

UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS
AT URBANA - CHAMPAIGN

EP.11.14

Office of the Provost and Vice Chancellor
for Academic Affairs

Swanlund Administration Building
601 East John Street
Champaign, IL 61820



November 2, 2010

Abbas Aminmansour, Chair
Senate Committee on Educational Policy
Office of the Senate
228 English Building, MC-461

Dear Professor Aminmansour:

Enclosed is a copy of a proposal from the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences to revise Bachelor of Arts in Liberal Arts & Sciences in Religion degree.

This proposal has been approved by the Committee on Courses and Curricula, Dean's Cabinet and the Executive Committee in the College of Liberal Arts & Sciences. It now requires Senate review.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Kristi A. Kuntz".

Kristi A. Kuntz
Assistant Provost

KAK/njh

Enclosures

c: E. Benmamoun
A. Mester
D. Price

UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS
AT URBANA - CHAMPAIGN

Office of the Dean

College of Liberal Arts and Sciences
294 Lincoln Hall
702 South Wright Street
Urbana, IL 61801-3631



October 7, 2010

Kritsi Kuntz
Assistant Provost
Swanlund Administration Building
MC-304

Dear Kristi:

The Committee on Courses and Curricula, Dean's Cabinet, and Executive Committee on behalf of the Faculty of the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences has voted to approve the following proposal:

Revision of the requirements for the BALAS in Religion

Please address all correspondence concerning this proposal to me. We request administrative review of the proposal for proposed implementation Fall 2011.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Ann M. Mester".

Ann M. Mester
Associate Dean

enclosure

C: Professor David Price
Professor Elabbas Benmamoun



Proposal to the Senate Educational Policy Committee

PROPOSAL TITLE: Revision of the requirements for the BALAS in Religion

SPONSOR: David Price, Department of Religion, 3072 Foreign Languages Building, MC 166; 3-0473

COLLEGE CONTACT: Ann M. Mester, Associate Dean, College of Liberal Arts and Sciences, 294 Lincoln Hall, 333-1350; mester@illinois.edu

BRIEF DESCRIPTION:

The proposed revision will make the following general changes:

1. Revised the 30 hour requirement of Religion courses so that at least five of these courses must be at the 300 or 400 level, and no more than three may be at the 100 level.
2. Replace the existing cumbersome system of areas of concentrations with a more flexible set of options. Each student will establish a primary area of study in which the student must complete a minimum of three courses and a secondary field of study in which the student must complete two courses. Each student will also take a set of distribution requirements, so that they gain exposure to both Western and non-Western religious traditions.
3. Reduce the required courses to (a) either RLST 230 (Philosophy of Religion) or RLST 231 (Religion and Philosophy) and (b) a “Capstone Course” requirement that will require all students to complete a significant research project. This will eliminate the need for students in the major to take several 100-level courses which are intended for the general student body.
4. Increase options for students in all areas and streamline what we require of all students, affording our majors more opportunity to focus on their main interests in the field.

5. The major will no longer require any foreign language study beyond meeting the University's general foreign language requirement. However, majors will be strongly encouraged to learn the languages relevant to their primary field of study.
6. Departmental distinction has been revised to include an overall GPA requirement.

JUSTIFICATION:

The major in Religion expanded rapidly from being the program of study for 1-2 students per year in the mid 1990s to 25-35 students per year currently. This level has remained fairly constant over the last few years. We teach very large numbers of students, many in general education courses, and there is great interest on the part of students in what our department has to offer. As the number of students we teach has grown, the number of our majors has not grown apace. We think that the major that we now wish to replace is too cumbersome, too laden with unnecessary requirements, and insufficiently flexible. We want a major that will both permit students who wish to pursue graduate study in the field with every opportunity to prepare themselves to do so but that will also be flexible enough to permit double majors.

BUDGETARY AND STAFF IMPLICATIONS: *(Please respond to each of the following questions. Place your response right after each item. See Appendix A for questions required of new program proposals as well additional notes regarding budgetary and staff implications.)*

- a. Additional staff and dollars needed. No additional staff needed for these revisions.
- b. Internal reallocations (e.g., change in class size, teaching loads, student-faculty ratio, etc.). No reallocations needed for the revisions we propose.
- c. Effect on course enrollment in other units and explanations of discussions with representatives of those department. Enrollments in other courses is not a concern.
- d. Impact on the University Library. No request for increased library resources.
- e. Impact on computer use, laboratory use, equipment, etc. No request for increased computer resources.

DESIRED EFFECTIVE DATE: Fall 2011

STATEMENT FOR PROGRAMS OF STUDY CATALOG:

Religion

[Religion, Department of](#)

Head: David Price

Office: 3072 Foreign Languages Building, 707 South Mathews, Urbana, (217) 333-0473

Religion

www.relst.illinois.edu

This major is sponsored by the Department of Religion.

Major in Sciences and Letters Curriculum

E-mail: religion@illinois.edu

Degree title: Bachelor of Arts in Liberal Arts and Sciences

A minimum of 30 hours of coursework is required for the major. This includes (a) RLST 230 (Philosophy of Religion: An Introduction) or RLST 231 (Religion and Philosophy), and completing a Capstone Course, as explained below.

At least 15 of the 30 hours must be at the 300 or 400 level, and no more than 9 hours may be at the 100 level.

Each student must complete two courses in any of the following: Hinduism, Buddhism, Chinese and Japanese Religions, or indigenous American religious practices, chosen from a list maintained in the departmental adviser's office. **And** each student must complete two courses in any of the following: Judaism, Christianity, Islam, or religious practices of the ancient Near East, chosen from a list maintained in the departmental adviser's office.

Additionally, each student will establish a primary and secondary field of study. For the primary area of study, a student must complete a minimum of **three** courses (nine credit hours), and for the secondary area **two** courses (six credit hours) are required. An individual course may not be counted twice toward fulfilling the requirements of the primary and secondary areas of interest. (Students are encouraged to complete more than the minimum of three courses in the primary area of study.)

The following are the areas of study: Buddhism, Christianity, Hinduism, Islam, Judaism, Philosophy of Religion, Religion in America, or individually designed area of study chosen with the approval of the departmental advisor.

Capstone Experience:

Research paper for one 400-level course in RLST: Each major must make special arrangements with a professor teaching a 400-level RLST course to conduct a significant research project that results in a research paper of 20 pages (minimum). The goal of this requirement is to ensure that each RLST major has conducted a significant research project. RLST 493 can be used to satisfy this requirement.

Students considering graduate study in Religion are urged to consult with professors on the necessary preparation for graduate study in their area of interest.

Departmental distinction: To be considered for departmental distinction a student must have an overall GPA of at least 3.5. Distinction is granted on the basis of a senior thesis written in the context of RLST 493. The level of distinction is based on evaluation of the thesis.

General education: The LAS General Education requirements are set up so students automatically complete the Campus General Education requirements.

Minimum hours required for graduation: 120 hours

Hours	Core Courses
	Minimum of 30 hours of Religion courses including:
3	PHIL 230–Philosophy of Religion Intro (same as RLST 230), or RLST 231- Religion and Philosophy
12	Distribution Requirement: Courses taken must include: (a) Two courses in the following: Judaism, Christianity, Islam, or religious practices of the ancient Near East, chosen from a list maintained in the departmental adviser’s office and (b) Two courses in the following: Hinduism, Buddhism, Chinese and Japanese Religions, or indigenous American religious practices, chosen from a list maintained in the departmental adviser’s office.
9	Three courses in a primary area of study ¹
6	Two courses in a secondary area of study ¹
	Capstone Experience: a 400-level RLST course in which a research project is undertaken and a 20 page research paper is written. This course can be RLST 493 and can also be used to fulfill part of the distribution or primary or secondary area of study requirement.

1. Areas of study include: Buddhism, Christianity, Hinduism, Islam, Judaism, Philosophy of Religion, Religion in America, or an individually designed area of study approved by the departmental advisor. Courses chosen to fulfill the primary area of study cannot also be used to fulfill the secondary area of study.

Twelve hours of 300 or 400-level courses in your major must be taken on this campus.

Foreign Language Requirements: The major in Religious Studies does not *require* any foreign language study beyond meeting the University’s general foreign language requirement. However, majors are strongly encouraged to learn the languages relevant to their primary field of study and to begin that course of study as soon as possible. Please consult with the Director of Undergraduate Studies in Religion or a professor in your area of interest about appropriate foreign language study.

A Major Plan of Study Form must be completed and submitted to the LAS Student Affairs Office before the end of the fifth semester (60-75 hours). Please see your adviser.

CLEARANCES:

Signatures:

David Linn
Unit Representative:

6 Oct 2010
Date:

G. P. Seaman
School Representative:

10/6/10
Date:

Ann M. M... ..
College Representative:

10/7/10
Date:

Provost Representative:

Date:

Educational Policy Committee Representative:

Date: