

University of Dayton
Department of Religious Studies

Assessment Report

Academic Year 2011-2012

August 15, 2012

This report follows the outline given in the “Assessment Overview (Summer 2012)” document. Making reference to the Department’s general assessment plan (q.v.), this report will name the learning outcomes selected for review this year, describe the means of assessing these outcomes, and present the results of the assessment. It will then offer comments on how these results will be used in the Department’s strategic planning for its undergraduate curriculum.

I. Learning Outcomes, Means of Assessment, Results of Assessment.

According to the Department’s general assessment plan, the Department established seven learning outcomes for its undergraduate major. During the 2011-2012 academic year, the Department decided to assess the first three of these outcomes by means of a combination of surveys, random sampling of course papers, and review of presentations in capstone seminars. The results of these assessments are reproduced on the following pages. Dr. Silviu Bunta coordinated the gathering of this assessment data and wrote the report that follows.

ASSESSMENT FOR RELIGIOUS STUDIES MAJORS

2011-2012

(version 4.4, revised November 1, 2011)

Outcome I: Graduating Religious Studies majors will demonstrate knowledge of basic concepts and categories of theological reflection.

Measures:

1. In an anonymous survey and/or exit interviews of graduating majors, at least 80% of respondents will agree that
 - a. they acquired fundamental concepts and methods of more than one area of the field of Religious Studies;
 - b. they appropriated a general vocabulary of theological discourse and reflection.

Result: 4/4=100%
2. At least 80% of a random sample of papers from the capstone seminar and/or other courses will demonstrate knowledge and appropriate use of basic concepts of theological discourse.

Result: capstone 5/6=83%
Other classes: 4/5=80%
3. At least 80% of a random sample of senior theses (if applicable) will demonstrate knowledge and appropriate use of major concepts of theological discourse.

N.A.

Outcome II: Graduating Religious Studies majors will be able to employ multiple critical methods to their analysis of texts and will be able to locate the texts in their historical contexts, diachronically and synchronically.

Measures:

1. In an anonymous survey and/or exit interviews of graduating majors, at least 80% of respondents will agree that in their courses they have appropriated and have used at least two different methods of textual interpretation.

Result: 4/4=100%
2. At least 80% of a random sample of papers from the capstone seminar and other classes will demonstrate awareness of different critical approaches of texts and of the historical contexts of the texts analyzed; the papers will provide at least dates for their texts, will indicate possible sources of influence, and will show awareness of subsequent reception and usage of the texts.

Result: capstone 5/6=83%
Other classes: 3/5=60%
3. At least 80% of a random sample of senior theses (if applicable) will demonstrate awareness of different critical approaches of texts and of the historical contexts of the texts analyzed; the papers will provide at least dates for their texts, will indicate possible sources of influence, and will show awareness of subsequent reception and usage of the texts.

N.A.

Outcome III: Graduating Religious Studies majors will be able to utilize effectively methods of research and argumentation appropriate to the field. They will locate and use appropriate information technologies when conducting research (book reviews, databases etc.), will evaluate and analyze critically information gathered from a variety of resources, will develop a thesis and an argument, will demonstrate knowledge of the mechanics of a paper production (e.g., use of citations), and will offer effective oral presentations of their research projects.

Measures:

1. At least 80% of a random sample of major papers from the capstone seminar or other classes will demonstrate effective use of varied resources, proper application of basic structure rules, clarity of thesis, clarity and unity of discourse, and proper and consistent citations of sources.

Results: capstone 5/6=83%

Other classes 4/5=80%

2. In an anonymous survey and/or exit interviews of graduating majors, at least 80% of the respondents will agree that their paper presentations (in capstone seminar and/or at Stander) have shaped their ability to present their knowledge publicly.

Results: 4/4=100%

3. At least 80% of a random sample of senior theses (if applicable) will demonstrate effective use of varied resources, proper application of basic structure rules, clarity of thesis, clarity and unity of discourse, and proper and consistent citations of sources.

N.A.

4. At least 80% of presentations in the capstone seminar and Stander symposium will demonstrate effective practices of public delivery of research.

Results: 6/7=85%

5. At least 80% of alumni responding to pertinent questions will agree or strongly agree that their coursework and related experience at UID has contributed significantly to their skills and practices of producing informed and well-organized research and of delivering this research in effective ways.

N.A.

II. Strategic Planning and Actions Taken by Department

To my knowledge, the results presented above were not made part of any strategic planning or action items during the 2011-2012 school year. This is both understandable given the extremely heavy load of tasks needing to be done by the faculty last year, and also a gap in the assessment process which I will attempt to rectify this year as the new chair. During the upcoming year, I will ask the Department's faculty to do the following:

- 1) Meet in a full session to review and discuss the results above (already scheduled for September);
- 2) Decide on a specific set of assessment outcomes to be reviewed this year, and decide on both the means and schedule for such assessments;
- 3) Develop a plan for the integration of the results of assessment into faculty discussion of curricular and programmatic revision, which this year will be particularly focused on the implementation of the new Common Academic Program at both the introductory and advanced levels.
- 4) Use the results of assessment from both last year and this year to inform a process of revision of the major according to CAP.

Respectfully submitted,

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