

**OHIO NORTHERN UNIVERSITY**  
**2007 ANNUAL REPORT ON THE ASSESSMENT OF STUDENT LEARNING**

Academic Program: Religion  
Department: Philosophy and Religion  
College: Arts and Sciences  
Submitted by/Date: \_\_\_\_\_

The Annual Report on the Assessment of Student Learning consists of three parts.

Part I provides the learning objectives and measures as previously identified.

Part II requests information about assessment activities for the previous academic year.

Part III requests information about programmatic or operational changes occurring or being proposed as a result of assessment activities.

Reports must be submitted by department chairs to the Office of Institutional Research by **December 3, 2007**. Each annual report will be evaluated by the University Assessment Committee and returned to the department chair and the respective Dean by **March 3, 2007**.

**I. ASSESSMENT PROGRAM COMPONENTS**

*Instructions: Please review the following and make changes as needed.*

**A. Learning Objectives**

Students majoring in religion will be introduced to all of the following learning objectives and will explore all of the objectives in more depth:

1. Knowledge of traditional religious and theological views.
2. Knowledge of contemporary religious and theological views.
3. Knowledge of the historical development of religious and theological ideas.
4. The ability to assess evidence for competing views
5. The ability to discern the value bases and biases involved in social issues.
6. The ability to examine the sacred texts in human existence.
7. The ability to clarify and develop his/her own understanding of religious and theological views

**B. Measurements**

- Evaluation of senior capstone experience
- Sophomore Reviews
- Junior Reviews
- Exit Interviews
- Youth Ministry major focus group

**II. ASSESSMENT ACTIVITIES FOR 2006-07 (ACADEMIC YEAR)**

*Instructions: Please complete the following sections.*

## **A. Describe the *measures* used to collect the data?**

Evaluation of senior essay: In the quarter in which a student is enrolled in RELG 481 or RELG 484, the student's project is evaluated as follows: Two faculty members, including the advisor of the project, complete the standard evaluation form for senior essays, which evaluates the student's accomplishment in relationship to some of the objectives for the major (attached).

Sophomore reviews: Every spring quarter the faculty will meet to discuss the appropriateness of each student's continuing as a major in the department. The main basis for evaluation will be a review of writing samples in the student's portfolio as well as the student's record of making progress towards completion of course requirements in the major. As a committee of the whole, the faculty will complete the standard evaluation form for sophomore reviews (attached).

Junior reviews: Every spring quarter the faculty will meet to discuss the appropriateness of each student's continuing as a major in the department. The main basis for evaluation will be a review of writing samples in the student's portfolio as well as the student's record of making progress towards completion of course requirements in the major. Discussion is to include how prepared the student is for completing the senior essay. As a committee of the whole, the faculty will complete the standard evaluation form for junior reviews (attached).

Exit interviews: At the end of the quarter in which a student will graduate, the department chair will conduct an exit interview. The student will be given a form to evaluate him/herself in relationship to the learning objectives of the major (attached). Then on the basis of the student's self-evaluation, the department chair will ask the following questions:

- (1) What has contributed to your meeting some objectives better than others (e.g., personal interests, program design)?
- (2) Evaluate the faculty.
- (3) What changes would you propose to improve the program?

Focus group:

On July 21, 2007, the department hosted a focus group of constituents of the youth ministry program. Although most of the discussion concerned those courses required for RYMN majors that RELG majors do not take, the focus group did discuss the entire academic program, 44 hours of which are RELG courses taken by RELG majors as well.

## **B. Present the *results* of the data collection and analysis for each measure listed above.**

Since this is the first year for the use of such a database and it is so small, these results must be understood as preliminary. For example, we do not have data on any student that spans all of the measures from sophomore year to graduation. Therefore, the following comments are based exclusively upon data from two students (a graduating senior and a senior who did not complete his major requirements), as the best measures given the current data we have as well as the comments from the focus group. See attached data sheets for these two students.

Evaluation of senior essay: One student clearly met the objectives (4.0 on a 5 point scale) on his senior essay. The other student received a D on his senior essay and, therefore, did not graduate.

This student was not evaluated for the purposes of the assessment program, since he failed to meet the graduation requirement; his assessment data will occur when he satisfactorily completes the graduation requirement of his senior essay.

Exit interviews: Both students participated in the exit interview, since the interview occurred before the grade was assigned for the senior essay. Both students rated themselves as meeting or exceeding the objectives for the major. Their answers to the questions are as follows:

- (1) What has contributed to your meeting some objectives better than others (e.g., personal interests, program design)? Both students stated that the difference was based on choices they made due to their own interests.
- (2) Evaluate the faculty. Both students rated the faculty as knowledgeable and helpful.
- (3) What changes would you propose to improve the program? One student had no suggestions for change. The other requested additional variety of upper-division courses, especially in world religions.

Focus group: Those in attendance agreed that the academic courses in RELG served YMIN graduates well in terms of preparing them with sufficient knowledge of Christianity as well as a good introduction to other world religions. This provides some indirect evidence from constituents of the program that these courses are helping students meet the objectives of the major.

### **III. PROGRAMMATIC /OPERATIONAL ADJUSTMENTS**

*Instructions: Please complete the following sections.*

**A. Describe the *adjustments*, if any, to the program or the program's operations (including budgetary) which are either being proposed or have already been made in order to narrow the gaps identified between learning objectives and actual outcomes.**

Over the last 5-6 years, exit interviews often include the students' desire to have additional choices for upper-division classes, especially in religions other than Christianity. The new position in world religions will help address this concern by adding upper-division courses in world religions that are currently not offered. For example, in winter 2007-08 Naoko Sasaki offered "East Asian Religions" for the first time. Furthermore, the department entered into an agreement with Methodist Theological Seminary in Ohio, which will allow eligible ONU students to enroll in up to two 3-hour semester courses at MTSO tuition-free. This will increase students' choice in RELG courses.

**B. Describe the *changes* that need to be made to the assessment plan and practices for the future?**

2006-07 is the first year to use the new rubrics in their entirety for the department's assessment program; therefore, the department is not proposing any new changes in terms of measures. Rather the department needs to collect enough assessment data with the new rubrics before deciding how well the assessment program is working. However, the department will refine its database as it gathers data on additional students, including aggregate numbers for each of the learning objectives for each of the measures to have a more detailed analysis to compare the

aggregated data. This improvement will allow the department to assess more accurately progression from the sophomore to junior to senior year and to compare one graduating class to previous graduating classes. This new format will also allow the aggregation of the data for youth ministry majors and religion majors for those objectives they have in common in addition to their separate aggregation. This will certainly increase the database for these objectives, so that a meaningful analysis of the quantitative data can occur earlier. This seems to be consistent with the feedback we received last year from the Assessment Committee.

Student	SOPH	JR	SR	ESSAY	EXIT	AVERAGE
Major						
Religion						
Catalog year						
Date declared						
Grad date						
GPA						
Major GPA						
Knowledge of traditional religious/theological views					4	4
Demonstrated knowledge of contemporary religious and theological view.					4	4
Knowledge of historical development of religious/theological ideas					4	4
Ability to assess evidence for competing views					3	3
Ability to discern the value bases and biases involved in social issues					4	4
Ability to examine the role of sacred texts in human existence					4	4
Ability to clarify and develop one's own understanding of religious/theological views					4	4
Average					3.86	3.86
Exit interview comments						
1. Own biases and interests						
2. Small so easy to get to know people, relationships are helpful, different expertises are helpful, good people						
3. More options for upperdivision in world religions, "denominations" class						

## Evaluation Form for Sophomore and Junior Reviews in Religion

Student Name:

Faculty name:

Date:

Based upon my evaluation of the student's portfolios, I am able to reach the following evaluation relating to this student's progress in relationship to the objectives of the major:

- 1 = little evidence toward meeting objective
- 2 = has met the objective to some degree
- 3 = has met the objective for the most part
- 4 = has met objective
- 5 = has exceeded the expectations for the objective

- |                                                                                                                               |           |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------|
| 1. The student has demonstrated knowledge of traditional religious and theological views                                      | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 2. The student has demonstrated knowledge of contemporary religious and theological views                                     | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 3. The student has demonstrated knowledge of the historical development of religious and theological ideas                    | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 4. The student has demonstrated the ability to assess evidence for competing views                                            | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 5. The student has demonstrated the ability to discern the value bases and biases involved in social issues                   | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 6. The student has demonstrated the ability to examine the role of sacred texts in human existence                            | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 7. The student has demonstrated the ability to clarify and develop one's own understanding of religious and theological views | 1 2 3 4 5 |

For each junior, the following additional evaluation is required:

1 = No, 2 = Yes with reservations, 3 = Yes

- |                                                        |       |
|--------------------------------------------------------|-------|
| 11. The student is prepared to begin the senior essay. | 1 2 3 |
|--------------------------------------------------------|-------|

## Evaluation Form for Senior Essays in Religion

Student Name:

Faculty name:

Date:

Based upon my reading of the student's senior essay, I am able to reach the following evaluation relating to the objectives of the major:

- 1 = little evidence toward meeting objective
- 2 = has met the objective to some degree
- 3 = has met the objective for the most part
- 4 = has met objective
- 5 = has exceeded the expectations for the objective

Each senior essay must be evaluated using the following criterion:

7. The student has demonstrated the ability to clarify and develop his/her own understanding of religious and theological views. 1 2 3 4 5

Each senior essay must address at least one of the following objectives:

1. The student has demonstrated knowledge of traditional religious and theological views. 1 2 3 4 5

2. The student has demonstrated knowledge of contemporary religious and theological views. 1 2 3 4 5

- 
3. The student has demonstrated knowledge of the historical development of religious and theological ideas. 1 2 3 4 5

Faculty members are encouraged, when helpful, to write comments concerning their evaluation of the student concerning the criteria above

## Evaluation Form for Exit Interviews in Religion

Student Name:

Faculty name:

Date:

Each graduating senior should fill out the following based on his/her understanding of how well he/she has met the learning objectives for the major.

1 = has not met the objective

2 = has met the objective to some degree

3 = has met the objective for the most part

4 = has met objective

5 = has exceeded the expectations for the objective

- |                                                                                                  |   |   |   |   |   |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1. knowledge of traditional religious and theological views                                      | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 2. knowledge of contemporary religious and theological views                                     | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 3. knowledge of the historical development of religious and theological ideas                    | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 4. the ability to assess evidence for competing views                                            | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 5. the ability to discern the value bases and biases involved in social issues                   | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 6. the ability to examine the role of sacred texts in human existence                            | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 7. the ability to clarify and develop one's own understanding of religious and theological views | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
-

### Common Questions for All Exit Interviews

On the basis of the information marked by students on the above forms, the faculty member will ask the following questions of the graduating seniors:

- (1) What has contributed to your meeting some objectives better than others (e.g., personal interests, program design)?
- (2) Evaluate the faculty.
- (3) What changes would you propose to improve the program?