Eastern Illinois University
New Course Proposal
RLS 3900, Special Topics in Religious Studies

Please check one:  ☑ New course  ☐ Revised course

PART I: CATALOG DESCRIPTION

1. Course prefix and number, such as ART 1000:  RLS 3900
2. Title (may not exceed 30 characters, including spaces):  Spl Topics Religious Studies
3. Long title, if any (may not exceed 100 characters, including spaces):  Special Topics in 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:  2010
7. Course description (not to exceed four lines):  An in-depth treatment of a major topic or figure of religious significance. May be repeated to a maximum of 9 hours.

8. 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 9 hours.
   f. Degree, college, major(s), level, or class to which registration in the course is restricted, if any:
   g. Degree, college, major(s), level, or class to be excluded from the course, if any:

9. Special course attributes [cultural diversity, general education (indicate component), honors, remedial, writing centered or writing intensive]  WI

10. 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.)

11. Instructional delivery method:  ☑ lecture  ☐ lab  ☑ lecture/lab combined  ☐ independent study/research
      ☐ internship  ☐ performance  ☐ practicum or clinical  ☐ study abroad  ☑ other

Agenda Item # 09-56
Effective Spring 2010
PART II: ASSURANCE OF STUDENT LEARNING

1. List the student learning objectives of this course:

The following are examples of student learning objectives for a special topics course under the RLS 3900 course number.

Students will:
I) Become familiar with the historical development of the traditions of the three major world monotheistic religions (Judaism, Christianity, and Islam).
II) Describe and articulate the main philosophical/theological principles of those religions.
III) Explain the ways in which those principles and traditions are reflected in contemporary forms of worship.
IV) Explain and articulate the inter-relationship between those faiths in a contemporary setting, identifying both areas of common interest or agreement and areas of friction or conflict.
V) Describe and evaluate possible future challenges and opportunities for those faiths.

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:
   • EIU graduates will write and speak effectively.
   • EIU graduates will think critically.
   • EIU graduates will function as responsible citizens.

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:
   • Depth of content knowledge
   • Effective critical thinking and problem solving
   • Effective oral and written communication
   • Advanced scholarship through research or creative activity

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

Weekly response papers focusing on readings in scriptures of each of the religions and supplemental readings in secondary sources (objectives I, II, IV, and V)
Research essay (objectives I, II, IV, and V)
Essay exams (objectives I, II, IV, and V)
Visit to a worship service of one of the three religions (students must choose a service outside their own religious tradition, if this applies), evaluated by a field research report. (objective III)

3. Explain how the instructor will determine students’ grades for the course:

Weekly 350 word response papers to assigned readings and class participation (10% combined);
One research essay (5 pages: will be revised after comments from instructor) (20%);
One field research report on a visit to a worship service of one of the three religions under study (7 – 10 pages) (25%);
Three exams (15% each, 45% total).
4. 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 weekly response papers and essay exams will cover student's knowledge of reading assignments and give them practice at evaluation. The discussion board and Wikibook will give students the opportunity to demonstrate their command of the various beliefs, traditions, and principles associated with the study of religion. The research essay and field research will allow students to explore similarities and differences and evaluate future challenges and opportunities.

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

   The questions will be in essay format. 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 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.

   For courses numbered 4750-4999, specify additional or more stringent requirements for students enrolling for graduate credit. These include:
   d. course objectives;
   e. projects that require application and analysis of the course content; and
   f. separate methods of evaluation for undergraduate and graduate students.

   N/A.

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 *.)

   The Course is writing-intensive: 90-100% of the course grade stems from writing, with one assignment that will be revised after comments from the instructor.

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 on a chatroom, post the discussion board, or contribute to the Wikibook. Contributions can be minimal like asking and answering a questions or editing a
Wikibook contribution. WebCT allows the instructor to track how often students visit the course and which pages the student viewed.

[SAMPLE OUTLINE]

Unit I
Week One: Introduction to Ancient Near Eastern religions.

Week Two: Abraham, Isaac & Jacob: the three patriarchs and the foundations of Jewish identity.

Week Three: Moses and the “Promised Land”; Torah, Talmud and the formation of Jewish practice.

Week Four: Judaism becomes monotheistic

Unit II
Week Five: From Jesus to the Christ- the story of Jesus as portrayed in the gospels.

Week Six: The missions of St. Paul: the transformation of the Jesus movement to the Christian church.

Week Seven: Early Christian thought: the marriage of Jerusalem and Athens.

Week Eight: Religion and Empire: how Christianity came to be the dominant religion of Europe.

Unit III
Week Nine: A Voice from the desert: Mohammed and the origins of Islam.

Week Ten: The Qur’an as a sacred text.

Week Eleven: The Rightly Guided Ones: successors to Muhammad

Week Twelve: Struggle in the Way of God: the meaning of jihad

Unit IV: Contemporary Issues in Judaism, Christianity & Islam

Week Thirteen: The Clash of Monotheisms: Jewish, Christian, Islamic interactions – historical encounters

Week Fourteen: Modernism and Fundamentalisms: Monotheism confronts the age of science.

Week Fifteen: Jewish, Christian & Muslim dialogue “A Common Word Between Us and You”: an open letter from an international group of Islamic scholars to the Christian and Jewish counterparts.

PART IV: PURPOSE AND NEED

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

The Philosophy department is expanding their offerings in this area, in order to facilitate the new Religious Studies minor. The Introduction to Religious Studies course has been successful, and an advanced course focusing on diverse topics in the field is needed to round out the program.
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.

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

The course will originally be taught traditionally, in the classroom, but we would like the opportunity to offer it also as a technology delivered course primarily to off-campus students through the School of Continuing Education. 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. Offering the course in a technology-delivered format allows students who might otherwise not be able to do so, the opportunity to take the course.

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

This course involves advanced treatment of issues in religious studies, suitable for an upper-level undergraduate course.

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

No similar courses.

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.

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.

4. 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 serves as an elective for the Religious Studies Minor and the Philosophy major.

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.

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.

PART V: IMPLEMENTATION

1. Faculty member(s) to whom the course may be assigned:

Grant Sterling, Dannie Otto, Ryan McDaniel, Jonelle DePetro, Philip Thompson
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.

2. Additional costs to students: None

   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): Sample texts:


   “A Common Word between Us and You”: an open letter from an international group of Islamic scholars to the Christian and Jewish counterparts. (2007)

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.

PART VII: APPROVALS

Date approved by the department or school: October 15, 2008

Date approved by the college curriculum committee: April 22, 2009

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

Date approved by CAA: May 6, 2009
*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).