

New Assessment Plan/Problem of Interest: Religion Department 2014-15

Recognizing the value of gaining skills, knowledge, and habits of mind that enable liberal arts students to understand religious diversity and the role of religion in peoples' lives and in society (both past and present), the religion department seeks to measure our impact on the liberal arts education and experience of Carleton students as a whole, especially with an eye to non-majors and undeclared majors. We will use two tools to measure and understand the details of this impact: (1) a survey circulated in numerous 100- and 200-level courses, and (2) a two-part reflection paper in two 100-level courses each year. During the first year of this new project, we will focus especially on item 1. We will also begin item 2, but will develop tools for assessing the materials collected for item 2 during the 2015-16 academic year. The two items are described below:

ITEM ONE: SELF-ASSESSMENT OF THE IMPACT OF RELIGION COURSES ON STUDENTS' LIBERAL ARTS EDUCATION

Our department's **self-assessment survey** of students will measure the impact of religion courses on non-religion majors. We will distribute this survey in 5-10 courses each year: at least three courses at the 100 level and at least two courses at the 200 level. This survey will take the form of a list of 10 questions to which students will respond by circling a numerical ranking. Courses to be surveyed this winter 2015 are: 110, 121, 243, 260, 274; spring 2015 courses are: 110, 140, 152, 245, 281.

This survey addresses the following department learning goals:

1. "Approach religious authority claims both sensitively and critically."
2. "Develop a cross-cultural and global orientation, recognizing the variety of religious traditions throughout the world..."
3. "Understand religions as part of historical processes, in constant development"
4. "Reflect knowledgeably and critically about religion in relation to current events"
5. "Communicate research and ideas effectively in writing and in oral presentations"
6. "Participate respectfully and effectively in group discussions"
7. "Recognize and interrogate key assumptions underlying primary and secondary texts"
8. "Practice ethical reasoning and action in the collection and attribution of both primary and secondary material"

This survey also attempts to get a sense of how the religion department helps Carleton meet the following of its learning goals:

1. "Demonstrate that they have acquired knowledge necessary for continuing study of the world's peoples, arts, environments, literatures, sciences, and institutions..."
2. "Analyze Evidence, i.e. identifying underlying assumptions...present opposing viewpoints and alternative hypothesis..."
3. "Formulate and Solve Problems, i.e. locate, analyze, synthesize and evaluate information; discern patterns, coherence, and significance; explore a situation, phenomenon, question or problem to arrive at a hypothesis or conclusion about it, come to well-reasoned conclusions or solutions."