

CURRICULUM PROPOSAL COVER SHEET  
University-Wide Undergraduate Curriculum Committee

LSC Use Only
Number <u>136</u>
Action <u>Approved</u>
Date <u>10-11-90</u>

UWUCC Use Only
Number _____
Action _____
Date _____

I. TITLE/AUTHOR OF CHANGE  
 COURSE/PROGRAM TITLE PH 329 Philosophy of Religion  
 DEPARTMENT Philosophy & Religious Studies  
 CONTACT PERSON Dr. Vincent J. Ferrara

*\*Note slightly revised Catalogue description.*

II. THIS COURSE IS BEING PROPOSED FOR:  
 \_\_\_\_\_ Course Approval Only  
 \_\_\_\_\_ Course Approval and Liberal Studies Approval  
X Liberal Studies Approval only (course previously has been approved by the University Senate)

III. APPROVALS

Sharon Montgomery 5-4-90  
 Department Curriculum Committee

Sharon Montgomery 5-4-90  
 Department Chairperson

Charles [Signature]  
 College Curriculum Committee  
 Director of Liberal Studies  
 (where applicable)

[Signature]  
 College Dean\*  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 Provost  
 (where applicable)

\*College Dean must consult with Provost before approving curriculum changes. Approval by College Dean indicates that the proposed change is consistent with long range planning documents, that all requests for resources made as part of the proposal can be met, and that the proposal has the support of the university administration.

IV. TIMETABLE

Date Submitted to LSC _____	Semester/Year to be implemented _____	Date to be published in Catalog _____
to UWUCC _____		

GENERIC SYLLABUS  
ELECTIVE ONLY

I. Course Description

3 credits  
3 Lecture Hours

PH 329 Philosophy of Religion

This course is a critical examination of religion to include: the nature of religion; religious argumentation; existence and nature of God; meaning and relation of faith and knowledge; theories of origin of religion.

II. Course Objectives

1. To develop in students a critical and objective approach to the study of religion as a profound human phenomenon.
2. To demonstrate the range and depth of the religious phenomenon through reading of primary sources.
3. To illustrate the impact of religious thought on everyday human experience (across gender, racial, ethnic lines where appropriate and feasible).

III. Course Outline\*

- A. Introduction
  1. The need for a critical approach and its meaning
  2. Schema of questions
  3. The difference between a philosophical and theological approach to the study of religion; sources for each
- B. The Question of God
  1. Meaning of theism, polytheism, henotheism, atheism
  2. Question of proof of God's existence
    - a. what does/can a proof do?
    - b. types of proofs
    - c. proof God does not exist
  3. Nature of God; attributes of God
- C. Question of Evil
  1. Types of evil
  2. Compatibility of rational universe and evil
- D. Religious Language
  1. Usages of language
  2. Characteristics of religious language
  3. Evidence and religious language; meaning of religious propositions
- E. Faith and Reason
  1. Definitions of belief, religious faith, reason
  2. Compatibility of faith and reason

- F. Origin of Religion
1. Transcendental
  2. Mythic
  3. Social
  4. Psychological

\*NOTE: The above outline covers typical problems in the discipline, but will vary according to the instructor.

#### IV. Evaluation Methods

Actual evaluative methods will vary according to the individual instructor, but would include some of the following:

1. Traditional examinations of an objective and/or essay type.
2. Research paper, book reports, philosophical journal.
3. Student lead in-class discussion on assigned topics.

V. REQUIRED TEXTBOOKS: this will vary with the instructor, but would include some of the following:

1. One of the many currently available texts which would emphasize either a thematic approach [Winston Smith's Introduction to Religion] or a textual approach [Allie M. Frazier's Issues in Religion]

2. Full length works which analyze religion as a phenomenon [Jonathan Edwards, Religious Affections, William James, Varieties of Religious Experience]

3. Articles from journals or monographs on selected themes

4. Handouts of material [Doctrine of the 10 Bulls; Edicts of Asoka]

5. One full length book (not a textbook) will be required reading.

#### VI. BIBLIOGRAPHY\*

Plato, Euthyphro

Augustine of Hippo, Confessions

Thomas Aquinas, Summa Theologiae

# LIBERAL STUDIES COURSE APPROVAL FORM

**About this form:** Use this form only if you wish to have a course included for Liberal Studies credit. The form is intended to assist you in developing your course to meet the university's Criteria for Liberal Studies, and to arrange your proposal in a standard order for consideration by the LSC and the UWUCC. If you have questions, contact the Liberal Studies Office, 353 Sutton Hall; telephone, 357-5715.

**Do not** use this form for technical, professional, or pre-professional courses or for remedial courses, none of which is eligible for Liberal Studies. **Do not** use this form for sections of the synthesis course or for writing-intensive sections; different forms will be available for those.

## PART I. BASIC INFORMATION

**A. For which category(ies) are you proposing the course? Check all that apply.**

### LEARNING SKILLS

- First English Composition Course
- Second English Composition Course
- Mathematics

### KNOWLEDGE AREAS

- Humanities: History
- Humanities: Philosophy/Religious Studies
- Humanities: Literature
- Fine Arts
- Natural Sciences: Laboratory Course
- Natural Sciences: Non-laboratory Course
- Social Sciences
- Health and Wellness
- Non-Western Cultures
- Liberal Studies Elective

**B. Are you requesting regular or provisional approval for this course?**

- Regular
- Provisional (limitations apply, see instructions)

**C. During the transition from General Education to Liberal Studies, should this course be listed as an approved substitute for a current General Education course, thus allowing it to meet any remaining General Education needs?  yes  no**

**If so, which General Education course(s)?** PH 101, 120, 221, 222

**PART II. WHICH LIBERAL STUDIES GOALS WILL YOUR COURSE MEET? Check all that apply and attach an explanation.**

All Liberal Studies courses must contribute to at least one of these goals; most will meet more than one. As you check them off, please indicate whether you consider them to be primary or secondary goals of the course. [For example, a history course might assume "historical consciousness" and "acquiring a body of knowledge" as its primary goals, but it might also enhance inquiry skills or literacy or library skills.] Keep in mind that no single course is expected to shoulder all by itself the responsibility for meeting these goals; our work is supported and enhanced by that of our colleagues teaching other courses.

**Primary      Secondary**

**A. Intellectual Skills and Modes of Thinking:**

- 1. Inquiry, abstract logical thinking, critical analysis, synthesis, decision making, and other aspects of the critical process.        X        \_\_\_\_\_
- 2. Literacy--writing, reading, speaking, listening      \_\_\_\_\_        X
- 3. Understanding numerical data      \_\_\_\_\_      \_\_\_\_\_
- 4. Historical consciousness      \_\_\_\_\_        X
- 5. Scientific inquiry      \_\_\_\_\_      \_\_\_\_\_
- 6. Values (ethical mode of thinking or application of ethical perception)        X        \_\_\_\_\_
- 7. Aesthetic mode of thinking      \_\_\_\_\_        X

**B. Acquiring a Body of Knowledge or Understanding Essential to an Educated Person**

  X        \_\_\_\_\_

**C. Understanding the Physical Nature of Human Beings**

\_\_\_\_\_      \_\_\_\_\_

**D. Certain Collateral Skills:**

- 1. Use of the library      \_\_\_\_\_        X
- 2. Use of computing technology      \_\_\_\_\_      \_\_\_\_\_

**PART III. DOES YOUR COURSE MEET THE GENERAL CRITERIA FOR LIBERAL STUDIES?** Please attach answers to these questions.

- A. If this is a multiple-section, multiple-instructor course, there should be a basic equivalency (though not necessarily uniformity) among the sections in such things as objectives, content, assignments, and evaluation. Note: this should not be interpreted to mean that all professors must make the same assignments or teach the same way; departments are encouraged to develop their courses to allow the flexibility which contributes to imaginative, committed teaching and capitalizes on the strengths of individual faculty.

**What are the strategies that your department will use to assure that basic equivalency exists?** Examples might be the establishment of departmental guidelines, assignment of responsibility to a coordinating committee, exchange and discussion of individual instructor syllabi, periodic meetings among instructors, etc.

cf. explanation

- B. Liberal Studies courses must include the perspectives and contributions of ethnic and racial minorities and of women wherever appropriate to the subject matter. **If your attached syllabus does not make explicit that the course meets this criterion, please append an explanation of how it will.**

cf. explanation

- C. Liberal Studies courses must require the reading and use by students of at least one, but preferably more, substantial works of fiction or nonfiction (as distinguished from textbooks, anthologies, workbooks, or manuals). **Your attached syllabus must make explicit that the course meets this criterion.**

[The only exception is for courses whose primary purpose is the development of higher level quantitative skills; such courses are encouraged to include such reading, but are not expected to do so at the expense of other course objectives. If you are exercising this exception, please justify here.]

cf. explanation

- D. If this is an introductory course intended for a general student audience, it should be designed to reflect the reality that it may well be the only formal college instruction these students will have in that discipline, instead of being designed as the first course in a major sequence. That is, it should introduce the discipline to students rather than introduce students into the discipline. **If this is such an introductory course, how is it different from what is provided for beginning majors?**

cf. explanation

E. The Liberal Studies Criteria indicate six ways in which all courses should contribute to students' abilities. To which of the six will your course contribute? Check all that apply and attach an explanation.

- 1. Confront the major ethical issues which pertain to the subject matter; realize that although "suspended judgment" is a necessity of intellectual inquiry, one cannot live forever in suspension; and make ethical choices and take responsibility for them.
- 2. Define and analyze problems, frame questions, evaluate available solutions, and make choices
- 3. Communicate knowledge and exchange ideas by various forms of expression, in most cases writing and speaking.
- 4. Recognize creativity and engage in creative thinking.
- 5. Continue learning even after the completion of their formal education.
- 6. Recognize relationships between what is being studied and current issues, thoughts, institutions, and/or events.

**PART IV. DOES YOUR COURSE MEET THE CRITERIA FOR THE CURRICULUM CATEGORY IN WHICH IT IS TO BE LISTED?**

Each curriculum category has its own set of specific criteria in addition to those generally applicable. The LSC provides copies of these criteria arranged in a convenient, check-list format which you can mark off appropriately and include with your proposal. The attached syllabus should indicate how your course meets each criterion you check. If it does not do so explicitly, please attach an explanation.

## CHECK LIST -- LIBERAL STUDIES ELECTIVES

### Knowledge Area Criteria which the course must meet:

- Treat concepts, themes, and events in sufficient depth to enable students to appreciate the complexity, history, and current implications of what is being studied; and not be merely cursory coverages of lists of topics.
- Suggest the major intellectual questions/problems which interest practitioners of a discipline and explore critically the important theories and principles presented by the discipline.
- Allow students to understand and apply the methods of inquiry and vocabulary commonly used in the discipline.
- Encourage students to use and enhance, wherever possible, the composition and mathematics skills built in the Skill Areas of Liberal Studies.

### Liberal Studies Elective Criteria which the course must meet:

- Meet the "General Criteria Which Apply to All Liberal Studies Courses."
- Not be a technical, professional, or pre-professional course.

**Explanation:** Appropriate courses are to be characterized by learning in its broad, liberal sense rather than in the sense of technique or professional proficiency. For instance, assuming it met all the other criteria for Liberal Studies, a course in "Theater History" might be appropriate, while one in "The Craft of Set Construction" probably would not; or, a course in "Modern American Poetry" might be appropriate, while one in "New Techniques for Teaching Writing in the Secondary Schools" probably would not; or, a course on "Mass Media and American Society" might be appropriate, while one in "Television Production Skills" probably would not; or, a course in "Human Anatomy" might be appropriate, while one in "Strategies for Biological Field Work" probably would not; or, a course in "Beginning French" might be appropriate, while one in "Practical Methods for Professional Translators" probably would not.



Liberal Studies Form: Exaplanations  
PH 329 Philosophy of Religion

PART II. Liberal Studies Goals

A1. The study of religion is both a global and historical persistent phenomenon, and students in PH 329 will be introduced to a critical examination of the fundamental meaning of religion and the controveries that include such questions as the existence and nature of deity, religious belief, action, practice. Given the historical and social place of religion in human life a critical, objective, and analytical approach is necessary both to illuminate the subject matter dispassionately, and to afford the student alternative theoretical perspectives with which to examine the phenomenon itself. The course joins a critical approach to a non-sectarian study of religion as religion both descriptively and normatively. The student is strongly encouraged to make an objective examination of common elements in religion itself, and its various expressive modes.

A2. Reading in this course may be supplemented, at instructor discretion, with audio and/or video materials to illustrate common and unique religious manifestations in culture and to address racial and gender questions. Strong class discussion is recommended.

A4. Material will cover what is of historical, cultural, and of contemporary interest.

A6. In the area of religion value questions are not only dominant, but highly sensitive. The course will endeavor to raise such questions in a critical and objective format so that students can make intelligent and meaningful decisions in this area.

B. Acquiring a body of Knowledge or Understanding Essential to an Educated Person:

The study of religion not only forms a necessary background for the understanding of culture and its various forms, but also as the internal motivating power in individual lives. Because of the pervasiveness of religion in all areas of the world and through all its historical periods, a critical and objective understanding of this phenomenon is a precondition for the understanding of cultural structures, choices, attitudes, and actions. Contemporary events reveal that an understanding of the religious attitudes of Third World nations is often essential to meaningful dialogue. Such considerations as the relation of faith and reason dominate not only western thought, but present day eastern and Third World thinking.

PART III. General Criteria:

A. Basic equivalency of all sections of this course would be assured by the following process. All instructors who have taught this course during the previous academic year and summer or intend to teach the course the following academic year will meet at the conclusion of the spring semester. They will review this document, including the generic syllabus. They will exchange individual syllabi and then will discuss whether or not they are adequately meeting the specific goals and criteria approved for this course and outline herein. Any problems or conflicts would be brought to the attention of the entire department for resolution.

B. The course is especially amendable to considerations of ethnic, minority and gender questions, since religion has had a marked impact on such groups. The course will also include representatives of such groups, and the use of nonracist, nonsexist, non derogatory ethnic language. The course can also sensitize students to the impact of religion on such groups through its concepts, language, rituals, e.g., the use of the male pronoun to describe the deity, the question of caste, refusal of female priests, bishops, etc.

C. Most readings are primary sources. Some are anthologies containing articles and/or selections by major philosophers. Required readings will include at least one booklength work by a major philosopher. Examples of booklength readings are: Plato: Euthyphro; Immanuel Kant: Religion within the Limits of Reason Alone; Jonathan Edwards: Religious Affections; William James: Varieties of Religious Experience; Soren Kierkegaard: Fear and Trembling; Sigmund Freud: The Future of Illusion; Rudolph Otto: The Idea of the Holy.

D. We do not have introductory major courses as such. This course meets all the requirements of a Liberal Studies "mandated" course except that it is a little more intense and demands a little more reading and comprehension ability. It would, therefore, be an ideal course for the better students at IUP. If a student can fulfill a requirement at a higher level should (s)he be required to take a lower level course?

E1. cf. syllabus and A1.

E2. cf. syllabus and A1.

E3. Discussion is encouraged.

E4. Creativity will be gained through discussion and challenge of material, and through essay examinations and research projects.

E5. The student will most probably approach the course with a religious commitment, and the course will seek to join that to a critical analysis of the phenomenon of religion, noting that its purpose as a course is not to encourage, discourage, support, or deny a student's religiosity, but to make an objective, dispassionate, and critical analysis of the phenomenon of religion itself.

E6. Ethical values implicit in religiosity as religiosity will be examined in conjunction with the view that religion takes a global view of the nature of reality, the human being, and what the human ought to do. This will be treated as indigenous to religious phenomena.

PART IV. Curriculum Category:

The syllabus and the above explanations reveal how the course fulfills the criteria selected.

1. The use of mathematics is inappropriate for this course.
2. The inclusion of non-western traditions and cultures can be used to illustrate, compare and contrast different examples of religious phenomena.