

University of Calgary
Classics and Religion
Curriculum Review Public Report
April 2020

1. Program Context:

The Department of Classics and Religion offers three BA programs, all of which were subject to this curriculum review: Greek and Roman Studies (GRST), Religious Studies (RELS), and Ancient and Medieval History (ANME). All three programs are characterized by a dedication to teaching students critical thought, good writing skills, and the ability to consider different societies, past and present.

1.1 *Greek and Roman Studies (GRST)*

CLARE's program of longest standing is Greek and Roman Studies (GRST):

The Greek and Roman Studies program explores the ancient Mediterranean world through its languages (principally ancient Greek and Latin), history, literature, religion, mythology, art, and architecture. Students are introduced to methods of textual analysis as well as the careful examination of material remains. Since the traditions of ancient Greece and Rome are foundational to modern western culture, their study is invaluable not only for their own sake, but also because of their continued relevance today. [Calendar Description]

From the perspective of our GRST majors, the program has three informal streams: language and literature, history, and material culture. The program is structured loosely enough that students may select from any of these 'streams' at random, thus building for themselves a personalized degree. Language training in Greek and Latin is integral to this program.

1.2 *Ancient and Medieval History (ANME)*

Ancient and Medieval History (ANME), established in the late 1990s, is the most recent addition to our roster of programs. For many years it was jointly administered by the Departments of History (HTST) and Greek and Roman Studies (GRST). When Humanities and Social Sciences merged into the single Faculty of Arts, our department assumed sole direction of ANME, though half of the program's core courses continued to be HTST offerings.

When the new Department of Classics and Religion was formed in 2014, the department broadened the definition of 'ancient and medieval' and incorporated many more Religious Studies (RELS) offerings. Many RELS courses focus on pre-modern societies in eastern, western, and southern Asia, using historiographic methodologies to do so; this was a natural fit, and allowed the Department to move beyond the western focus of the program. By the same reasoning, ARKY courses in the pre-modern, indigenous cultures of Africa and the Americas were designated as eligible ANME options. The University of Calgary's Ancient and Medieval History program thus became one of the first ancient studies programs in North America to enlarge its vision beyond traditional 'western' limits:

The Ancient and Medieval History program examines pre-modern societies around the globe, from those of the Greeks and Romans of antiquity to the European Middle Ages, from the civilizations of the ancient Near East to those of southern and eastern Asia, Africa, and the Americas. To study Ancient and Medieval History is to discover cultures that, while they are unlike our own in many respects, have

nevertheless provided the political, social, religious, and intellectual foundations of the modern world. [Calendar Description]

1.3 Religious Studies (RELS)

The Religious Studies program (RELS) has existed at the University of Calgary since 1971, having branched off originally from the Department of Philosophy. Since then, it has evolved into a comprehensive program with particularly strong expertise in Hinduism, Buddhism, Christianity, and the philosophy of religion:

Religious Studies seeks to foster an understanding of the wide variety of religions that have influenced the development of human cultures and that continue to be powerful forces in today's world. Courses examine religious worldviews and their associated texts and practices, movements, and institutions, as they appear now and as they have developed over time in many cultures of the world. The Field of Religious Studies is multicultural, i.e., religions from all over the world are the subject of study, including the ancient traditions of Hinduism, Buddhism, Daoism, Confucianism, Judaism, Christianity, and Islam, as well as religious movements of more recent origin. Religious Studies is also multidisciplinary, which means that religion is studied with the use of methods and theories from various disciplines, including history, anthropology, philosophy, sociology, psychology, literary theory, and feminist theory. [Calendar Description]

The program is structured into three thematic streams: Eastern Religion, Western Religion, and the Nature of Religion. Students are expected to complete a progression of courses in each stream, as well as two senior level theory and method courses and two semesters of language training. The program is structured to ensure that students receive not only an understanding of religions in each subfield, but advanced training in how to understand the philosophical and theoretical bases for studying religion in an academic setting. Religious Studies also houses the Numata Chair in Buddhist Studies and the Chair of Christian Thought.

2. Guiding Questions

The critical questions that guided CLARE's Curriculum Review are these:

1. What are our common departmental learning objectives?
2. Are our programs well designed to meet those objectives?
 - i. Is a year-by-year progression towards those objectives discernible?
 - ii. Should we restructure course-level designations accordingly?
 - iii. Should we add a more thorough system of pre-requisites?
3. Is there enough collaboration across departmental programs?
4. Do our programs respond to the university-wide initiatives for diversity, internationalization, experiential learning, and indigenization?

While the department represents two distinct disciplines, the primary questions behind this review focus on how we perceive of our approaches to these disciplines and where the overlap between our fields can be found. This was an important process because it very clearly illustrated that the fields have more in common in terms of overarching learning objectives than we expected, and

that the distinct fields can both be respected and integrated at the same time through a focus on these objectives. Isolating these has allowed for us to put forward an action plan meant to tighten our year-by-year progressions, strengthen the current and potential collaborations, and continue to grow our engagement with the university's strategic initiatives.

3. Authorship

The six members of the Classics and Religion (CLARE) Undergraduate Committee were *ex officio* authors of the Department's 2020 *Curriculum Review Report*: Reyes Bertolin Cebrian (Associate Professor), James Hume (Senior Instructor and Co-Chair of the Committee), Craig Maynes (Senior Instructor), Joy Palacios (Assistant Professor), Rachel Schmidt (Professor and Co-Chair), and Peter Toohey (Professor). The Committee was greatly aided by Kristine Nolte and Courtenay Canivet (former and current Undergraduate Program Administrators, respectively), and advised throughout the process by Marica Cassis (Associate Professor and Department Head).

4. Action Plan

*Please note that dates listed above are the dates for discussing and beginning changes, not the final implementation, which is subject to committee approvals at various levels.

4.1 Departmental Level

4.1.1 Course Progression

Action Item: Establish a more consistent progression of our courses through the various levels (200, 300, 400, and 500), either by re-numbering some existing courses or introducing new courses at the advanced level. This will also involve removing some courses from the calendar; renaming and/or renumbering some; and regularizing some special topics courses. This may also involve introducing prerequisites at the higher levels.

Date for completion: Fall 2021 (Submission to CARC), for implementation in the 2022/23 Calendar.

Responsibility: CLARE Undergraduate Programs Committee, upon consultation with all instructors involved; CARC Representative

4.1.2 Mentorship

Action Item: Consider and where possible initiate a mentoring program between professors/instructors/graduate students and undergraduate Majors. If adopted, all professors would be assigned majors for individual advising.

Date for completion: Fall 2021 (delayed because of COVID-19 complications)

Responsibility: All full-time professors and instructors, and possibly some graduate students

4.1.3 Class Size

Action Item: Establish an equitable and viable standard for class sizes and enrolment caps.

Date for completion: Fall 2021 (Process begun in Fall 2020)

Responsibility: Department Head and Head's Advisory Committee in consultation with department.

4.1.4 Writing Components

Action Item: Designate at least one junior (200-level) course in each program that should incorporate a larger-than-average writing component. This may be accomplished by assigning suitable graduate students to assist.

Date for completion: Fall 2021

Responsibility: Department Head and Head's Advisory Committee (for the assignment of appropriate GATs) in consultation with Undergraduate Programs Committee and department.

4.1.5 Sense of Community

Action Item: Foster a greater sense of community among undergraduates in the department, especially among majors and minors, by sponsoring student-focused events and supporting events organized by *Agora*, CLARE's new student-run undergraduate club.

Date for completion: Ongoing, with initial steps taken in Fall 2020

Responsibility: CLARE Undergraduate Programs Committee; Undergraduate Program Administrator (for help with advertising and communication)

4.1.6 Faculty Liaison with Agora

Action Item: That the department Head appoint a faculty member to act as a liaison with *Agora*, the new undergraduate association.

Date for completion: Dec. 2020 [Completed]

Responsibility: Head

4.1.7 Pedagogy

Action Item: Establish a departmental brown-bag session on pedagogy at least once per semester to create an opportunity for instructors in CLARE (faculty, graduate students, and sessionals) to share ideas and resources, identify challenges, and brainstorm solutions.

Date for Completion: Ongoing, with first session in Fall 2021 (probably via Zoom)

Responsibility: CLARE Undergraduate Programs Committee

4.2 ACTION PLAN: GREEK AND ROMAN STUDIES

4.2.1 Embedded Certificates

Action Item: Create embedded certificates in *i)* Classical Literatures; *ii)* Ancient Material Culture; and *iii)* Ancient History, from existing GRST courses in conjunction with other departments

Date for completion: Winter 2022 (delayed because of COVID-19 complications)

Responsibility: Undergraduate Program Committee; CARC Representative

4.2.2 Topics Courses

Action Item: Convert regularly offered, decimalized versions of topics courses (400-level) into standing courses with their own Calendar numbers.

Date for Completion: December 2021 (Submission to CARC), for implementation in the 2022/23 Calendar.

Responsibility: CLARE Undergraduate Programs Committee, upon consultation with all instructors involved; CARC Representative

4.2.3 Deletion and Consolidation of Courses

Action Item: Assessment, deletion and/or consolidation and/or renaming of rarely offered GRST courses. Few permanent courses need to be removed, but the special topics lists need to be considered as there are courses that are offered every year under those numbers.

Date for completion: December 2021 (Submission to CARC), for implementation in the 2022/23 Calendar.

Responsibility: CLARE Undergraduate Programs Committee in consultation with GRST faculty

4.3 ACTION PLAN: ANCIENT AND MEDIEVAL HISTORY

4.3.1 Languages as Part of Major Field

Action Item: Include languages (especially Latin and Greek) as acceptable options in the regular ANME Major Field. Allow for languages like Sanskrit, French, Spanish, Italian, Old and Middle English, Arabic, to be added to the list of ANME language options.

Date for Completion: Spring 2021 (Submission to CARC), for implementation in the 2022/23 Calendar.

Responsibility: CLARE Undergraduate Programs Committee; CARC Representative

4.3.2 Balance of Courses in Major Field

Action Item: Establish a greater balance among GRST, RELS, and HTST offerings in the “Core Courses” section of the ANME program

Date for Completion: a gradual process that may take several years

Responsibility: CLARE Undergraduate Programs Committee, in consultation with program directors and instructors in the Department of Classics and Religion and the Department of History

4.3.3 GRST 205

Action Item: Determine whether GRST 205 should or should not be split into two separate courses, or whether it should be considered as a candidate for a writing component.

Date for Completion: Fall 2021 (Submission to CARC), for possible implementation in the 2022/23 Calendar.

Responsibility: CLARE Undergraduate Programs Committee, upon consultation with all instructors involved; CARC Representative

4.4 ACTION PLAN: RELIGIOUS STUDIES

4.4.1 Language Requirements

Action Item: Remove the language requirement for all of our non-Honours Majors, but strongly recommend that students take a second language if they intend to pursue post-degree programs connected to Religious Studies.

Date for completion: Spring 2021 (Submission to CARC), for implementation in the 2022/23 Calendar.

Responsibility: CLARE Undergraduate Programs Committee; CARC Representative aptitude, and not just fulfilling a requirement.

4.4.2 Indigenous Spirituality Lecture Series

Action Item: Institute a lecture series on indigenous spirituality.

Date for Completion: Fall 2021

Responsibility: CLARE Research committee

4.4.3 Review of Course-Streams

Action Item: Review and Remove/Renew the three Course-Streams (“Western Religions”, “Eastern Religions”, and “Nature of Religion”) from the requirements of Religious Studies Majors.

Date for completion: Fall 2021 (Submission to CARC), for implementation in the 2022/23 Calendar.

Responsibility: CLARE Undergraduate Programs Committee

4.4.4 Deletion and Consolidation of Courses

Action Item: Assessment, deletion and/or consolidation of rarely offered RELS courses. Several courses need to be removed, and some which are consistently offered as special topics need to be regularized.

Date for completion: Fall 2021 (Submission to CARC), for implementation in the 2022/23 Calendar.

Responsibility: CLARE Undergraduate Programs Committee in consultation with RELS faculty

4.4.5 Topics Courses

Action Item: Convert regularly offered, decimalized versions of topics courses into standing courses with their own Calendar numbers.

Date for Completion: Fall 2021 (Submission to CARC), for implementation in the 2022/23 Calendar.

Responsibility: CLARE Undergraduate Programs Committee, upon consultation with all instructors involved; CARC Representative

4.4.6 Renaming Courses

Action Item: Rename certain RELS courses and rewrite their Calendar descriptions so as to better represent course progression and the relationship among courses.

Date for Completion: Fall 2021 (Submission to CARC), for implementation in the 2022/23 Calendar.

Responsibility: CLARE Undergraduate Programs Committee, upon consultation with all instructors involved; CARC Representative

4.4.7 Embedded Certificates

Action Item: Explore the creation of embedded certificates in i) Religion in Canada and ii) Religious Pluralism, from existing RELS courses in conjunction with other departments.

Date for completion: Winter 2022 (delayed because of COVID-19 complications)

Responsibility: Undergraduate Program Committee; CARC Representative

4.5 OTHER RECOMMENDATIONS for FUTURE ACTION

4.5.1 Increased Major Enrolments

Recommendation: That CLARE make a concerted effort to increase majors in all three programs.

Date for completion: Ongoing; Already in 2020-2021 we have seen a marked increase in majors across the programs.

Responsibility: All

4.6.2 Cooperation between GRST, ANME and RELS

Recommendation: that CLARE continue fostering interdisciplinary ties between the three programs.

Date of completion: On-going

Responsibility: All

4.6.3 Extracurricular Events for Majors and Minors

Recommendation: That the department foster extracurricular events, both sponsored by the department and those sponsored by students.

Date for completion: Ongoing

Responsibility: All

4.6.4 Major Requirements

Recommendation: That the Religious Studies major requirements be reworked so as to increase the units required of majors at the 400-level or above.

Date for completion: Fall 2021 (Submission to CARC), for implementation in the 2022/23 Calendar.

Responsibility: CLARE Undergraduate Programs Committee, upon consultation with all instructors involved; CARC Representative

4.6.5 Undergraduate Research

Recommendation: Increased participation of undergraduates in research.

Date for completion: On-going

Responsibility: CLARE Research Committee, RELS faculty members

4.6.6 Honours Programs

Recommendation: that more students be enrolled in the honours programs.

Date for completion: on-going

Responsibility: Undergraduate Program Director, Undergraduate Program Advisor, and all faculty

4.6.7 Experiential Learning

Recommendation: promote opportunities for experiential learning

Date for completion: on-going

Responsibility: CLARE Undergraduate Program Committee, CLARE Research Committee, RELS Faculty members

4.6.8 Study Abroad and Group Study Programs

Recommendation: that CLARE promote study abroad and group study programs to RELS majors.

Date for completion: on-going.

Responsibility: Head, Undergraduate Program Director, Undergraduate Program Advisor, faculty