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| **COMMUNITY COLLEGE OF PHILADELPHIA**  **Proficiency Certificate Template** | | | |
| Name of Proficiency Certificate | Religious Studies Proficiency Certificate | | |
| Academic Pathway | Liberal Arts and Communication | | |
| Department | History, Philosophy, and Religious Studies | | |
| Faculty Writer | David Prejsnar | | |
| Facilitator | Cindy Giddle | | |
| New or Revised? | New | | |
| If this is a **revision**, indicate which are being revised (check box) | Title of PC | Catalog Copy | Program Sequence/Grid |
| PLOs | Curriculum Map | Credit Hours: \_\_\_ to \_\_\_ |
| Recommended Starting Semester | Fall 2021 | | |
| **Today’s Date** | February 24, 2021 | | |

**Part 1: Rationale**

The Religious Studies Proficiency Certificate provides a means for understanding religion as a crucial dimension of human existence in the modern world. As former Secretary of State John Kerry remarked: “I often say that if I headed back to college today, I would major in comparative religions rather than political science. That is because religious actors and institutions are playing an influential role in every region of the world and on nearly every issue central to U.S. foreign policy.” Political, social welfare, medical and other institutions and systems are increasingly shaped by diverse religious and faith-based claims and beliefs. The Religious Studies Proficiency Certificate provides students with supplementary knowledge of the beliefs, practices, and history of various religious and spiritual traditions from the perspectives of a variety of academic disciplines. For some students, it may also serve as a means for transfer to a degree program in religious studies or a related field, such as anthropology or history. For all students, it will support their ability to work within a diverse, global workforce in a variety of careers.

The insights of Religious Studies are used in a variety of professions, such as economics, health care, social work, education, and law. Religious Studies does not address only those with a religious background, and it does not seek to either promote or disparage religious beliefs. Religious Studies is the systematic, academic study of religious phenomenon in an attempt to explain the variety of roles that religious beliefs, experiences and institutions play in human life. Religious Studies is both its own academic discipline and a multi-disciplinary field that uses theories and methods from a variety of disciplines such as history, sociology, psychology, economics, anthropology, philosophy and literary studies.

The Religious Studies Proficiency Certificate provides students with a broad religious literacy that can serve as 1) supplementary training for those going into professions such as social work, education and health care, 2) a foundation and a credential for those working in faith-based social welfare or educational non-profit organizations, 3) a gateway and path into an academic degree at the College or at a transfer institution, and 4) a credential for lay and assistant clerical leadership positions in religious organizations. The PLOs are specifically designed to align with the Five Core Competencies in Religious Literacy as defined by the American Academy of Religion ([www.aarweb.org](http://www.aarweb.org)).

While certificates in religious studies are not as common at American universities and colleges as academic degrees (Associate, Bachelor and Graduate degrees), they are not uncommon. There are numerous examples of both graduate and undergraduate certificates in Religious Studies. Graduate certificates are often designed to provide certification for teachers employed in religiously affiliated schools (the Harvard University Extension Graduate Certificate and the Kansas University Graduate Certificate in Religious Studies are two examples.) Undergraduate certificates in Religious Studies are usually designed for the populations listed in the previous paragraph. Examples of undergraduate Religious Studies Certificate programs, such as those at The University of Wisconsin - Madison, The University of Massachusetts – Amherst, Normandale Community College, and Drexel University, all consist of 15-18 credits, and usually require three to four courses in Religious Studies, although some may allow for courses in related fields such as anthropology or history. (Another similar program is the Minor in Religious Studies, which is 18 credits at West Chester University.)

The proposed Religious Studies Proficiency Certificate, in alignment with the prevalent models for undergraduate certificates in Religious Studies, requires completion of six courses (18 credit hours), including four courses in Religious Studies: RS 101, RS 151/PHIL 151, RS 160, and RS 170.

* **RS 101**: Introduction to Religious Studies is an introduction to the study of religion and examines significant social scientific, philosophical and theological theories that attempt to explain both the unity and diversity of religious experience and institutions. This prepares students in fields such as social work and allied health to understand the social, cultural and political dimensions of religion.
* **RS 151/PHIL 151**: World Religions studies the history and development of the major world religions (Hinduism, Buddhism, Confucianism, Judaism, Christianity and Islam) and how these traditions view the religious life of man and the nature of human existence. This course provides students with knowledge of a wide variety of religious and spiritual traditions, and an understanding of how these traditions approach issues such as identity, death and the possibility of life after death.
* **RS 160:** Death and Dying, effective Fall 2021, is useful for students looking for a career in social work or health care. This course examines how religious traditions from across the world and from different historical periods have addressed and explored the meaning of death, the process by which humans grieve and confront death, and the question of transcendence beyond death.
* In addition, students will take one more course in the field, such as RS 170/HIST 170: Religion in America, RS 175: Religions of the Middle East, RS 180: Religions of Asia, RS 152/PHIL 152: Philosophy of Religion, along with the related course BHHS 131. Depending on the student’s career interests and course availability, they will be able to select from any of these four courses.
* Taken together, the Religious Studies courses give a student breadth of knowledge about religious traditions from around the world, how religion functions in human society and culture, and how religion and spirituality relates to fields such as social work and health care.

These courses transfer to local four-year institutions. The certificate also requires the student to complete English 101, in order to gain written communication skills, and give students a choice of Communication course, ENGL 115, ENGL 116, or ENGL 118, to provide the writing and communication skills that are necessary for work in religious studies. This pairing recognizes that this proficiency certificate addresses audiences with a variety of skills and career interests.

The Religious Studies Proficiency Certificate also aligns well with the Associate Degree in Liberal Arts. Students can choose to supplement their degree programs with the Certificate, possibly without taking additional courses, and obtain additional certification.

Finally, if a student is looking to transfer to a four-year institution, all six courses transfer to most of the College’s major transfer institutions. In general, religious studies provides important preparation for critical thinking, communicating, and functioning as a professional and a citizen in a diverse world where all are interdependent.

**Part 2: Catalog Copy**

**Title:** Religious Studies Proficiency Certificate

**Description:** The Religious Studies Proficiency Certificate is primarily designed to provide supplementary training for those going into social work, education, and health care, to provide a credential for those working in faith-based social welfare or educational non-profit organizations, or for lay and assistant clerical leadership positions in religious organizations, and/or a gateway to an academic degree in Liberal Arts or related fields at the College or at a transfer institution. Students take courses that provide a background to religious and spiritual beliefs, practices and institutions from around the world and the United States. As well as taking introductory courses in comparative religion, students can choose courses that deal with more specialized issues such as death and dying, and the role of spirituality in human services. The Religious Studies Proficiency Certificate can be used in a variety of professions, such as economics, health care, social work, education, and law. Students earning the Religious Studies Proficiency Certificate may elect to continue their education at the College by completing 43 additional credits to earn the A.A. degree in Liberal Arts.

**Student Learning Outcomes:**

Upon successful completion of the Religious Studies proficiency certificate, students will be able to:

* Compare a variety of religious traditions and recognize the internal diversity of religious traditions.
* Explain how religions have shaped and are shaped by the experiences and histories of individuals, communities, nations and cultural/geographical regions.
* Analyze religious texts (written, visual, architectural, aural) and practices, from across the world, using a variety of theoretical approaches.

**Program Entry Requirements:** This certificate is open to interested students. New students are normally required to take the College’s placement test at their time of entry. Students who are identified as needing developmental course work must satisfactorily complete the appropriate English and mathematics courses as part of the certificate when applicable.

**Program of Study and Graduation Requirements:** Successful completion of the program requires a “C” grade or better in each of the courses in the program.

**Course Sequence**

| **Course Number and Name** | **Prerequisites** | **Credits** |
| --- | --- | --- |
| ENGL 101 - English Composition |  | 3 |
| RS 101 - Introduction to Religion |  | 3 |
| RS 151/PHIL151 - World Religions |  | 3 |
| RS 160 - Death and Dying |  | 3 |
| **RS Elective (choose one):**  RS 152/PHIL 152 -Philosophy of Religion  RS 170/HIST 170 - Religion in American History\*  RS 175 - Religions of the Middle East  RS 180 - Religions of Asia  BHHS 131 - Faith and Spirituality in Human Services |  | 3 |
| **Communication Course (choose one)**  ENGL 115 - Public Speaking  ENGL 116 - Interpersonal Communication  ENGL 118 - Intercultural Communication | ENGL 101, which may be taken concurrently | 3 |
| **Minimum Credits Needed to Graduate:** | | **18** |

\* Students in the Liberal Arts program should take RS 170.

**For More Information, Contact:** The Division of Liberal Studies, Room BR-21, 1700 Spring Garden Street, Philadelphia, PA. 19130. Telephone (215) 751-8768; or call the College Information Center (215) 751-8010.

[**Gainful Employment Information:** The Office of Institutional Research will insert gainful employment information.]

**Part 3: Assessment Plan and Curriculum Map**

**Assessment Plan:**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Student Learning Outcome** | **How Assessed** |
| 1. Compare a variety of religious traditions and recognize the internal diversity of religious traditions. | Weekly writing samples  Examinations  Quizzes |
| Explain how religions have shaped and are shaped by the experiences and histories of individuals, communities, nations and cultural/geographical regions. | Weekly writing samples  Examinations  Quizzes |
| Analyze religious texts (written, visual, architectural, aural) and practices, from across the world, using a variety of theoretical approaches | Weekly writing samples  Examinations  Quizzes |

**Curriculum Map:**

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Proficiency Certificate Learning Outcomes** | | | |
| **Required Courses** | Compare a variety of religious traditions and recognize the internal diversity of religious traditions. | Explain how religions have shaped and are shaped by the experiences and histories of individuals, communities, nations and cultural/geographical regions. | Analyze religious texts (written, visual, architectural, aural) and practices, from across the world, using a variety of theoretical approaches |
| RS 101 |  | I, A | I |
| RS 151 | I, A |  | R |
| RS 160 | R, A | R, A | R, A |
| RS 170 | R, M | R, M | R, M, A |

**Key: I**—Introduced **R**—Reinforced and opportunity to practice

**M**—Mastery at exit level **A**—Assessment evidence collected

**Courses and Completion Sequence**

The following courses and sequence of courses is designed for the optimal success and completion of the [Religious Studies](https://www.ccp.edu/college-catalog/degree-programs/associate-arts-aa/religious-studies?mode=ls) degree/certificate. Any alterations should be discussed with your academic advisor.

| **Course Number and Name** | **Credits** | **Advisory Notes** |
| --- | --- | --- |
| ENGL 101- English Composition | 3 | Prerequisite for Communication course |
| RS 101 - Introduction to Religion | 3 | Major Course |
| RS 151/PHIL 151 - World Religions | 3 | Major Course |
| RS 160 - Death and Dying | 3 | Major Course |
| **RS Elective (choose one)**  RS 170/HIST 170 - Religion in American History  RS 175 - Religions of the Middle East  RS 180 - Religions of Asia  BHHS 131 - Faith and Spirituality in Human Services | 3 | Major Course |
| **Communication Course (choose one)**  ENGL 115 - Public Speaking  ENGL 116 - Interpersonal Communication  ENGL 118 - Intercultural Communication | 3 |  |

**Appendix 1**

Religious Composition of Adults in the Philadelphia Metropolitan Area (2014)

Source: PEW Research Center: Religion & Public Life

<https://www.pewforum.org/religious-landscape-study/metro-area/philadelphia-metro-area/>

**Religious Faith Philadelphia Metro Area**

**Christian 68%**

Evangelical Protestant 13%

Mainline Protestant 17%

Historically Black Protestant 11%

Catholic 26%

Mormon <1%

Orthodox Christian <1%

Jehovah’s Witness 1%

Other Christian <1%

**Non-Christian Faiths 8%**

Jewish 3%

Muslim 1%

Buddhist 1%

Hindu 1%

Other World Religions <1%

Other Faiths 1%

**Unaffiliated (religious ‘nones’) 24%**

Atheist 5%

Agnostic 4%

Nothing in particular 15%

**Don’t Know 1%**

**Appendix 2**

Religiosity of Adults in the Philadelphia Metropolitan Area and Other Metro Areas (2014)

Source: PEW Research Center: Religion & Public Life

<https://www.pewforum.org/religious-landscape-study/metro-area/philadelphia-metro-area/>

**Belief in God**

**Metro Region Absolutely Certain Fairly Certain Not Too Do Not**

**Philadelphia** 57% 20% 7% 13%

**Boston** 44% 24% 10% 17%

**Los Angeles** 53% 23% 9% 11%

**Dallas** 70% 18% 3% 7%

**Pittsburgh** 69% 16% 6% 5%

**Detroit** 66% 20% 4% 9%

**Attendance at Religious Services**

**Metro Region At Least Weekly 1-2x Month/1-2x Year Seldom/Never**

**Philadelphia** 31% 34% 35%

**Boston** 25% 31% 43%

**Los Angeles** 34% 35% 31%

**Dallas** 41% 34% 24%

**Pittsburgh** 29% 40% 31%

**Detroit** 29% 41% 30%