found. for Excellence ....................................................... .2
- ENG 101-College Writing I ............................................................... .3
- HIS 113-Hist. of World Civ. I ......................................................... .3
- Foreign Language ............................................................................ .3
- PMN 201-Nyack Heritage ............................................................... .1
- INT 101-Info Literacy ...................................................................... .1

#### SECOND YEAR: Fall
- BIB 201-New Testament Lit ........................................................... .3
- ENG 201 or 202-Global Lit. I or II .................................................. .3
- Foreign Language ............................................................................ .3
- MAT-Math Elective ......................................................................... .3
- REL 310-Psych. & Soc. of Rel .......................................................... .3

#### THIRD YEAR: Fall
- BIB 303 Christian Thought ............................................................ .3
- BIB 365-Romans ............................................................................ .3
- SOC 347-Multicultural America ....................................................... .3
- REL-Elective ................................................................................... .3
- Electives ......................................................................................... .5

#### FOURTH YEAR: Fall
- REL 441-Phil. of Religion ............................................................... .3
- REL-Elective ................................................................................... .3
- Electives ......................................................................................... 9

#### FIRST YEAR: Spring
- BIB 102-Old Testament Lit ............................................................ .3
- ENG 102-College Writing II ............................................................ .3
- HIS 114-Hist. of World Civ. II ....................................................... .3
- Foreign Language ............................................................................ .3
- PHI 101-Intro. to Philosophy .......................................................... .3

#### SECOND YEAR: Spring
- Foreign Language ............................................................................ .3
- Laboratory Science ........................................................................ .4
- Social Science Elective .................................................................. .3
- Electives ......................................................................................... 6

#### THIRD YEAR: Spring
- BIB-Elective .................................................................................. .3
- Fine Arts requirement .................................................................... .3
- REL 342-History of Christianity .................................................... .3
- Electives ......................................................................................... .3

#### FOURTH YEAR: Spring
- REL 470-Topics in Rel Studies ....................................................... .3
- REL-Elective ................................................................................... .6
- Electives ......................................................................................... 9