Religious Studies Department’s Learning Goals (amended 11-14-14)

The overarching goal of the Religious Studies Department is to introduce students to the academic study of religion. The department’s mission is to educate students about the key role religion plays in human history, politics, culture, and in human life by teaching a variety of methodological and theoretical approaches.

To achieve this mission, we have identified the following central learning goals for our students:

1. Students learn to articulate, discuss and analyze religious pluralism both within and between specific traditions.

2. Students learn that the academic study of religion treats spirituality as a human phenomenon.

3. Students are able utilize a variety of classical and contemporary methodological approaches, and employ, integrate, and articulate the perspectives of other academic fields when they interpret religious phenomena.

4. Students work with different types of “texts,” including, for example, scriptures, religious literatures, rituals, sacred art objects and architecture, and film.

5. Students recognize that people’s lives, including their own, are often rooted in different religious worlds that profoundly affect their experiences, politics, ethical, and aesthetic sensibilities.

6. Students reflect upon “religion” as an academic category. They should think about how religion is described by scholars and practicing communities, often in ways that diverge and are contested.