

Please make any changes to the department’s purpose statement, goals, or assessment cycle chart. Remember each SLO must be assessed between program review cycles.

Philosophy and Religion Purpose Statement:

The Philosophy and Religion department offers courses designed to help students critically reflect upon religious and philosophical traditions that for millennia have deeply shaped how human beings have understood their lives as a whole in relationship to all that exists. In so doing, students will critically consider their own worldview, while at the same time understanding more deeply and with greater empathy the worldviews of others. Travel courses offered through the program superbly complement the rest of the curriculum for this purpose. The practical benefits of the major are many. It provides excellent background for professions such as business, education, social work, and humanitarian assistance – to name just a few – that require understanding and empathy across widely diverse cultures. The major develops critical thinking skills essential to success in these and other professions, especially law. In addition, given the possibility the major offers for focusing specifically on the Christian tradition, it can assist students who seek to understand their chosen profession, whatever it may be, as Christian ministry, or who want preparation for entering seminary upon graduation. Whatever their career path, students will find their study of philosophy and religion empowering them to live with a deeper sense of purpose, a surer sense of their vocation, and greater appreciation for values such as peacemaking, stewardship, and service that contribute to the well-being of the world.

The Department of Philosophy and Religion achieves its purpose when its graduates:

Program Student Learning Outcomes	2015-2016	2016-2017	2017-2018	2018-2019	2019-2020	2020-2021	
Demonstrate an understanding of the world’s major religious traditions and the diverse ways each is interpreted, with a special emphasis on how these traditions help shape both the human experience of the world around us and our response to it	Program Review	Assessment Planning	X			Program Review-Spring	
Demonstrate the ability to critically engage the western philosophical tradition as it addresses fundamental questions about the nature of reality, the meaning of our experience, and the purpose of life				X			
Demonstrate the ability to critically evaluate and improve their own thinking					X		
Demonstrate the ability to bring the study of religion and philosophy to bear on their quest to understand the meaning and purpose of their own lives.							X

<b>1. Select Your Department</b>	Philosophy
<b>2. Has the program's purpose, SLOs, or program review year changed from the above document?</b>	No
Upload the edited Purpose/SLO doc here.	<a href="http://app.captainform.com/upload_dld.php?fileid=2040dea16b33ede3e391ffa287daf52a">app.captainform.com/upload_dld.php?fileid=2040dea16b33ede3e391ffa287daf52a</a>
<b>3. Will/did the department submit a program review this year? If yes, please attach the final review as a pdf document.</b>	No
Upload program review pdf.	<a href="http://app.captainform.com/upload_dld.php?fileid=ff3d3a4bb962a4a6be549a604653704b">app.captainform.com/upload_dld.php?fileid=ff3d3a4bb962a4a6be549a604653704b</a>
<b>1. Please select the type of direct evidence of student learning that was gathered THIS YEAR.</b>	
-Assignment/exam paper completed as part of regular coursework and used for program-level assessment	yes
-Other	
<b>2. Please select the type of indirect evidence of student learning that was gathered THIS YEAR.</b>	
-Interviews or focus groups that contain self-reports of SLO achievement	no
-Employer meetings/discussions/survey interview of student SLO achievement	no
-Student reflective writing assignment (essay, journal entry, self-assessment) on their SLO achievement	no
-Alumni survey that contains self-reports of SLO achievement	no
-Student surveys (course evaluation additional questions, program created, from institutional student survey data) contain reports of SLO achievement	no
<b>3. Please select how the evidence was evaluated, analyzed, or interpreted.</b>	
-Used a rubric/scoring guide	yes
<b>4. Enter the number of students assessed for each SLO.</b>	3
<b>5. Summarize the results of the assessment activities checked in questions 4,5 and 6. Include the percentaghe of students that met or exceeded each SLO.</b>	<p>To fully assess this year's SLO, I subdivided it into two components: (1) Majors will achieve an insider's or emic perspective on a different religious tradition than their own; (2) Majors will achieve the skill to evaluate spiritual pathways within a religious tradition other than their own based on objective and personal criteria distinguishing life-giving characteristics from life-denying characteristics.</p> <p>I therefore assessed the SLO by scoring (1) on a rubric and (2) on a rubric, where the maximum score for each component was 8 points (evaluated via two 4-point criteria). A score of 7-8 on a component was exemplary; a score of 5-6 was good; a score of 3-4 was competent; a score of 1-2 was developing; and a score of 0 was unacceptable. To pass the assignment, a student needed a minimum total score (adding the scores from both components) of 6. To meet this year's SLO, a major needed a minimum total score (adding the scores from both components) of 10.</p> <p>Here are the results for each of the three Philosophy and Religion majors:  Major 1: 4 + 2 = 6 for component (1); 4 + 4 = 8 for component (2); total score 14  Major 2: 3 + 3 = 6 for component (1); 3 + 4 = 7 for component (2); total score 13  Major 3: 4 + 3 = 7 for component (1); 4 + 3 = 7 for component (2); total score 14</p> <p>Hence 100% of the majors exceeded this year's SLO.</p>

<b>6. Please upload any supporting documentation (i.e. rubrics, data analysis, charts/tables, department minutes, etc.)</b>	<a href="http://app.captainform.com/upload_dld.php?fileid=9dbf29297dbdec2a8bc87ddb368e9ec4">app.captainform.com/upload_dld.php?fileid=9dbf29297dbdec2a8bc87ddb368e9ec4</a>
<b>7. What describes how the program plans to use the results?</b>	
-Course changes (course content, pedagogy, courses offered, new course, pre-requisites, requirements)	yes
-Results indicated no action needed because students met expectations	yes
<b>1. The department will submit a program review NEXT YEAR.</b>	No
<b>2. SLO(s) the department will assess NEXT YEAR is/are:</b>	Demonstrate the ability to critically engage the Western philosophical tradition as it addresses fundamental questions about the nature of reality, the meaning of our experience, and the purpose of life.
<b>3. Please select the type of direct evidence of student learning the department plans to use NEXT YEAR.</b>	
-Assignment/exam paper completed as part of regular coursework and used for program-level assessment	yes
-Oral performance (e.g. oral presentation, conference presentation)	yes
-Other	
<b>4. Please select the type of indirect evidence of student learning that was gathered NEXT YEAR.</b>	
-Interviews or focus groups that contain self-reports of SLO achievement	no
-Employer meetings/discussions/survey interview of student SLO achievement	no
-Student reflective writing assignment (essay, journal entry, self-assessment) on their SLO achievement	no
-Alumni survey that contains self-reports of SLO achievement	no
-Student surveys (course evaluation additional questions, program created, from institutional student survey data) contain reports of SLO achievement	no
-Other	
<b>5. Based on previous assessment data, what percentage of students does the department expect to meet or exceed the SLO(s)?</b>	100
<b>6. Is the department interested in learning how to apply for an assessment grant?</b>	Yes

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Entry ID: 8

## **G-PR 106L—Spiritual Pathways: Transformation, Compassion, and Vocation Midterm Paper Assignment**

*Becoming a Hindu or a Buddhist!*

### **Directions**

Suppose you were to convert to either Hinduism or Buddhism. Within your “new” religion, choose **one** spiritual pathway that you desire to follow. Your purpose in this paper is to make a case for why your particular pathway is best suited for you as opposed to other pathways in that same religion. Your case should employ the objective criteria for finding a spiritual pathway delineated on pp. 7-10 of Ferguson. Your case should also employ subjective, personal criteria which inclined you toward your pathway and away from other pathways. (Explain briefly why you think each subjective, personal criterion is important before using it.) After reading your paper, I should know how your pathway meets Ferguson’s objective criteria and your personal criteria. I should also know what other pathways are available within your “new” religion and why each of those pathways do not meet Ferguson’s objective criteria and your subjective criteria as well as your pathway does.

### **Due Dates**

A hard copy of your draft of the Midterm Paper is due in class on Monday, September 19. The draft must be at least 4 **full** pages long, double-spaced and using Times New Roman 12-point font with 1-inch margins. The draft is worth 5% of the course grade and will be scored on the basis of whether or not you have made a good faith effort to follow the assignment instructions. Your draft will be returned in class on Friday, September 23, so as to give you ample time to make revisions before the final copy is due.

You will give an oral presentation of the central themes of the Midterm Paper on either Friday, September 30, Monday, October 3, or Wednesday, October 5. Your time slot will be determined at random by the instructor. The oral presentation must be 7-8 minutes long and be accompanied by a PowerPoint show. The oral presentation is worth 5% of the course grade and will be scored on the basis of content, delivery, and style.

A hard copy of the finished Midterm Paper (along with your draft) is due in class on Friday, October 7. The finished paper must be at least 5 **full** pages long and no more than 6 full pages long, double-spaced and using Times New Roman 12-point font with 1-inch margins. It is worth 20% of the course grade. The Midterm Paper will be scored rigorously and **solely on the basis of quality**, including content, argumentation, clarity, spelling, punctuation, grammar, format, and whether or not you have executed the revisions suggested by the instructor on the draft. Unlike the draft, the Midterm Paper will **not** be scored on the basis of whether or not you have made a good faith effort. A good faith effort is a necessary but not sufficient condition for a satisfactory grade on the Midterm Paper.

### **Formatting**

Put the course number, your name, and the due date on a cover page (which **does not** count as one

of the required pages). **Do not** put your name anywhere else on the paper, as I grade papers (both drafts and final copies) anonymously to ensure objectivity in the evaluation process.

There should not be any extra spacing between paragraphs.

In writing this paper, the only sources you are allowed to use are Ferguson, material from class, and, if you wish (this is not required), any other source agreed upon by the student and the instructor. Only print material (including online material) needs to be cited; material from class is considered to be common background knowledge and requires no citations. Citations should be parenthetical; no footnotes, endnotes, works cited page, or bibliography is necessary. Cite sources by placing in parentheses the name of the author and the page(s) from which data is drawn. Use the following illustrations (the sentences are fictional and don't actually come from Ferguson) of the rules for parenthetical citations as a guide, observing carefully the placement of punctuation.

- *Relying upon one portion of Ferguson without quoting it.* The prophetic author emphasized that Yahweh is the only God who ever will exist (Ferguson 124-5).
- *Relying upon multiple portions of Ferguson without quoting them.* Therefore the created universe is deprived of its due harmony, and in the absence of external aid, the whole human race has irretrievably forfeited blessedness (Ferguson 15-6, 41-2).
- *Quoting a brief indicative (i.e., non-interrogative) portion of Ferguson.* According to the Islamic Prophet Muhammad, God told people who were at odds with each other: "They are invited to the Book of Allah, to settle their dispute" (Ferguson 323).
- *Quoting a brief interrogative portion of Ferguson.* Craig rightly notes that we should wonder, "Why, in light of its well-known problems, does Dr. Lüdemann embrace the hallucination hypothesis?" (Ferguson 217).
- Quotations of three lines or more (i.e., block quotations) must be single-spaced, indented ½ inch (a normal tab's length) on the left side only, and lacking quotation marks at their start and finish (the indentation substitutes for these surrounding quotation marks). Use the following snippet of a paper as an example:

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Surprisingly to many Christians, the Islamic faith accepts the virginal conception of Jesus.

Since Allah is all-powerful, no barrier prevents Allah from transcending the laws of nature and causing such a miracle to occur.

Behold! the angels said: "O Mary! Allah giveth thee glad tidings of a Word from Him: his name will be Christ Jesus, the son of Mary, held in honour in this world and the Hereafter and of (the company of) those nearest to Allah. He shall speak to the people in childhood and in maturity. And he shall be (of the company) of the righteous." She said: "O my Lord! How shall I have a son when no man hath touched me?" He said: "Even so: Allah createth what He willeth." When He hath decreed a plan, He but saith to it, 'Be,' and it is" (Ferguson 345-7).

Here we learn that Mary was approached by angels, who gave her the good news that she would

bear a son despite her virginity. When the incredulous Mary asked how her pregnancy could transpire without the assistance of a man, the angel Gabriel reminded her that Allah creates whatever he desires out of nothing.

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- The paper uses gender-inclusive language when it is appropriate. Thus, when referring to the human race at large, use “humankind” or “humanity” instead of “mankind” or “man.” Gender-exclusive language should only be used when referring specifically to females or males.

### **Writing Help**

Located on the main floor of Miller Library, the Writing Center provides a tutoring service for any student who wants assistance with a writing assignment. Tutors are trained to help at any stage of the writing process with writers of any skill level. The service is provided free of charge. The Writing Center is open this semester on Sunday from 2-5 pm, Monday through Thursday from 11:30 am-1 pm and 7-10 pm, and Friday from 11:30 am-1 pm (it is closed Saturday). Writing tutors work regular hours and by appointment. If you need a tutor, please contact Ben Coffey by email at [coffeyb@mcpherson.edu](mailto:coffeyb@mcpherson.edu) or by phone, ext. 2488 or direct dial (620) 242-0488.

Please talk with me about the paper during my office hours or by appointment. If you have any questions about this assignment, please ask before turning in the paper!

## Rubric and Scoring Results for G-PR 106L Midterm Paper Assignment

**SLO:** Demonstrate an understanding of the world’s major religious traditions and the diverse ways each is interpreted, with a special emphasis on how these traditions help shape both the human experience of the world around us and our response to it.

### Component 1: Majors will achieve an insider’s or emic perspective on a different religious tradition than their own.

Criteria	0 points Unacceptable	1 point Developing	2 points Competent	3 points Good	4 points Exemplary	Score
1. Major accurately described the traits of their hypothetical spiritual pathway (though not necessarily in the same manner that a practitioner of that spiritual pathway would describe it).	No traits of the spiritual pathway are described accurately.	A minority of traits of the spiritual pathway are described accurately.	Approximately half of the traits of the spiritual pathway are described accurately.	A majority—but not all—traits of the spiritual pathway are described accurately.	All traits of the spiritual pathway are described accurately.	
2. Major explained their hypothetical spiritual pathway in a manner consistent with the way a practitioner of that spiritual pathway would explain it.	No similarity exists between the explanation of the spiritual pathway and the manner in which a practitioner of that spiritual pathway would explain it.	A small degree of similarity exists between the explanation of the spiritual pathway and the manner in which a practitioner of that spiritual pathway would explain it.	A moderate degree of similarity exists between the explanation of the spiritual pathway and the manner in which a practitioner of that spiritual pathway would explain it.	A high degree of—but not complete—similarity exists between the explanation of the spiritual pathway and the manner in which a practitioner of that spiritual pathway would explain it.	Complete similarity exists between the explanation of the spiritual pathway and the manner in which a practitioner of that spiritual pathway would explain it.	

Total Score for Component 1 (maximum 8 points):

**Scale:** 7-8 = Exemplary; 5-6 = Good; 3-4 = Competent; 1-2 = Developing; 0 = Unacceptable

**Component 2: Majors will achieve the skill to evaluate spiritual pathways within a foreign religious tradition based on objective and personal criteria distinguishing life-giving characteristics from life-denying characteristics.**

Criteria	0 points Unacceptable	1 point Developing	2 points Competent	3 points Good	4 points Exemplary	Score
3. Major effectively uses objective criteria to assess the life-giving and life-denying characteristics of their hypothetical spiritual pathway.	<i>No</i> objective criteria are used to assess the characteristics of the spiritual pathway, or <i>some</i> objective criteria are used but <i>none</i> of those criteria are applied correctly.	<i>Some</i> objective criteria are used to assess the characteristics of the spiritual pathway, and <i>some</i> of those criteria are applied correctly.	<i>Some</i> objective criteria are used to assess the characteristics of the spiritual pathway, and <i>all</i> of those criteria are applied correctly.	<i>All</i> the objective criteria described in the literature are used to assess the spiritual pathway, and <i>some</i> of those criteria are applied correctly.	<i>All</i> the objective criteria described in the literature are used to assess the spiritual pathway, and <i>all</i> of those criteria are applied correctly.	
4. Major effectively formulates and uses personal criteria to assess the life-giving and life-denying characteristics of their hypothetical spiritual pathway.	<i>No</i> personal criteria are formulated or used to assess the characteristics of the spiritual pathway, or <i>some</i> personal criteria are formulated but <i>none</i> of those criteria are applied cogently.	<i>1-2</i> personal criteria are formulated to assess the characteristics of the spiritual pathway, and <i>some</i> of those criteria are applied cogently.	<i>1-2</i> personal criteria are formulated to assess the characteristics of the spiritual pathway, and <i>all</i> of those criteria are applied cogently.	<i>3 or more</i> personal criteria are formulated to assess the characteristics of the spiritual pathway, and <i>some</i> of those criteria are applied cogently.	<i>3 or more</i> personal criteria are formulated to assess the characteristics of the spiritual pathway, and <i>all</i> of those criteria are applied cogently.	

Total Score for Component 2 (maximum 8 points):

**Scale:** 7-8 = Exemplary; 5-6 = Good; 3-4 = Competent; 1-2 = Developing; 0 = Unacceptable

**SLO Sum Total (maximum 16 points):**

**NOTES**

- A passing grade on the assignment is a sum total of 6 or higher.
- An acceptable level of achievement for majors to meet the SLO on this assignment is a sum total of 10 or higher.

**Scoring Results:**

Major 1: 4 + 2 = 6 for component 1; 4 + 4 = 8 for component 2; total score 14 (exceeds SLO)

Major 2: 3 + 3 = 6 for component 1; 3 + 4 = 7 for component 2; total score 13 (exceeds SLO)

Major 3: 4 + 3 = 7 for component 1; 4 + 3 = 7 for component 2; total score 14 (exceeds SLO)

## **Recommendations/Action Plan**

### **Kirk R. MacGregor**

#### **Conclusions Drawn from Findings**

Although 100% of Philosophy and Religion majors exceeded the SLO (such that the results on the whole indicated no action), I noticed that majors could improve on component (1), criterion 2: Major explained their hypothetical spiritual pathway in a manner consistent with the way a practitioner of that spiritual pathway would explain it. On a 4-point scale, the scores on this criterion were {2, 3, 3}, the lowest of any of the four criteria (the other criteria scored {4, 3, 4}, {4, 3, 4}, and {4, 4, 3}).

There are three easy steps to improve majors' ability to explain a hypothetical spiritual pathway (*i.e.*, one that the major does not herself or himself practice) in a manner consistent with how an actual practitioner would explain it.

#### **Timeline**

All three of these steps will be implemented starting in Fall 2017. The first step is a change to the course G-PR 106L: Spiritual Pathways, and the second and third steps are changes to the course G-PR 306: World Religions.

#### **Recommendations**

The change needed for G-PR 106L: Spiritual Pathways is:

1. For each spiritual pathway discussed, play a related video in class from the *Religions of the World* DVD series (Schlessinger Media, 2003). Each video interviews practitioners of the spiritual pathway under investigation and explains the pathway from their perspective. Shot on location, it also gives students glimpses into the sacred sites, art, music, and architecture associated with each pathway.

The changes needed for G-PR 306: World Religions are:

2. Use a textbook written not by one author but by multiple authors, each an expert in and a practitioner of the religious tradition s/he discusses. A textbook which does this is *Introduction to World Religions*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed., gen. ed. Christopher Partridge and rev. Tim Dowley (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2013). This is the assigned course textbook for Fall 2017.
3. Develop new small group activities in which groups read short texts written by practitioners of each major world religion, describing what it is like to belong to that religion. These texts are entitled things like "I am a Hindu," "I celebrated Diwali," "I am a Buddhist," "I use deep meditation," "I am a Muslim," "Going on the Hajj," and so forth. After reading these texts, each member of the group role-plays before the class what it is like to believe or practice some element of the religion.