

Eastern Illinois University
Revised Course Proposal
RLS 1200G, Introduction to Religious Studies

Please check one: ☐ New course ☒ Revised course

PART I: CATALOG DESCRIPTION

- 1. Course prefix and number, such as ART 1000:** RLS 1200G
- 2. Title (may not exceed 30 characters, including spaces):** Intro to Religious Stud
- 3. Long title, if any (may not exceed 100 characters, including spaces):** Introduction to Religious Studies
- 4. Class hours per week, lab hours per week, and credit [e.g., (3-0-3)]:** 3-0-3
- 5. Term(s) to be offered:** ☐ Fall ☐ Spring ☐ Summer ☒ On demand
- 6. Initial term of offering:** ☐ Fall ☐ Spring ☒ Summer **Year:** 2008

Course description (not to exceed four lines):

RLS 1200 provides an introduction to world religions such as Buddhism, Judaism, Christianity and Islam. Students will examine various ways of understanding world religions and gain an appreciation for the nature and variety of religious experience.

7. Registration restrictions:

a. Identify any equivalent courses (e.g., cross-listed course, non-honors version of an honors course).
None.

b. Prerequisite(s), including required test scores, courses, grades in courses, and technical skills. Indicate whether any prerequisite course(s) **MAY** be taken concurrently with the proposed/revised course.

None

c. Who can waive the prerequisite(s)?

☐ No one ☒ Chair ☐ Instructor ☐ Advisor ☐ Other (Please specify)

d. Co-requisites (course(s) which **MUST** be taken concurrently with this one):

e. Repeat status: ☒ Course may not be repeated.

☐ Course may be repeated to a maximum of _____ hours or _____ times.

f. Degree, college, major(s), level, or class to which registration in the course is restricted, if any: None

g. Degree, college, major(s), level, or class to be excluded from the course, if any: None

8. Special course attributes [cultural diversity, general education (indicate component), honors, remedial, writing centered or writing intensive] Writing-Active, Cultural Diversity

9. Grading methods (check all that apply): ☒ Standard letter ☐ C/NC ☐ Audit ☐ ABC/NC ("Standard letter"—i.e., ABCDF—is assumed to be the default grading method unless the course description indicates otherwise.)

- 10. Instructional delivery method:** ☐ lecture ☐ lab ☐ lecture/lab combined ☐ independent study/research
☐ internship ☐ performance ☐ practicum or clinical ☐ study abroad ☒ other

PART II: ASSURANCE OF STUDENT LEARNING

List the student learning objectives of this course:

1. Students will apply interpretive categories in religious studies to understand, analyze, and interpret major religious traditions in the contemporary world. [General Education Goal – critical and reflective thinking]
2. Students will explain and evaluate the influence of religion and religious experience in shaping society and culture. [General Education Goal – responsible citizenship in a global society.]
3. Students will describe and evaluate the diversity and pluralism within the major religious traditions of the world.

a. If this is a general education course, indicate which objectives are designed to help students achieve one or more of the following goals of general education and university-wide assessment:

This course will further two components of Eastern's general education mission: responsible citizenship in a global society and skills in critical thinking and reflection.

Responsible citizenship in a global society demands the ability to communicate and work with people from a wide variety of cultural backgrounds. These diverse cultural backgrounds are shaped directly and indirectly by religious customs, beliefs, rituals, myths, and practices. Responsible citizenship also includes a critical appreciation for the place of religious experience and institutions in shaping public debate and policy in the contemporary world.

Critical and reflective thinking helps students become "more mindful of the relationships among self, society, and the environment. Such preparation is vital as society becomes more complex, interdependent, and reflective of diversity." This course encourages students to become more aware of religious diversity both between and within various religious traditions. It provides an introduction to the various approaches scholars have developed to study religious traditions critically and reflectively.

b. If this is a graduate-level course, indicate which objectives are designed to help students achieve established goals for learning at the graduate level:

This is not a graduate-level class.

1. Identify the assignments/activities the instructor will use to determine how well students attained the learning objectives:

Learning objectives for RLS 1200G will be met through chapter quizzes and final exam and a variety of writing assignments including chapter quizzes and final exam, discussion board posts, term paper, and a collaborative class project (a Wikibook that the entire class will write and edit).

2. Explain how the instructor will determine students' grades for the course:

Method of Evaluation: Quizzes and Final Exam	1/3
Term Paper	1/3
Participation (Discussion Board and Wikibook)	1/3

3. For technology-delivered and other nontraditional-delivered courses/sections, address the following:
a. Describe how the format/technology will be used to support and assess students' achievement of the specified learning objectives:

The chapter quizzes and final exam will cover the student's knowledge of reading assignments. The discussion board and Wikibook will give students the opportunity to demonstrate their command of the various beliefs and theories associated with the study of religion. The term paper will allow students to select two of the world's religions and explore the similarities and differences between them.

OBJECTIVES	Discussion Board and Wikibook 33%	Term Paper 33%	Chapter Tests and Final 33%
Apply interpretive categories of discipline of religious studies	X	X	X
Explain and evaluate influence of religion in shaping society and culture	X	X	X
Describe and evaluate diversity and pluralism within major world religions		X	X

b. Describe how the integrity of student work will be assured:

The test questions will be selected from a large test bank. Most questions will have alternates, so no student will take the same quiz or assessment. The order of the questions can also be scrambled, and a strict time limit will be enforced. In addition, writing assignments will be submitted to turnitin.com.

c. Describe provisions for and requirements of instructor-student and student-student interaction, including the kinds of technologies that will be used to support the interaction (e.g., e-mail, web-based discussions, computer conferences, etc.):

The instructor will communicate with students through the WebCT email client and the chat tool. The instructor will also participate with the class on the discussion board and will give weekly feedback on discussion board posts and contributions to the Wikibook..

4. For courses numbered 4750-4999, specify additional or more stringent requirements for students enrolling for graduate credit. These include:

Not Applicable to this class.

5. If applicable, indicate whether this course is writing-active, writing-intensive, or writing-centered, and describe how the course satisfies the criteria for the type of writing course identified. (See Appendix *.)

This is a writing active course. Writing activities are designed primarily to assist students in mastering course content, secondarily to strengthen students' writing skills.

PART III: OUTLINE OF THE COURSE

Provide a week-by-week outline of the course's content. Specify units of time (e.g., for a 3-0-3 course, 45 fifty-minute class periods over 15 weeks) for each major topic in the outline. Provide clear and sufficient details about content and procedures so that possible questions of overlap with other courses can be addressed. For technology-delivered or other nontraditional-delivered courses/sections, explain how the course content "units" are sufficiently equivalent to the traditional on-campus semester hour units of time described above.

Participation on WebCT is a course requirement (3 days per week) Students must spend at least 15 minutes a day on WebCT. Each day students must either participate in a chatroom, post to the discussion board, or contribute to the Wikibook. Contributions can be minimal like asking and answering a question or editing a Wikibook contribution. WebCt allows the instructor to track how often students visit course and which pages the student viewed.

Sample Course Outline:

Weeks One and Two

Foundations for Religious Studies

Early attempts to explain religion: Frazer and Tylor
The hermeneutics of suspicion: Marx, Freud, and Durkheim
Religion reconsidered: Eliade, Geertz, and Turner
Approaches to the scientific study of religion

Weeks Three and Four

Overview of interpretive categories and their use in religious studies

Ritual
Symbol
Myth
Sacred time and space
Sacred writings
Deity and cosmogony
Spiritual practice and spiritual experience
Suffering, the problem of evil, and theodicy

Week Five

Oral and Indigenous Religions

Week Six

The Hindu Tradition

Week Seven

The Buddhist Tradition

Week Eight

Jainism and Sikhism

Week Nine

Taoism and Confucianism

Week Ten

Shintoism

Week Eleven

Judaism

Week Twelve

Christianity

Week Thirteen

Islam

Week Fourteen

Contemporary alternative or “new” religions

 Scientology

 Religions of the Yoruba Tradition: Santería, Voodoo, Candomblé

 Falun Gong

Week Fifteen

Modern influences on the development of religion

Re-Assessing religion

PART IV: PURPOSE AND NEED

1. Explain the department’s rationale for developing and proposing the course.

- a. If this is a general education course, you also must indicate the segment of the general education program into which it will be placed, and describe how the course meets the requirements of that segment.**

This course will further two components of Eastern’s general education mission: responsible citizenship in a global society and skills in critical thinking and reflection.

Responsible citizenship in a global society demands the ability to communicate and work with people from a wide variety of cultural backgrounds. These diverse cultural backgrounds are shaped directly and indirectly by religious customs, beliefs, rituals, myths, and practices. Responsible citizenship also includes a critical appreciation for the place of religious experience and institutions in shaping public debate and policy in the contemporary world.

Critical and reflective thinking helps students become “more mindful of the relationships among self, society, and the environment. Such preparation is vital as society becomes more complex, interdependent, and reflective of diversity.” This course encourages students to become more aware of religious diversity both between and within various religious traditions. It provides an introduction to the various approaches scholars have developed to study religious traditions critically and reflectively.

b. If the course or some sections of the course may be technology delivered, explain why.

The rationale for offering RLS 1200G as a technology delivered course is that it is necessary in order to give students the opportunity to take this course in a nontraditional format. This course will be made available primarily to off-campus students through the School of Continuing Education, but at times may be offered as a regular course. Nontraditional students are unable to take these classes on the EIU campus because they live too far away and/or have full-time jobs that prevent them from traveling to Charleston to take the class.

Justify the level of the course and any course prerequisites, co-requisites, or registration restrictions.

Non-Applicable

2. If the course is similar to an existing course or courses, justify its development and offering.

a. If the contents substantially duplicate those of an existing course, the new proposal should be discussed with the appropriate chairpersons, deans, or curriculum committees and their responses noted in the proposal.

RLS 1200G is already available to on-campus students in a traditional classroom. This proposal seeks to extend the same opportunity to nontraditional students by offering RLS 1200G as a technology delivered course.

b. Cite course(s) to be deleted if the new course is approved. If no deletions are planned, note the exceptional need to be met or the curricular gap to be filled.

No courses are to be deleted if this course is approved.

3. Impact on Program(s):

a. For undergraduate programs, specify whether this course will be required for a major or minor or used as an approved elective.

This course is intended as an elective.

b. For graduate programs, specify whether this course will be a core requirement for all candidates in a degree or certificate program or an approved elective.

Not Applicable

If the proposed course changes a major, minor, or certificate program in or outside of the department, you must submit a separate proposal requesting that change along with the course proposal. Provide a copy of the existing program in the current catalog with the requested changes noted.

Not Applicable.

PART V: IMPLEMENTATION

- 1. Faculty member(s) to whom the course may be assigned:** Phil Thompson, Jonelle DePetro, Grant Sterling, Gary Aylesworth

If this is a graduate course and the department does not currently offer a graduate program, it must document that it employs faculty qualified to teach graduate courses.

This is not a graduate course.

- 2. Additional costs to students:**

No additional costs for student.

Include those for supplemental packets, hardware/software, or any other additional instructional, technical, or technological requirements. (Course fees must be approved by the President's Council.)

- 3. Text and supplementary materials to be used (Include publication dates):**

Molloy, M. (2005). *Experiencing the world's religions: Tradition, challenge, and change*, 3rd ed. Columbus OH: McGraw-Hill Companies.

Pals, D. (1996). *Seven theories of religion*. New York: Oxford University Press.

PART VI: COMMUNITY COLLEGE TRANSFER

If the proposed course is a 1000- or 2000-level course, state either, "A community college course may be judged equivalent to this course" OR "A community college course will not be judged equivalent to this course." A community college course will not be judged equivalent to a 3000- or 4000-level course but may be accepted as a substitute; however, upper-division credit will not be awarded.

A community college course may be judged equivalent to this course according to the standards of the IAI.

PART VII: APPROVALS

Date approved by the department or school: March 25, 2008

Date approved by the college curriculum committee:

Date approved by the Honors Council (*if this is an honors course*):

Date approved by CAA: May 1, 2008

*In **writing-active courses**, frequent, brief writing activities and assignments are required. Such activities -- some of which are to be graded -- might include five-minute in-class writing assignments, journal keeping, lab reports, essay examinations, short papers, longer papers, or a variety of other writing-to-learn activities of the instructor's invention. Writing assignments and activities in writing-active courses are designed primarily to assist students in mastering course content, secondarily to strengthen students' writing skills. In **writing-intensive courses**, several writing assignments and writing activities are required. These assignments and activities, which are to be spread over the course of the semester, serve the dual purpose of strengthening writing skills and deepening understanding of course content. At least one writing assignment is to be revised by the student after it has been read and commented on by the instructor. In writing-intensive courses, students' writing should constitute no less than 35% of the final course grade. In **writing-centered courses** (English 1001G, English 1002G, and their honors equivalents), students learn the principles and the process of writing in all of its stages, from inception to completion. The quality of students' writing is the principal determinant of the course grade. The minimum writing requirement is 20 pages (5,000 words).

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