

Religious Studies Program University Plan III

Submission Date: October 13, 2008

Mission and Aspirations

The past few years have demonstrated that religion informs all human behavior, ranging from personal decisions to government policy. One need look no further than the two fastest-growing economies India and China, to know that world religions frequently complicate American business, politics, and security. Within America, the different religious views of its citizens work both to unite and to divide. To deal with this complexity, students need to study these religions.

The Religious Studies Program sometimes describes religions in terms of “ours” and “theirs”—an admitted over-simplification. By plan and by accident, the University of Wyoming has different levels of expertise in these two categories. On the one hand, the Program has a solid foundation of three full-time faculty with expertise in “our religions” of Judaism and Christianity; we can teach from the earliest origins recorded in their scriptures through European history to American colonization and ultimately the settlement of the American West. Furthermore, as described below (RELI-5), we are laying the foundations for additional expertise in religions in the American West. At the same time, Religious Studies has been working to develop resources for teaching “their religions,” those of internationally influential societies around the world. We now have a full-time expert in Islam and the religions of the Middle East, and we are seeking ways to provide instruction in Hinduism and Buddhism. Religious Studies’ primary goal in University Plan III is to serve student need at UW by establishing a B.A. in Religious Studies (RELI-1). This field constitutes a resurgent major at campuses across America, sought by those entering business, medicine, and politics alike. Indeed, the discipline draws from a wide population of students who recognize the need in today’s world to understand fundamental motivations of human behavior. Here at UW, Religious Studies accounts for over 3000 student credit hours per year, despite having only four dedicated lines. Since Fall 2006, we have been working toward a major and have had our proposal approved up through the College of Arts and Sciences. In this next planning cycle, the Program aims to complete University approval of the Religious Studies major and to implement it. The other action items either support this goal or relate to our ongoing activities.

Previous Planning Accomplishments

RELI 1	Join Religious Studies Program with the History Department.	Accomplished, then failed. See above.
RELI 2	Develop teaching foci on American Religion and religion in the American West	Accomplished
RELI 3	Develop teaching foci on Islam and other Middle East religions	Accomplished
RELI 4	Design and implement a Religious Studies major.	Design accomplished. Awaiting approval before implementation.
RELI 5	Cooperate with AAS to offer courses on African and African-American religions	Accomplished
RELI 6	Develop courses in Hinduism & Buddhism	Not accomplished
RELI 7	Continue statewide leadership in the discussion of religious issues	Accomplished
RELI 8	Re-institute student participation in summer archaeological excavations in Israel	Not accomplished, political situation unsafe in Middle East.

RELI 9	Get requirements for Global Studies USP changed	Failed
RELI 10	Design and begin implementing an assessment program for the Religious Studies minor	Accomplished
RELI 11	Expand the audience of the Religion Today column	Accomplished

Relevant Institutional Issues

Since every society across the world has significant religious activity and belief, the discipline of Religious Studies focuses both on religions important to our own culture and on religions important on the world stage. The proposed major (RELI-1) focuses on “our culture” by incorporating study of the religions of the American West (see RELI-1, 5 and 6), a plan that fits squarely into UP III’s Area of Distinction concerning the History and Culture of the Rocky Mountain region. Concomitantly, the Program’s emphasis on international religions places its efforts squarely into UP III’s interest in Internationalization (Access, Inclusiveness). (See RELI-9.)

Action Items

RELI-1. Gain Approval for and Implement a Religious Studies Major.

The Religious Studies Program developed a plan for a B.A. in Religious Studies in Spring 2007 (see Appendix for Plan introduction). Since then it has been working to gain its approval. The College of Arts and Sciences has given its approval and support. During the period of UP III, the Program aims to complete this process and implement the major midway through the plan period.

Since its inception in 1993, the Religious Studies Program has worked towards its long-range goal of having a major. Religious Studies currently delivers over 3000 credit hours of courses per year and has four, full-time, permanent (and permanent-track) faculty. The number of students that take its courses and a recent student survey show a significant depth of student interest sufficient to make the Religious Studies major a success.

Religious Studies now has the faculty resources and student interest to mount a viable major. Between its four permanent faculty and its associated adjunct faculty, Religious Studies has the foundation to deliver on a regular basis the lower- and upper-level courses needed for a major in Judaism and Christianity, covering ancient, medieval and modern periods, and ranging from the Middle East to Europe to America and the US West. While the new major will require some faculty to reorganize their teaching priorities, by shifting to include more upper-level courses and fewer lower-level courses, no increase in teaching loads will take place. We have a full-time position covering Islam and other Middle Eastern religions, covering this key aspect of international religions.

The one weakness in the new Major lies in our dearth of coverage of Hinduism and Buddhism, the world’s third and fourth largest religions. Despite several attempts, Religious Studies has been unable to cover these religions in any detail with resources available on campus. (See the discussion under RELI-9 below). The College of Arts & Sciences supports our request to hire in this area (Religious Studies was listed second on A&S alternate CPM list this past year), and while it will not be necessary to implement the major, we see this position as substantially adding to student interest in the Religious Studies Major.

[E: we anticipate implementing this action item Early in the Plan period].

RELI-2. Implement Religious Studies curriculum assessment.

When the Program designed its proposed major, it developed its assessment strategy alongside it. The Program is ready to implement this strategy as soon as the major is put into place. Until that occurs, the Program will continue to implement relevant portions of the assessment plan for its minor.

[E: we will continue to implement assessment Early in the Plan period].

RELI-3. Obtain departmental status for Religious Studies, in the Humanities division.

With approval of the major and a stable core of permanent full-time faculty numbering between 4 and 6, Religious Studies will function as a department in all but name. Designation as a department will remove the confusion over its status and that of its faculty. Placement in the Humanities division will help balance that division (which presently has only three units) and link Religious Studies with the disciplines most closely related to it.

[L: we anticipate implementing this action item Late in the Plan period].

RELI-4. Mormon Studies Initiative. Raise funds for a chair in Mormon Studies.

The Religious Studies Program is actively raising funds from sources external to UW to finance a chair in the study of Mormonism. This is the first position for CSTRAW, the Center described in the next item.

[E: since we are already actively pursuing external funding, this will be implemented Early in the Plan period].

RELI-5. Publicize, raise funds, and establish the Center for the Study and Teaching of Religion in the American West (CSTRAW).

It is all too common in American religious history to portray the movement of religions in America as progressing from east to west. This distorted view ignores the movement of religions and religious people from west to east, from south to north, and from north to south converging on the area now called the “West,” as well as the religions of Native Americans already there. The “West” is west in name only.

To correct this view in the minds of both scholars and students, the Religious Studies Program is working to create the Center for the Study of Religion in the American West. This Center, to be located in Religious Studies, will focus its teaching, outreach, and research on the role and impact of religions here in the West and the interaction among them. The Rocky Mountain region is the only area of the country lacking such a center, and having it located at UW would be an important asset. Moreover, since CSTRAW will be oriented initially around an externally-funded endowed chair in Mormon Studies, it will not require additional resources from the University.

Religious Studies took its first step towards realizing this vision in 2004, when we hired Dr. Quincy Newell, an American Religious Historian whose expertise lies in the religions of the American West. The second step took place in 2005, when we began fund-raising for the first faculty position for the Center, that of a chair in Mormon Studies. Eventually, it is hoped that monies raised will enable the hiring of several new faculty, as well as funding research and outreach activities. Indeed, with the exception of a position in American Indian religions (see RELI-6B), it is anticipated that all funds for the Center will come from sources outside the University.

[E: Fundraising and advertising are already ongoing at this point in the Plan.]

RELI-6. Cooperation with American Indian Studies. Work with American Indian Studies Program to find common ground for having a joint position in American Indian religions/ways of knowing.

The study of religions in the American West is not complete if it does not include the religions of the American Indians who lived here prior to the arrival of Euro-American settlers and who continue to occupy this region. However, the study and teaching of Native American religions in a university setting (i.e., a context removed from the traditional settings for the transmission of cultural knowledge) is a particularly sensitive matter. The Religious Studies Program and the American Indian Studies Program have agreed to take a series of exploratory steps in an effort to identify common ground for the teaching of and research into aspects of Native American world views and the impact those views have on how the people lead their lives. These steps range from informal conversations to formal lectures to discussions with tribal and other native leaders. Discussions will include leaders on the Wind River Reservation and at the Wind River Tribal College. Should agreement be reached on an appropriate way to include religious aspects of Native American cultures in UW's curriculum, then means will be sought to obtain instruction in this area, perhaps through application for an Excellence Chair.

[M: Realistically, such a Chair would be assigned in 2010-11, with a search taking place midway through the Plan period].

RELI-7. Public Outreach. Continue current outreach activities and build on them, especially those which involve cooperation with other entities, both within UW and beyond it.

The Religious Studies Program has been active for many years in bringing the university to the state. Some of these activities have focused on public outreach, such as the twice-monthly *Religion Today* column and Dr. Ward's participation in the Wyoming Humanities Council speaker series (which takes him to approximately eight communities each year). Other activities emphasize educational initiatives now deemed important in *Creation of the Future III* that Religious Studies has been doing for a long time, including: piloting a program with the Social Sciences division at LCCC to improve access to baccalaureate degrees (Access, Delivery), and helping develop a course in the Outreach College to assess non-traditional students' readiness to engage a major and to assist them in increasing that readiness (Access, Student success). Specific new initiatives include: working with the Buffalo Bill Historical Center to develop and implement ideas for cooperation raised during discussions begun in June 2007, and cooperation with LCCC's Social Science Division might be reshaped in light of the new working relationship between UW and LCCC.

[E: we are ready to engage these new initiatives at the earliest opportunity.]

RELI-8. The Outreach School and Religious Studies

The Religious Studies Program has been active in delivering courses through the Outreach School for more than a decade. It delivered the first Internet-only course at UW in 1996, and in the years following has often provided more online courses a semester than any other A&S department. In that time, we have developed a small cadre of dedicated and professional outreach faculty. *Creation of the Future III* envisions that UW will revise its Outreach funding and faculty model. Religious Studies should be part of that project, so that we will be able to continue and even increase our involvement with Outreach. In particular, we want our faculty to have a place in the new faculty organization as permanent Religious Studies faculty lines assigned to Outreach and located in key areas around the state.

[M: we envision this new arrangement with Outreach occurring midway through the Plan period.]

RELI-9. CPM position in Eastern Religions.

The College of Arts & Sciences supports the goal of Religious Studies to seek a CPM tenure-track hire in Eastern Religions. This position is needed to balance our current curricular offerings in Western religions. In particular, we require instruction in the South Asian karma-based reincarnation religions, the largest of which are Hinduism and Buddhism, which are in turn the dominant religions of the world's two most populous countries, India and China.

Action item 6 in the Program's APII plan was to explore ways of providing instruction in Hinduism and Buddhism with local resources. Unfortunately, we discovered that there were few local faculty with expertise to provide significant offerings about either religion. The Program has managed to schedule only two courses in this area so far. Even if we can repeat this pattern, it lacks the frequency and depth in these religions to enable them to play a role in the major. To properly teach these two religions, we need to hire an expert. This faculty member would contribute to the Asian Studies Minor in International Studies as well as our Religious Studies program. This position was approved by the College of Arts and Sciences in Spring 2007.

[E: we intend to implement this action item early in the Plan period].

RELI-10. Office Space Assessment.

Religious Studies is in discussion with the A&S Dean's office regarding the acquisition of suitable office space for Religious Studies faculty. There is a serious need for office space for Religious Studies faculty. Hoyt Hall is bursting at the seams due to growth of other departments in the building. Two of the four Religious Studies faculty are currently in temporary offices on loan from other departments. Relocation will also require space for support staff, storage, etc. Space will continue to be a problem even if the Program experiences no further growth. At the present, Religious Studies is included in Dean Walter's space plan for Hoyt Hall to be implemented when A&S accesses the space vacated by Business College faculty in Ross Hall, once the Business Building has been remodeled.

[M: this item will realistically be implemented Midway through the Plan period].

RELI-11. Instructional excellence.

To improve our ability to reach more students in courses and more individuals through outreach activities, we will need additional support funding. The Religious Studies Program has both an active teaching program and an active program of outreach to the community through lectures, courses, non-credit classes, and so on. We continually are limited in these activities by a shortage of funds. An increase in excellence funding would translate directly into an ability to teach more students, particularly in our high-enrollment courses, while an increase in support budgets would enable us to do more outreach without having to ask "how are we going to pay for it?"

[M: we envision an increase in University support budgets to occur Midway through the Plan period.]

Implementation

Table of Proposed Implementation of Action Items:

Year 1: #1, 2, 7, 9

Year 2: #4, 5, 7

Year 3: #6, 8, 10, 11

Year 4: #3, 10

Year 5: #3

Appendix

Proposal for a Bachelor of Arts in Religious Studies

March 26, 2007

Table of Contents

1. TITLE.....	9
2. PURPOSE AND NATURE OF THE DEGREE	9
2.1 THE STUDY OF RELIGIONS IN AMERICAN UNIVERSITIES.....	9
2.2 A MAJOR IN RELIGIOUS STUDIES AT THE UNIVERSITY OF WYOMING.....	9
2.3 THE RELIGIOUS STUDIES PROGRAM AT THE UNIVERSITY OF WYOMING.....	10
3. REQUIREMENTS FOR A RELIGIOUS STUDIES MAJOR	10
3.1 THE MAJOR'S GOALS.....	11
3.1.2 <i>Remarks about the Major's Goals</i>	11
3.2 THE MAJOR'S REQUIREMENTS.....	ERROR! BOOKMARK NOT DEFINED.
3.2.1 <i>The B.A. in Religious Studies</i>	Error! Bookmark not defined.
3.2.2 <i>Concentrations</i>	Error! Bookmark not defined.
3.3 REMARKS ON THE MAJOR'S REQUIREMENTS:	ERROR! BOOKMARK NOT DEFINED.
3.3.1 <i>Notes on the Requirements</i>	Error! Bookmark not defined.
3.3.2 <i>From Goals to Requirements</i>	Error! Bookmark not defined.
4. CURRICULUM FOR THE RELIGIOUS STUDIES MAJOR.....	ERROR! BOOKMARK NOT DEFINED.
4.1 THE PRESENT	ERROR! BOOKMARK NOT DEFINED.
4.2 IMPLEMENTING THE NEW CURRICULUM FOR RELIGIOUS STUDIES MAJOR.....	ERROR! BOOKMARK NOT DEFINED.
4.2.1 <i>Three Levels of Courses</i>	Error! Bookmark not defined.
4.2.2 <i>2000 Level Courses</i>	Error! Bookmark not defined.
4.2.3 <i>3000 Level Courses</i>	Error! Bookmark not defined.
4.2.4 <i>4000 Level Seminars</i>	Error! Bookmark not defined.
4.3 OTHER NEW COURSES.....	ERROR! BOOKMARK NOT DEFINED.
5. THE RELIGIOUS STUDIES MINOR.....	ERROR! BOOKMARK NOT DEFINED.
6. ASSESSMENT PLAN	ERROR! BOOKMARK NOT DEFINED.
6.1 GOALS FOR A PROPOSED RELIGIOUS STUDIES MAJOR.....	ERROR! BOOKMARK NOT DEFINED.
6.2 ASSESSABLE OBJECTIVES FOR A PROPOSED RELIGIOUS STUDIES MAJOR.....	ERROR! BOOKMARK NOT DEFINED.
6.3 METHODS FOR ASSESSING RELIGIOUS STUDIES OBJECTIVES.....	ERROR! BOOKMARK NOT DEFINED.
6.4 ASSESSING THE MINOR.....	ERROR! BOOKMARK NOT DEFINED.
7. ACCREDITATION ISSUES	ERROR! BOOKMARK NOT DEFINED.
8. FACULTY RESOURCES FOR A RELIGIOUS STUDIES MAJOR, PRESENT AND FUTURE.....	ERROR! BOOKMARK NOT DEFINED.
8.1 THE RELIGIOUS STUDIES PROGRAM CURRENTLY.....	ERROR! BOOKMARK NOT DEFINED.
8.2 TENURED AND TENURE TRACK FACULTY.....	ERROR! BOOKMARK NOT DEFINED.
8.2.1 <i>Tenured</i>	Error! Bookmark not defined.
8.2.2 <i>Tenure Track</i>	Error! Bookmark not defined.
8.3 FULL-TIME TEMPORARY TEACHING STAFF.....	ERROR! BOOKMARK NOT DEFINED.
8.4 ASSOCIATED AND ADJUNCT FACULTY	ERROR! BOOKMARK NOT DEFINED.
8.5 PART-TIME TEACHING STAFF.....	ERROR! BOOKMARK NOT DEFINED.
8.6 ADDITIONAL FACULTY NEEDS.....	ERROR! BOOKMARK NOT DEFINED.
8.6.1 <i>Islam Position</i>	Error! Bookmark not defined.
8.6.2 <i>Asian Religions Position</i>	Error! Bookmark not defined.
8.6.3 <i>Mormon Studies Position</i>	Error! Bookmark not defined.
9. LIBRARY NEEDS	ERROR! BOOKMARK NOT DEFINED.
9.1 PRESENT LIBRARY RESOURCES	ERROR! BOOKMARK NOT DEFINED.
9.2 RECENT IMPROVEMENTS.....	ERROR! BOOKMARK NOT DEFINED.

10. PHYSICAL FACILITIES .	ERROR! BOOKMARK NOT DEFINED.
11. SPACE.....	ERROR! BOOKMARK NOT DEFINED.
12. NEED AND STUDENT DEMAND	ERROR! BOOKMARK NOT DEFINED.
12.1 RELIGIOUS STUDIES' S GROWING COURSE ENROLLMENTS	ERROR! BOOKMARK NOT DEFINED.
12.2 RELIGIOUS STUDIES MINORS.....	ERROR! BOOKMARK NOT DEFINED.
12.3 SURVEY RESULTS	ERROR! BOOKMARK NOT DEFINED.
12.4 PROJECTING APPLICANTS TO A NEW RELIGIOUS STUDIES MAJOR.....	ERROR! BOOKMARK NOT DEFINED.
12.5 RELIGIOUS STUDIES MAJORS AT RESEARCH 1 AND RESEARCH 2 INSTITUTIONS.....	ERROR! BOOKMARK NOT DEFINED.
13. FINANCING.....	ERROR! BOOKMARK NOT DEFINED.
14. PROJECTED TIMETABLE FOR IMPLEMENTATION	ERROR! BOOKMARK NOT DEFINED.
APPENDIX ONE: CURRENT REQUIREMENTS FOR THE RELIGIOUS STUDIES MINOR (1994-2006)	ERROR! BOOKMARK NOT DEFINED.
APPENDIX TWO: CURRENT GENERAL BULLETIN ENTRY FOR RELIGIOUS STUDIES (2006-7)	ERROR! BOOKMARK NOT DEFINED.
APPENDIX THREE: COMPARISON OF CURRENT AND PROPOSED COURSES FOR RELIGIOUS STUDIES	ERROR! BOOKMARK NOT DEFINED.

1. Title

Bachelor of Arts in Religious Studies

2. Purpose and nature of the degree

2.1 The Study of Religions in American Universities

The events of the latter half of the twentieth century and the start of the twenty-first century have made it clear that religions and their practitioners must be studied and understood for a successful life in the twenty-first century. In the United States, religious adherents have become an important part of a major political party and voters have shown that religious issues affect how they vote. Many debates about public issues take place in religious terms and politicians are quick to reveal their religious *bona fides*. The rise of the Hindu National Party (BJP) in India and the reemergence of Daoism, Buddhism, and Confucianism in Communist China have revealed the enduring character of religious belief and its importance to followers, while terrorist acts in New York, London, Delhi, and Madrid—as well as the deaths of countless suicide bombers—have shown that religious beliefs can be more determinative of personal choices than life itself.

What all these have in common is the importance of religion as the motivation for actions and choices, both for individuals and for large groups. The United States is learning that frequently it cannot act on the international stage without encountering religiously motivated actions and perspectives. Acting and reacting in ignorance has led to disaster. Just as the ignorance of the persuasive power of one *ayatollah* in Iran led to the fall of the United States' ally, the Shah, so too ignorance of the differences (and hatred) between Sunnis and Shiites in Iraq has led to the rise of civil strife and has prolonged American involvement in that country.

Religious motivation happens closer to home as well. Wyoming itself was built upon the actions of many different religious groups. Native Americans linked the natural landscape to the sacred realm at holy sites now known as the Devils Tower and the Medicine Wheel. Catholic and Episcopalian missionaries were among the first non-natives in the region, first aiming to convert the natives and later providing religious services to the earliest white settlers. Mormons walked across Wyoming to their Zion in Utah, and then returned from the west, settling not just the region's western edge, but also the Shoshone Valley, where they dug the Cody Canal to bring water into this desert landscape. People who followed these different religions helped make this state what it is today.

In light of the religious impact on the world, both internationally and locally, the University of Wyoming needs to expand the study of the world's religions. Students need to learn about the religions of their own country and of countries around the world. They need to know those religions well enough to understand how they motivate their followers and how to respond to them so as to achieve mutually beneficial goals and avoid damaging problems. They need to understand the history of religiously inspired actions to understand the forces that created the world they live in.

2.2 A Major in Religious Studies at the University of Wyoming.

The Religious Studies Program proposes that the University of Wyoming establish a Bachelor of Arts in Religious Studies within the College of Arts and Sciences. The B.A. in Religious Studies will

- Provide a comparative perspective on different world religions and their components.
- Explore how a religion's components interact with the culture(s) to which it belongs, showing how they shape and are shaped by the surrounding society.

- Examine how Religion is defined and hence understood, and teach students methods for studying it.

This synopsis indicates the goals that guide the major's design and the courses that will support it. Rather than being developed after the fact, the goals were created at the outset and the degree requirements flow from them. Description of both begins in section 3 below.

The foundation of this degree is the academic approach to the study of world religions. The degree emphasizes the understanding of a religion, its components and their interaction, and the reasons why its adherents find it compelling. This is not for the purpose of conversion, but for comprehending how religions work and how they affect their followers, as well as their impact on those who do not adhere to the religion. The academic study of religion seeks neither to promote nor denigrate any religion or religious belief, although it may point out the dangers inherent in particular attitudes or actions.

2.3 The Religious Studies Program at the University of Wyoming

The Religious Studies Program was established in 1993 as an Interdisciplinary Program. It was designated as UW's only curricular locus for the academic study of religion and has worked to fulfill that charge. At the beginning, the Program took on the mission of making available to UW students a variety of courses about religions. A minor was established, but not a major, since there were insufficient upper-level courses to sustain it. The main reason for this was the lack of faculty, since, in 1993, there was only one full-time faculty member, whose task was to bring together faculty in other departments.

Fourteen years after its founding, the Religious Studies Program remains a modest enterprise. It has reached the limits of what it can accomplish with its present faculty, but stands at the verge of significant development. It has now grown to a point where it can support a viable major. It has a solid set of offerings in one world religion, Christianity, and has a faculty base upon which it is building offerings in two additional religions, namely, Judaism and Islam. The Program anticipates growth in two key directions. First, to solidify the comparative, non-western character of the major, one further faculty member is needed in world religions, specifically in the area of Asian Religions. This would enable the teaching of Hinduism and Buddhism, strengthening the curriculum's comparative capabilities.

Second, at the same time, the Religious Studies Program also aims to strengthen its offerings in the religions and religious developments of the Western United States. Through fund-raising from external sources, the Program aims to develop an Area of Excellence in Religion in the American West, in keeping with Area of Distinction "History and Culture of Wyoming and the Rocky Mountain Region" of UW's Academic Plan II. The strategy is to create a Center for the Study and Teaching of Religion in the American West (C-STRAW), with its first component being a chair in Mormon Studies. In the long term, the Center will include faculty who can teach about and research the influence of Catholicism, the various forms of Protestantism, Native American religions, and perhaps other traditions.

3. Requirements for a Religious Studies Major

Proposing a new major from scratch enables the faculty to "do it right." This proposed major began when the Program's faculty laid out the goals they wanted students to achieve. They then designed

the Religious Studies Major to help students meet those goals. Thus this section on the major's requirements begins by spelling out its goals (a complete description of outcomes and assessment methods appears in section 6) before delineating the requirements. This will be followed by discussion of how the major's requirements match the goals.

3.1 The Major's Goals

3.1.1 A student who majors in Religious Studies at the University of Wyoming will be able to...

- 1) Describe several world religions and compare their key features.
- 2) Delineate how scholars have variously defined Religion and its key components, evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of those definitions, and discuss the methodologies arising from the definitions.
- 3) Analyze how a religion's components interact with the culture to which it belongs, explaining how it shapes and is shaped by the surrounding society.
- 4) Use standard, neutral, scholarly terminology in describing and analyzing religions. This includes being able to speak and write about religions neutrally, without prescription or prejudice, advocacy or polemics.

3.1.2 Remarks about the Major's Goals

Studying religion begins with the ability to identify and describe a religion's key elements. In the same way a mechanic understands the parts of an automobile and how they work together to make it move forward, so too students should understand the main features of a religion, being able to articulate the function of each feature and how it fits with others to accomplish the religion's goals and provide meaning to the religion's members.

Students need to study *different* religions because that enables them to be compared. Comparison provides students with the insight and skills to identify the characteristics that religions share (or do not share) and the variety of ways those characteristics manifest themselves in different religions. In Religious Studies, Max Müller's emphasis of Goethe's insight, "He who knows one, knows none," has become a guiding principle. Knowledge of more than "one" in the study of religions provides the foundation for understanding. Understanding leads to insight, which enables students to draw conclusions about the nature of religion from the examples of specific religions, and in turn to be able to draw conclusions about particular religious situations with the aid of their general knowledge about religions.

Comparison also provides the basis for the successful understanding of the other three goals. Goal 2, defining "Religion" and assessing those definitions, depends upon comparative knowledge of several religions. A student's mastery of Goal 3, understanding how religions shape and are shaped by their cultures, becomes strongest when it is clear how this ability functions in several religions and their cultures. Finally, Goal 4, the necessity and skill of using neutral, academic language in describing religions, is a requirement of being able to understand each religion without bias (insofar as that is possible) and hence to engage successfully in comparison.

[**For complete Plan, see Religious Studies Program, omitted here for space considerations]