

College of Arts and Sciences
Department of Religion | Religion Program
Table 3: Student Learning Outcomes

Doctorate in Religion

Outcome Type	Outcome	Assessment & Evaluation Process
Program Outcome: Classroom Performance	During the year, the program will the teaching performance of all departmental graduate students teaching their own classes (as opposed to being assistants in the classroom with faculty members), with the aim of having only those graduate students in the classroom whom faculty deem satisfactory teachers.	100% of PhD students in the department achieving a score of satisfactory on their evaluations, as assessed by a count of said evaluations. as evidenced by department assessment and participant evaluation.
Program Outcome: Applications to Ph.D. Program	By the end of the year, the program will increase This is the first record of the PhD applications so there is no prior data for comparison. Previously applications for MA and PhD were considered as a single pool.	This is the first record of the PhD applications so there is no prior data for comparison. as evidenced by enrollment statistics.
Learning Outcome: Student Publishing / Presentations	During the year, students will produce either a successfully published book review or article, or a conference paper that is accepted for presentation at a regional or national conference. (The annual graduate-student conference in the department is not included.)	This will result in 30% of the students either gaining or extending their publication/presentation record, as determined by acceptances from journals/conferences, as determined by an annual survey of doctoral students. Method(s): Professional Judged Performance or Demonstration of Ability in Context, Written Report or Essay, Public Performance or Presentation (Juried), and Portfolio of Student Work.
Learning Outcome: Mastery of Scholarship	Before beginning work on the dissertation, the student will be able to demonstrate mastery of the broad contours in contemporary scholarship in their chosen subfield, as well as in theory and method in the study of religion.	This will result in all students scoring 80% or better (i.e. passing) a battery of comprehensive exams, as assessed by a faculty committee. Method(s): Departmental Exam/Comprehensive Exam/Preliminary Exam.

Source: FSU Institutional Effectiveness Portal, 2017-18.

Masters in Religion

Outcome Type	Outcome	Assessment & Evaluation Process
Program Outcome: Applications to MA Program	By the end of the year, the program will increase the number of applications received by the graduate program by 10% above the 2008-09 applications.	This will lead to a total of 64 applications received during the 2009-10 year, as determined by a simple count. as evidenced by enrollment statistics.
Learning Outcome: Research Methodology	Upon completion of the course of instruction, the student will be able to demonstrate a thorough familiarity with the texts and tools of the study of religion.	This will result in 75% of the students scoring 90% or better on a series of papers developed during the course of the department proseminar, REL 5035 (Introduction to the Study of Religion), in terms of ability to display comprehension of benefits and drawbacks of various traditional approaches to the study of religion. Method(s): Written Report or Essay.

Learning Outcome: Scholarly Conventions	Upon completion of the course of instruction, the student will be able to produce a substantial written work, either the equivalent of a brief article or a preliminary version of a longer piece of work such as a master's thesis, that is in line with proper scholarly format, at both the levels of articulation and defense of a thesis of scholarly value, and use and citation of secondary sources.	This will result in 66% of students in the department's MA program scoring 93% or better in 50% of their courses with substantial written work, as determined by instructor's evaluation of a term paper. (The member of the department responsible for assessing Institutional Effectiveness conducts a survey of departmental faculty in this regard on an annual basis.) Method(s): Written Report or Essay.
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Source: FSU Institutional Effectiveness Portal, 2017-18.

Bachelors in Religion

Outcome Type	Outcome	Assessment & Evaluation Process
Program Outcome: Number of Graduates	By the end of the year, the program will increase the number of graduates by 3% of 2008-2009 levels.	This will result in a total of 54 students earning the Bachelor of Arts degree in Religion in the F09, Sp10, and Su10 semesters, as determined by the graduation clearance process of the College of Arts & Sciences. as evidenced by enrollment statistics.
Learning Outcome: Religion and Social / Political / Cultural Practice	Students experience a world in which religion often is closely intertwined with politics, social change is driven or resisted by religious rhetoric, and culture is permeated by religious ideas, material culture, forms of association, ritual practices and emotional orientations. Religion, as a key bearer of culture and a repository of much cultural tradition, is both ancient and new in the sense that rituals and beliefs are generally rooted in centuries or millennia of history but at the same time religions are always changing, adapting, to new circumstances. Religion accordingly can be read as a text rich with information about the manner in which societies develop, political ideologies form, and culture coalesces. It is important for students to appreciate how religion informs much of the infrastructure of collective life. It is also important for students to develop a sense of how religion, in some places and in some times, was limited in its influence on the rest of culture. Such investigation leads to discussion about what we mean by religion. The problem of the definition of religion is constant, and students must be aware that when we define religion too broadly, or too narrowly, we risk missing its relationship to other aspects of culture. Upon completion of the course of instruction, the student will be able to analyze at least one religious tradition in terms of its philosophical or ethical vocabulary, and/or its relationship to tools learned from various social-scientific fields. Through a critical consideration of relevant literature and theories in the fields of philosophy, theology, anthropology, sociology, psychology, literary criticism, and/or history, students will become acquainted with several ways in which to interpret religious language regarding right and wrong, morality, responsibility, will, justice, equality, understanding, proportion, and other core ideas of philosophical and ethical discourses. They will learn to identify the frameworks of tradition - from scriptures and modes of authority to ritual practices and emotional styles --that provide context for the intersection of religion with social, political, and cultural practice. Students will become familiar with religion as an activity of human actors whose lives are complex, layered, and sometimes contradictory. They will learn how a religious tradition collaborates with other systems of meaning in order to shape individual and collective life. They will learn how to identify religious practice, including in its less obvious forms. and how to analyze its linkages with other aspects of culture.	80% of registered students will receive a score of 80% or above on at least half of the written assignments in one of the 3000-level classes that fulfills the departmental "Issues & Approaches" requirement. Their performance will be measured by their capability to critically deploy interpretive theory in the analysis of the intersection of religion with social, political, and cultural practice; by evidence of their success in illustrating how religious tradition adapts over time in order to survive; by their ability to explain how the authority of religious texts is both accepted and rejected in other spheres of cultural life; by their illustration of religious aspects of mass culture as well as distinct local cultures; and by their ability to identify the ways in which there is a dialectical relationship between religious conceptualizations of reality, and conceptualizations redolent in other areas, such as politics, economics, and social theory, among others. Students also will be expected to evidence understanding of some of the ways in which religions are altered from within through the emergence of competing interpretations of tradition, and disagreements about religious practices and the structuring of authority, and how certain kinds of cultural settings are favorable or unfavorable to that. Method(s): Written Report or Essay.

<p>Learning Outcome: Historical Development of Religion / Religious Thought</p>	<p>Religion as a component of culture is subject to change over time in the same ways that other aspects of culture are molded by historical processes. Religious thought is always diverse. it develops from a very wide range of sources. it adapts over time to new intellectual currents and responds to social change, population migration, events of nature, large-scale conflict, and other stimuli. It is important that students appreciate that religions are not created in a vacuum, and that they are not brought into being in a perfected form. All religion, like all of culture, is being constantly shaped by forces that shape all of culture. In some cases, religions build upon foundations that we might not characterize as religious. The emergence of Christian theology out of Greek learning, for example, is the story of explicitly religious thought rooted in what might be called "secular" but certainly was not Christian. The development of Jewish religious thought, but e same token, was a process of millennia that involved the blending of oral traditions and eventually the construction of a written theology. Upon completion of the course of instruction, the student will be able to summarize basic concepts in at least one Western religious tradition. That includes knowing about the origins of theological traditions in oral cultures and written argumentation, the process of borrowing and adaptation that framed the refinement of theological ideas and religious practice, the relationship between the organization of authority within religions and the structuring of civil authority, the development of ritual forms and especially how environmental factors affected the refinement of ritual, and the ongoing creation of a religious material culture. It likewise is necessary for students to appreciate the manner in which religion has actively shaped culture, how it has influenced the organization of societies, the relations between men and women, the identification of enemies and friends on the personal and collective levels, themes in literature, forms of art and architecture, stylers of dress and eating, and other aspects of culture.</p>	<p>85% of students will score 85% or higher on a final written report or essay for a class numbered 3936 or above, in accordance with the department's requirement for its students to complete upper-level coursework in either the field of Western religion, Asian religion, or "Issues in & Approaches to Religion" (i.e. philosophical, social-scientific, etc.). The essay/report will measure the extent of the student's knowledge in areas such as the beginnings of religion, the changes that have taken place over time in a religion, the intertwining of religion with other aspects of culture over time, religion as a driving force for social change, religion as a conservative influence on society, the elaboration of theological ideas and their arrangement within systems, the diversity of religious thought, and other components of religious life. Students must demonstrate knowledge of how large cultural milieus, such as "The West" have affected the development of religion, and also how discrete frameworks for the development of religious thought - such as the emergence of a local "school of thought" in a particular period of time - have had their effect. Students must also indicate how religion has been involved in the emergence of ways of life on both large scales and small scales.</p> <p>Students must also know something about the history of a religion in the West, including when it began, what the important events were in its development, and how an important historical context here or there led to changes or adaptations in that religion. Students also will be required to know something about the religious texts that are important to that religion, and be able to recognize and explain the roles of certain important figures in that religion. Method(s): Written Report or Essay and Instructor Constructed Exam.</p>
<p>Learning Outcome: Communicative Skills</p>	<p>A crucial component of the learning process for students in religion is to read a text critically, analyze it with an eye to local culture as well as more general considerations about religion, and to relate their own insight to those that scholars have offered in scholarly works. Students also must develop a voice of their own in the course of reflecting on their reading, and argue the central points of their analysis in a rhetorically consistent fashion. Central to this process is their ability to accomplish all of this in a way that elicits a response from their conversational partners in the class. The instructor accordingly chooses texts that are challenging, susceptible to critical analysis though not overly detailed or advanced beyond the level of the student, and conceptually linked to other texts that the class has read or will read. By the same token, the instructor will teach the student</p>	<p>This will result in 85% of registered students scoring 80% or better on a class performance or presentation, as assessed by the instructor. The performance will be evaluated by the instructor for its critical prowess, measured by the student's ability to cogently summarize central arguments, to disclose aspects of the text that are not obvious, to indicate similarities or differences to other ways of seeing the issue (either through reference to previous discussions in class or to</p>

	<p>how to refine the presentation of evidence, the construction of prose, and the utilization of voice so that it provokes other students to thoughtfulness and makes a strong contribution to the aggregate understanding of the lesson, over the course of the class itself as well as the course that term. Upon completion of one or more upper-level departmental seminars, students will demonstrate that they can articulate underlying issues in a reading assignment and analyze it in a way that generates classroom discussion. A strong response from fellow students, leading to deeper and more detailed discussion of the text, will be an indication of the success of the student's demonstration, alongside of the instructor's valuation of the demonstration as informed, thoughtful, linguistically complex, persuasive, and intellectually honest. The capability to reference other interpretations, either those that have been drawn from the analyses of published scholars or from the remarks of student colleagues, or both, will be considered an indication of learning. Especially important will be evidence of a student bridging the discussion of a specific text or set of texts to larger questions that organize research in the field. So, for example, a student's discussion of "child sacrifice in the ancient Mediterranean" should, ideally, gesture towards encompassing meanings, framed, in this case, with reference to questions such as "what is ritual?" "what is sacrifice" and "what is religion?" Analysis accordingly ought to include both a fine-grain focus on the specific content of a text while at the same time positioning itself within the more general analytical contexts of the field.</p>	<p>other scholarly works or both), to relate the analysis of the text to larger questions of the field, and to interest and engage the class and to provoke informed critical discussion among members of the class, and to respond in informed fashion to questions and queries, by the class and the instructor, with regard to the details of the text under discussion and the larger frames of reference for understanding and interpreting that text. Method(s): Class Performance or Presentation.</p>
<p>Learning Outcome: Cross-Cultural Analysis</p>	<p>The current generation of students are growing up in a world that is more global than ever before, in the sense that diverse cultures and geographically dispersed lives are more intertwined through technologically advanced communications, economic dependencies, linguistic similarities, and other factors. Religion, as a key bearer of culture and a repository of much cultural tradition, is both ancient and new in the sense that rituals and beliefs are generally rooted in centuries or millennia of history but at the same time religions are always changing, adapting, to new circumstances. Religion accordingly can be read as a text rich with incidences of cultural encounter, a record of how cross-cultural engagements can lead to adaptation as well as to retrenchment. Some aspects of religious life are especially noteworthy in this regard, such as structures of religious authority and moral codes, which generally do not require a far-reaching analysis of symbology in order to be understood. In some cases, however, such as the analysis of ritual, material culture, or ideologies of gender, the body, and sexuality, all of which are central components of religion, different kinds of analyses are needed, and especially approaches that recognize the symbolic character of such components. Upon completion of a series of courses, the student will be able to analyze a central aspect of religion from both a Western and a non-Western religious perspective. In order to appreciate the way in which religions have interacted, the student must be equipped to see both sides of an encounter between religions. That means that a student must learn to experimentally step outside his/her own frame of vision in an attempt to appreciate a religious culture that is unfamiliar to him/her. By examining, for example, religious rituals of sexual coming of age in a tribal society, from the perspective of an American Jew, and then placing oneself conceptually in the place of a member of the tribe, and seeing the nature and function of the ritual in that way, a student will be better equipped to appreciate the ways in which local cultures imbue religion with specific meanings that often differ from ways in which other religious cultures structure similar events. A Bar Mitzvah training and celebration might be structurally similar in some ways to a tribal ceremony in a geographically distant place, but analysis of the two rituals will reveal that beneath apparent similarities there can be differences. Analysis of those</p>	<p>This will result in 85% of the students scoring 80% or better on an instructor-constructed exam or written report, or term paper, depending on the class. The department offers three courses that address this outcome: RELY 1300 (Introduction to World Religions), REL 3145 (Gender and Religion), and REL 3170 (Religious Ethics and Moral Problems). The department conducts an annual survey of instructors in these classes as to student performance on those assessment tools that ask students either (a) to evaluate categories of religious experience (e.g. ritual, purity) in the introductory world-religions class or in higher-level classes in individual Western or non-Western traditions, (b) to compare the relationship between gender and religion in a Western and a non-Western context or contexts, or (c) to evaluate patterns of ethical reasoning across religious cultures. Students are expected to demonstrate an ability to balance two perspectives, one a Western and one a non-Western way of understanding a certain feature of religion, be it a moral code, the role of women, ideas about the creation of the world, or some other component. That means that some consideration must be given in the paper, report, or exam of some of the assumptions that two different cultures make about human behavior, the body, cosmology, or another relevant cultural frame of reference. the analysis carried out in the paper is</p>

	<p>differences, and especially of the frames of consciousness, the cultural mentalities that make for those differences, is a central part of the education of a student in the field of religion.</p>	<p>successful in as much as it is thoughtful and informed, and especially in as much as it demonstrates an ability to analytically consider religion as a representation of cultural difference, and to define those differences in ways that indicate a willingness to honestly engage the unfamiliar. Method(s): Written Report or Essay and Instructor Constructed Exam.</p>
<p>Learning Outcome: Facility with Foundational Texts</p>	<p>Religious traditions are grounded in religious scriptures. Where they are not, and that is in a very few cases, oral traditions serve the same purpose of explaining how the world came about, where humans came from and what they are doing on earth, the invisible worlds of spirits, ghosts, and demons, what happens at death, and so forth. Building upon those scriptures are texts that interpret them. Within religious communities, theologies develop as interpretations of scriptures, and those theologies over time become complex and diverse, and as they proliferate lead to disagreements and divisions. Scholars who study religion also produce foundational texts, in the form of interpretations of religion. The field of religion, like others in the humanities, includes a number of foundational scholarly studies of religion as well as foundational primary texts. All of these taken together form an important part of the textual material that students of religion study. Many courses include such foundational texts, and they are read from an assortment of critical perspectives. It is crucial, however, that all students establish a starting point for their ongoing study of theologies and their reading of scholarly interpretations. Accordingly, upon completion of the course of instruction, the student will be able to interpret carefully and critically at least one primary text of a major world religion (in translation). Through a careful, critically informed reading of foundational texts such as the Bible, Quran, Bhagavad Gita or other texts, students will become familiar with the structure of the accumulated narratives that a religious tradition considers the basis for its existence as a form of spirituality. They will learn to identify the central stories explaining the creation of the world, good and evil, the afterlife (if there is one), and the ends of things (heaven, hell, destiny, reincarnation, nothing, etc.). They will learn how a religious tradition frames time and space through stories about persons who had visions, performed great deeds, spoke wisely, collected a following, and/or died unrecognized. They will become familiar with the means of argumentation employed by the authors, and the ways in which texts came into being, including their emendations, deletions, conflations, and combinations. They will also learn about how those who have studied the text have built certain kinds of theological standpoints on it, and how scholars who have studied it have brought a range of critical tools and approaches to its analysis.</p>	<p>75% of registered students will score 80% or above in an exam or paper, in one of the core departmental classes in either Western or Asian religions, that assesses this skill. Their performance will be measured by their familiarity with the names and places and story lines that are part of the foundational text. They will be required to demonstrate understanding of how religious ideas are expressed in the text, through the words attributed to heroes, saints, and gods, and through directly polemical and other didactic writing in the text. They will be required to know the history of the text, including when it came into being, its roots in oral culture (if that is the case), how it came to take the form that it existed in for most of its life, and what other texts it drew upon. Students will learn how rhetorical devices function in the texts to enhance their persuasiveness or make them more pointed in relation to competing texts. Students will become familiar with the interpretations given the text by religious insiders who base their spiritual life upon the text as well as by scholars whose interests are historical and critical. Method(s): Written Report or Essay and Instructor Constructed Exam.</p>
<p>Learning Outcome: Religion in the West</p>	<p>Religion in the West includes three monotheistic world religions, Judaism, Christianity, and Islam, as well as tribal religions, non-monotheistic religions, small devotional sects, and religious entities that are combinations of elements drawn from some or all of those. There are a great many religious groups in the West and each has its distinctive religious ideas and ritual forms, material culture and structures of authority, styles of community and solitary devotional practices. The fact that all are in the "West" by no means indicates that any two will share basic elements of belief or practice, but in most cases, lineages and lines of influence can be located. To know one religion is to know something about some others as well, in most cases. Judaism, for example, exercised a strong influence on the ideologies and religious practices of both Islam and Christianity, and Christianity likewise influenced Islam. Zoroastrianism served as a foundation (among others) for Judaism. To comprehend one religion is to know something about some others in the West as well.</p>	<p>80% of students will receive a score of 80% or better on an instructor-constructed exam given in one of the 2000- or 3000-level departmental classes that satisfies the departmental requirement in Western religions. The exam will measure the extent of the student's knowledge in areas such as scriptures, theology, ethics, material culture, authority, community, ritual, worship, and the religious calendar. Students will be required to explain basic concepts having to do with those areas, such as, for example, what an "unclean" food is to a Jew, what Muslims do with water during their prayers,</p>

	<p>Upon completion of the course of instruction, the student will be able to summarize basic concepts in at least one Western religious tradition. That includes knowing about the scriptures of that religion, and/or the oral traditions that shaped it; the theological ideas that grew from scriptures and the ways in which those ideas were altered, debated, implemented, and revised; the development of ritual forms in that religion, including those associated with life-cycle markers such as birth, puberty, marriage, and death, but also rituals associated with physical healing, the celebration of important occasions, friendship, and enmity; the religious calendar, including seasons and dates given over to certain religious activities such as worship, fasting, or celebration; the material culture of the religion, including some of styles of art and architecture, dress, food, music and other areas; the emotional styles of the religion, including the performance of joy and sorrow, love and hatred; the connection of the religion with political and social orders, and the extent to which political ideology is interwoven in religious thinking; the ethical systems that characterize that religion; and the ways in which authority and community are structured within that tradition.</p>	<p>what "Easter" means to Christian, what a "sealed marriage" is to a Mormon, or what the religious meanings of the figure of a "coyote" are to Native Americans of some tribes. Students must also know something about the history of a religion in the West, including when it began, what the important events were in its development, and how an important historical context here or there led to changes or adaptations in that religion. Students also will be required to know something about the religious texts that are important to that religion, and be able to recognize and explain the roles of certain important figures in that religion. Method(s): Instructor Constructed Exam.</p>
<p>Learning Outcome: Religion in Asia</p>	<p>Religions in Asia includes numerous traditions, including Hinduism, Buddhism (in its various forms such as Zen or Theravada, etc.), Taoism, Confucianism, Sikhism, Jainism, local religions and devotions, and blending of these and other traditions, such as are found, for example, in the Vietnamese religion Cao Dai. Islam, often considered a Eastern religion because it is monotheistic and was strongly influenced by Judaism and Christianity, also is found in Asia (e.g. Indonesia; Pakistan) but is not usually lumped by academics together with "Asian" religions. There are a great many religious groups in Asia and each has its distinctive religious ideas and ritual forms, material culture and structures of authority, styles of community and solitary devotional practices. The fact that all are in "Asia" by no means mandates that any two will share central elements of belief or practice, but in most cases, lineages and lines of influence can be located. To know one religion is to know something about some others as well, in most cases. There are linkages between Hinduism and Buddhism, for example, that can be tracked across continental regions as well as through localities. Knowledge about Hinduism in certain ways in knowledge about much more that is Asian. Upon completion of the course of instruction, the student will be able to summarize basic religious concepts in at least one Asian religious tradition, as per the department's requirement in Asian religions. That includes knowing about the scriptures of that religion, and/or the oral traditions that shaped it; the theological ideas that grew from scriptures and the ways in which those ideas were altered, debated, implemented, and revised; the development of ritual forms in that religion, including those associated with life-cycle markers such as birth, puberty, marriage, and death, but also rituals associated with physical healing, the celebration of important occasions, friendship, and enmity; the religious calendar, including seasons and dates given over to certain religious activities such as worship, fasting, or celebration; the material culture of the religion, including some of styles of art and architecture, dress, food, music and other areas; the emotional styles of the religion, including the performance of joy and sorrow, love and hatred; the connection of the religion with political and social orders, and the extent to which political ideology is interwoven in religious thinking; the ethical systems that characterize that religion; and the ways in which authority and community are structured within that tradition.</p>	<p>80% of students will receive a score of 80% or above in an instructor-constructed exam in one of the 2000- or 3000-level classes that satisfy the department's requirement in Asian religions. The exam will measure the extent of the student's knowledge in areas such as scriptures, theology, ethics, material culture, authority, community, ritual, worship, and the religious calendar. Students will be required to explain basic concepts having to do with those areas, such as, for example, what "reincarnation" is to a Hindu, what Zen Buddhists are doing when they rake gravel in a courtyard, what a dagger means to a Sikh, how good and evil are at war for a Zoroastrian, or what the religious meanings of the figure of an elephant are to various religious persons in Asia. Students must also know something about the history of a religion in Asia, including it beginnings, what the important events marked its development, and how an important historical context here or there led to changes or adaptations in that religion. Students also will be required to know something about the religious texts that are important to that religion, and be able to recognize and explain the roles of certain important figures in that religion. Method(s): Instructor Constructed Exam.</p>

Source: FSU Institutional Effectiveness Portal, 2017-18.