

## **Religion Department Writing Plan**

### **What does religious studies value in written communication?**

In written communication, the field of religious studies values clarity, creativity, attention to historical context, reasoned argumentation based on evidence, attention to detail, and the ability to accurately represent the voices and ideas of others.

### **What kinds of texts do scholars in religious studies create?**

Scholars in the field of religious studies create many different types of texts. These include: histories, translations, analyses (of texts, visual objects, material culture, rituals, music, and so forth), ethnographies, biographies, websites, theory, critical editions of texts, edited volumes, guidebooks, travelogues, catalogs, articles for academic journals, reference works, textbooks, and articles for popular media.

On the undergraduate level, students in religion classes write essays typical of humanities classes, such as historical analyses, argumentative essays, and interpretive essays.

### **What kinds of skills or experiences help scholars of religious studies learn to write in those ways?**

In terms of skills, scholars of religious studies benefit from practicing: close reading, attention to detail, historical sensitivity, argumentation, the use of evidence, language skills, and patience. Some types of religious studies writing also require specialized or technical skills (such as linguistic skills or computer skills).

In terms of experiences, writers in the field of religious studies may benefit from visiting the communities they study, and developing sympathy for others whose views are different from their own. Reading widely in multiple fields (religion, history, literature, anthropology) is also valuable.

### **What courses or assignments are best suited to giving students access to and practice in these skills and experiences?**

Courses suited to practicing the above skills are: courses that focus on particular religious traditions, comparative courses, and thematic courses. Assignments include low stakes writing assignments, skill building assignments (such as writing summaries of arguments), close reading assignments, historical contextualization assignments, and argumentative essays. More advanced writing assignments are interpretive essays, long format argumentation, and research projects.

## **Writing Emphasis Classes in Religion**

REL-101 Introduction to Religion  
REL-103 Belief and Unbelief  
REL-108 Western Religions  
REL-128 Judaism  
REL-136 Religions of China  
REL-138 Modern Judaism  
REL-206 Buddhist Thought  
REL-215 The Rise of Christianity  
REL-226 Religions of China: Daoism  
REL-236 Zen Buddhism  
REL-336 Tibetan Buddhist Culture  
REL-105 Introduction to Hebrew Bible  
REL-115 Introduction to New Testament  
REL-310 Early Christian Gospels  
REL-330 Topics in Hebrew Bible  
REL-365 The Letters of Paul  
REL-217 Religion in America  
REL-338 Modern Religious Thought  
REL-385 Advanced Topics in Religion  
REL-386 Advanced Topics in Religion: Non-Western Perspectives  
REL-394 Directed Readings in Religion  
REL-444 Independent Study in Religion  
REL-494 Internship in Religion