54. Special Consideration

**College of Liberal Arts**

University Studies Degree

Area of Concentration - Religious Thought, Practices and Cultures

Request for a new program
SPECIAL CONSIDERATION
SPECIAL CONSIDERATION

COLLEGE OF LIBERAL ARTS
UNIVERSITY STUDIES DEGREE
AREA OF CONCENTRATION - RELIGIOUS THOUGHT, PRACTICES AND CULTURES
REQUEST FOR A NEW PROGRAM
Texas A&M University
University Studies Degree
Proposed Area of Concentration

Name of Area of Concentration: Religious Thought, Practices, and Cultures

Department: Interdisciplinary Program in Religious Studies

College: Liberal Arts

Office responsible for advising students in this Area of Concentration:

a. Office Name/Location: CLLA Interdisciplinary Programs, 314 Bolton

b. Telephone Number: (979) 845-7994

c. Email: dox@tamu.edu

The University Studies degree is an innovative interdisciplinary degree with an area of concentration and two minors, at least one of which is in a different college from that of the area of concentration. The degree serves two main groups of students: first, students who are in good academic standing (GPA of 2.0 or above) but who are unable to find or gain access to a major of interest and (b) students who specifically seek a broad interdisciplinary combination of coursework that is unavailable through existing degree programs.

The educational objective of the University Studies Degree is to provide students with an interdisciplinary academic degree that will prepare them for a successful life and career or for graduate school.

Please append two items to this sheet:

1. A statement that: A) describes the area of concentration and distinguishes it from existing majors, B) explains how this area of concentration would serve at least one of the two main groups of students cited above, and C) indicates how this area of concentration would promote the purposes of the university studies degree as described above. In the case of a College submission, please indicate support from the faculty.

2. The enclosed form for listing courses that will be used in the area of concentration that will be required as prerequisites, and will be used for university core curriculum requirements.

Reviewed and approved by:

For Interdisciplinary Degrees Only:
COURSE FORM

There needs to be a minimum of 6 hours at 400-level and 36 hours of 300-400 level coursework in residence at Texas A&M University.

A. Select 21-24 hours from among the following courses for the area of concentration. If there will be more than 24 hours in the area of concentration please include a justification. Two approved writing courses will be required for the University Studies degree. The courses may be in the area of concentration or the minors. Please indicate writing courses in the area of concentration, if any, with a W following the course number (TAMU 400 W). If courses required for the area of concentration include a course or courses from outside the department of the area of concentration, please include a letter of support from the department(s) offering the course(s). Courses listed as part of the University Core Curriculum do not need a letter of support.

1. The following 6 hours of course work are required*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Course Prefix &amp; Number</th>
<th>Course Title</th>
<th>Credit Hours</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>RELS 480</td>
<td>Religious Communication</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RELS 491</td>
<td>Research</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2. Select 15 hours from the following courses*:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Course Prefix &amp; Number</th>
<th>Course Title</th>
<th>Credit Hours</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>SEE ATTACHED TABLES</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* If the Area of Concentration requires students to select courses from a list of pre-selected combinations, please duplicate this table; e.g. two course from column A, two courses from column B

3. Prerequisite courses not included in the University Core Curriculum or listed above:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Course Prefix &amp; Number</th>
<th>Course Title</th>
<th>Credit Hours</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
B. Student will select two minors (30-36 hours). One must be from outside the college offering the area of concentration.

C. Free electives (17-26 hours). If there will be fewer than 17 hours of free electives please include a justification in the preceding 2-3 page statement.

D. Specify courses in the University Core Curriculum\(^1\),\(^2\),\(^3\) that will be required for this area of concentration (43 hours). Please maintain as much flexibility as possible.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Course Prefix &amp; No.</th>
<th>Course Title</th>
<th>Credit Hours</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Communication</td>
<td>ENGL 104</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>English 104</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mathematics</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Natural Sciences</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Humanities</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Visual &amp; Performing Arts</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social &amp; Behavioral Sciences</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>History</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Political Science</td>
<td>POLS 206 &amp; 207</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>International &amp; Cultural Diversity</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kinesiology</td>
<td>KINE 198 &amp; 199</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

NOTES: \(^1\) To be selected from the University Core Curriculum.

\(^2\) There is a graduation requirement which includes 6 hours of international and cultural diversity courses. Refer to the International and Cultural Diversity table for a list of acceptable courses. A course satisfying a University Core category, a college/department requirement, or as a free elective may be used to satisfy this requirement.

\(^3\) Completion in high school of two units of the same foreign language or one year of college work is required for graduation.
Currently the College of Liberal Arts offers an 18-credit interdisciplinary minor in Religious Studies. Most courses are offered by departments and cross-listed with the minor program. There is no major in Religion at Texas A&M. Religion is a powerful force in the modern world, and a critical aspect of cultural diversity. The proposed University Studies concentration in Religious Thought, Practices, and Culture gives TAMU students a knowledge base for analyzing how religious beliefs and practices work in a global context. Students will develop the mental flexibility to see the world from multiple points of view. Students will also learn to recognize how religion shapes social organizations, political actions, and individual behavior.

This degree will serve students in the following ways.

The study of religion requires critical distance, analytical skills, and the mental flexibility to see the world from multiple points of view. Students with these attributes who are motivated by a desire to know how people of different religions approach the world are not served by any single major at TAMU are likely to be among the best thinkers and observers (well above the 2.0 threshold).

People’s religious beliefs and practices influence virtually every aspect of daily social life, from diet and dress to ethics to political commitments. A concentration in Religious Thought, Culture, and Practices sits at the intersection of multiple disciplines. Any minor, in or outside the College of Liberal Arts, is thus likely to contribute to a concentration in religion. For example: a minor in biology offers a research path into the neuroscience of religious experience; a minor in psychology contributes a secular view of how religious belief affects people’s behavior; a minor in anthropology shows the ways religion shapes cultural identity; a minor in history applies methods for analyzing how religious traditions evolve and change; a minor in mathematics could allow students to model changes in the global distribution of religious traditions; a minor in political science provides methods for analyzing the interplay between religion and politics.

This degree will promote the purposes of the university studies degree as described above. Our current director of the Interdisciplinary Minor in Religious Studies interviews all prospective minors, focusing on their goals and interests. Since 2009, there has been a distinct trend toward studying religion in conjunction with biology/medicine, business (global), non-profit work, nutrition science, and psychology. Students invariably talk about wanting a better grasp of how religious diversity shapes the modern world. About 10% of Religious Studies minors would like to major in religion, though the College of Liberal Arts is not likely to develop such a major. A University Studies concentration is the ideal curricular model for allowing students to focus on the complexities of religious thought and practice in the modern world while supporting that focus with minors than enhance their knowledge base and lead toward careers.
Core Major Requirements

1. Required courses 6 hours

   RELS 480  Religious Communication  3
   RELS 491  Research  3

2. Choose 15 hours from the following courses:

   ARCH 438  History and Design of Sacred Architecture  3
   PHIL 411  Medieval Philosophy  3
   RELS 211  Hebrew Scriptures  3
   RELS 213  New Testament  3
   RELS 220  History of Christianity: Origins to Reformation  3
   RELS 221  History of Islam  3
   RELS 302  Women and Religion  3
   RELS 303  Near Eastern Religions  3
   RELS 304  Indian and Oriental Religions  3
   RELS 312  Contemplation in the Modern World  3
   RELS 317  Introduction to Biblical Archaeology  3
   RELS 321  Islam, Politics, and Jihad  3
   RELS 326  Sociology of Religion  3
   RELS 331  Philosophy of Religion  3
   RELS 340  Folklore and the Supernatural  3
   RELS 347  Rise of Islam  3
   RELS 351  Classical Mythology  3
   RELS 364  Diversity Lessons from Medieval Spain  3
   RELS 365  History of Religion in America to 1860  3
   RELS 366  History of Religion in America after 1860  3
   RELS 371  Hispanic Religions  3
   RELS 392  Studies in Literature, Religion, and Culture  3
   RELS 403  Anthropology of Religion  3
   RELS 418  European Intellectual History from Ancient Greece to the Middle Ages  3
   RELS 419  European Intellectual History from the High Ages to the 17th Century  3
   RELS 436  Ancient Egypt  3
# University Core and College Requirements

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Course Name</th>
<th>Credit Hours</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Communication</td>
<td>ENGL 104</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Select from:</td>
<td>Any course with [KCOM] attribute</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Literature: Choose from the college approved list</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Life and Physical Science</td>
<td>Any courses with the [KLPS] attribute</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mathematics</td>
<td>Select any courses with [KMTH] attribute</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Foreign Language</td>
<td>14 hours in the same language</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LPC</td>
<td>Any course with the [KLPC] attribute</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Creative Arts</td>
<td>Any course with the [KCRA] attribute</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social and Behavioral Science</td>
<td>Any courses with the [KSOC] attribute</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Citizenship</td>
<td>POLS 206</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>POLS 207</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>HIST</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Any U.S. History but no more than one Texas History course</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UICD</td>
<td>Any courses with the [UICD] attribute</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Writing Requirement</td>
<td>Take any two RELS courses with the [UWRT] attribute</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

General Electives and 2 Minors: Two university approved minors; one must be from outside the college.

| General Electives               | Includes 30-36 hours of courses used to satisfy the two minor requirements and 1-7 hours of 100-499 hours not used elsewhere | 34            |

## Summary

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Requirement</th>
<th>Total Credit Hours</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Core requirements</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>University Core and College Requirements</td>
<td>65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>General Electives and Minors</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Credit Hours</td>
<td>120</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Degree Evaluation
University Studies in Religious Thought, Practices, and Culture

Concentration Field of Study: 21 hrs
A. Required courses 6 hrs
   Take RELS 480 and RELS 491
AND B. Concentration electives 15 hrs

Communication: 12 hrs
A. ENGL 104 3 hrs
   Must have a grade of 'C' or better.
AND B. Communication Rqmt 3 hrs
   Select 3 hours from any course with the Communication attribute [KCOM]
AND C. Literature Rqmt 6hrs

Mathematics: 6 hrs
A. Mathematics Rqmt 6hrs
   Select any course with the [KMTH] attribute

Life and Physical Sciences: 9hrs
A. Life/Physical Sciences 9hrs
   Select 9 hours from any courses with the Life and Physical Sciences attribute [KLPS]

Language, Philosophy, Culture and Creative Arts: 6 hrs
A. Lang, Phil, Culture Rqmt 3hrs
   Select any course with the Language, Philosophy and Culture attribute [KLPC]
AND B. Creative Arts 3hrs
   Select any course with the Creative Arts attribute [KCRA]
Foreign Language: 14 hrs

A. Arabic 14hrs
   8 hours. Take ARAB 101 and 102.
   6 hours. Take ARAB 201 and 202.

OR B. Chinese 14hrs
   8 hours. Take CHIN 101 and 102
   6 hours. Take CHIN 201 and 202.

OR C. French 14hrs
   8 hours. Take FREN 101 and 102.
   3 hours. Select from FREN 201 or 221.
   3 hours. Select from FREN 202 or 222.

OR D. German 14hrs
   8 hours. Take GERM 101 and 102.
   3 hours. Select from GERM 201 or 221.
   3 hours. Select from GERM 202 or 222.

OR E. Greek 14hrs
   8 hours. Take CLAS 101 and 102.
   3 hours. Take CLAS 211.
   3 hours. Select from CLAS 311 or 312.

OR F. Italian 14hrs
   8 hours. Take ITAL 101 and 102.
   6 hours. Take ITAL 201 and 202.

OR G. Japanese 14hrs
   8 hours. Take JAPN 101 and 102.
   6 hours. Take JAPN 201 and 202.

OR H. Latin 14hrs
   8 hours. Take CLAS 121 and 122.
   6 hours. Take CLAS 221 and 222.

OR I. Russian 14hrs
   8 hours. Take RUSS 101 and 102.
   6 hours. Select from RUSS 201, 202, 221, 222.

OR J. Spanish 14hrs
   4 hours. Take SPAN 101.
   4 hours. Select from SPAN 102 or 140.
3 hours. Select from SPAN 201 or 221.
3 hours. Select from SPAN 202, 203 or 222.

Social and Behavioral Science: 6hrs
   A. Social Science Rqmt 3hrs
      Select any course with the Social and Behavioral Science attribute [KSOC]
   AND  B. Social Science 3hrs
      Select any course with a [KSOC] attribute.

Citizenship: 12 hrs
   A. American History Rqmt 6hrs
      Select from any course with the [KHIS] attribute.
   AND  B. Political Science Rqmt 6hrs
      Take POLS 206 and POLS 207.

General Electives: 34 hrs
   A. General Electives 37 hrs
      Includes 30-36 hours of courses that were used to satisfy the two minor requirements and 1-7 hours of 100-499 courses not used elsewhere

Work Not Applied:
   A. Courses not applied

University Writing Req.:
   A. Writing Requirement
      Two RELS 100-499 courses with the Writing attribute [UWRT] required

Int’l & Cult Diversity:
   A. International and Cultural Diversity 6 hrs
      Select from courses with the International and Cultural Diversity attribute [UICD]

University Studies Minor Rqmt:
   A. Required Minor
      Two university approved minors are required for this degree program. This area ensures completion of minors and will be removed once an application for degree has been submitted.
Residence Requirement:
A minimum of 36 hours of 300-400 level coursework must be completed at Texas A&M University. 12 hours must be in the major field.
   A. Residence - Major 12hrs
      Includes RELS 300-499
   AND B. Residence – 300-499 24hrs

GPR-Major:
A GPR of 2.00 must be maintained in all major field courses.
   A. Major GPR 21+hrs
      Includes RELS 200-499
Oberhelman, Steven M

From: Holliday Shelley D
Sent: Thursday, October 08, 2015 3:30 PM
To: Dox Donnalee
Cc: Geva, Anat M; Oberhelman, Steven M
Subject: RE: ARCH 438

Donnalee—

Yes, we would definitely be amenable to having ARCH 438 listed as an elective in your University Studies concentration in Religious Beliefs, Practices, and Culture. It is always great to collaborate. We were a bit surprised when we did not see it listed under the minor.

Thank you,

Shelley
Shelley D. Holliday
Associate Department Head for Undergraduate Studies, Architecture
Langford ARCA 418
Department of Architecture
Texas A&M University
College Station, Texas 77843-3137
979.845.7885
sholliday@tamu.edu

From: Dox Donnalee
Sent: Wednesday, October 07, 2015 1:23 PM
To: Holliday Shelley D
Cc: Geva, Anat M; Oberhelman, Steven M
Subject: ARCH 438

Dear Shelley,

The College of Liberal Arts is requesting a University Studies concentration in Religious Beliefs, Practices, and Culture. Would you be amenable to allowing us to list ARCH 438 as an elective in the concentration?

Donnalee

From: Rogers, Julie [mailto:jrogers@arch.tamu.edu]
Sent: Tuesday, December 3, 2013 12:26 PM
To: Geva, Anat; Annette Jackson
Cc: Dox, Donnalee; Klein, Nancy L
Subject: RE: cross listing ARCH 438

All,
Anat is correct. The Department of Architecture Academic Affairs committee expressed concerns over cross-listing this course. Of course we would fully support the ARCH 438 course being available to students as an elective on the Religious Studies minor.