

REPORT ON STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES

Question	Response
<p>1. What do you expect your majors to know and be able to do by the time they graduate?</p>	<p>The Program for the Study of Religion expects its students to be able:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) to explain the tenets of one or more religious traditions, demonstrating familiarity with the native vocabulary of the tradition(s), as well as sensitivity to the ways in which fundamental doctrines change over time. 2) to analyze complex problems in the study of religion from a multiplicity of perspectives, using tools and methods developed by diverse intellectual disciplines. 3) to recognize the historicity of “religion” as an intellectual category. 4) to distinguish academic from confessional approaches to the study of religion. 5) to read religious primary sources in a nuanced manner, sensitive to factors of time, geography, and socio-cultural context. 6) to read secondary sources about religion actively rather than passively. I.e., to be able to ask clarificatory questions, disagree with an author by raising objections, and integrate newly read texts with prior knowledge. 7) to write accurate and incisive essays that articulate an academic thesis and support the thesis using both primary and secondary materials. 8) to speak about religion with clarity and precision, applying their interpretive and critical skills to oral conversation.
<p>2. What is the relationship between the major’s core curriculum and your learning outcomes?</p>	<p>The Program for the Study of Religion (PSR) permits only upper division courses to count towards the major. Thus before a student pursues the PSR major, s/he will already have begun developing writing and analytic skills in courses required by the University and by her/his individual College or, in the case of transfer students, in courses that articulate with UCSD courses.</p> <p>The PSR’s grounding principle can be articulated by reference to a familiar anthropological cliché, namely the claim that all human beings in all times and places have had religion. Reversing this cliché, one reaches the PSR’s academic basis: The phenomena we classify as “religious” phenomena are, for all times and places, to be treated as integrally human phenomena. Thus, the PSR is committed to radical interdisciplinarity. For religion, as an emergent phenomenon, appertains to the fullness of the human world. Religion emerges from literature, history, social organization, imagination, emotions, culture, the physical body itself. Thus the PSR core curriculum includes both required courses as well as electives.</p> <p>Required Courses</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● RELI 110A or RELI 110B – Entitled “The Modern Study of Religion,” this course focuses on the study of religion as a distinct academic field,

	<p>providing a theoretical grounding for the majors. Any student who completes either version of RELI 110 successfully will have satisfied learning outcomes #2, #3, #4, #6, #7.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● RELI 111 or RELI 112 or RELI 113 – Entitled “Texts and Contexts,” this course focuses on the close reading and analysis of religious texts in relationship to historically specific contexts and communities of interest. Additionally, secondary consideration is given to understanding the meta-process the analysis of texts informs the study of religion as an academic field. Any student who completes one version of this course will have satisfied learning outcomes #1, #2, #3, #4, #5, #6, #7. ● RELI 189 – Entitled “Seminar in Religion,” this capstone course has a shifting subject matter, depending upon the faculty member teaching it. The seminar offers majors an opportunity to closely observe how professional scholars articulate research questions and construct projects to address those questions. Whereas lectures expose students to accumulated knowledge, the seminar gives them practical experience in the process of knowledge-creation within the humanities. The active learning environment of the seminar will enable students to take responsibility for their own education, forcing them to cultivate their own capabilities as scholars and thinkers. Any student who completes one version of this course will have satisfied learning outcomes #2, #3, #5, #6, #7, #8. <p>Electives</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● PSR majors are required to take nine electives from among the courses offered by more than forty faculty members in ten departments. Approximately twenty electives are offered every quarter on an ad hoc basis, contingent upon affiliated faculty’s availability and interest. This enforced interdisciplinarity necessarily satisfies learning outcome #2. Additionally, depending upon an individual student’s chosen course of study, the nine electives will normally satisfy most, if not all, the other seven stated learning objectives as well.
<p>3. How will you communicate information about your learning outcomes to your majors and potential majors?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● UCSD’s <i>General Catalogue</i> (available online at: http://infopath-1.ucsd.edu/catalog/pdf/files/0809_UCSD_-General_Catalog.pdf) ● The Program for the Study of Religion website (http://religion.ucsd.edu/learningoutcomes.pdf) ● Individual course syllabi. ● Regular meetings of the PSR director with majors and potential majors. ● Conversations of students with PSR faculty advisors and/or PSR staff coordinator.
<p>4. How will you determine whether or not your majors have achieved your learning objectives?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Individual faculty not only assess individual students based on their performance in courses but also act as advisors as well as instructors, guiding students in improving their outcomes. ● RELI 189 serves as a capstone course for the major. ● RELI syllabi include a statement of desired learning outcomes. Faculty submit a self-assessment to PSR director after the quarter is complete. ● We also see our outcomes operating in the world, e.g., in students’ acceptance to professional and graduate schools, their success in getting jobs, their publications, and public awards they receive.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Majors are given an exit questionnaire before graduating. This allows them to reflect upon and assess the religion courses they took and the work done in them. Although the questionnaire already contains a question about future plans, the PSR will make a greater effort to maintain contact with students after graduation in the interest of tracking their future success. In the present moment, it seems that befriending students on Facebook.com is the most expedient means for maintaining long-term contact.
<p>5. How will your assessment results be used for the improvement of undergraduate education (teaching and learning)?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Individual course instructors regularly use student feedback to modify their classes from year to year. ● Regular meetings between the majors and faculty allow the director to ascertain whether new courses are needed to serve student desires and interests. (The addition of RELI 189 as a required capstone course is an example of a programmatic change that had its origin as a student initiative.) ● The PSR sponsors regular “Town Hall Meetings” for all affiliated faculty at which the curriculum is discussed and assessed. ● Faculty self-assessments allow the PSR director to develop an overall “sense of the program” as well as to address issues raised by individual faculty members and their courses.