Program Assessment Plan, 2007-2012

I. RELIGIOUS STUDIES

II. Contact Person:  Micki Lennon
                 Ext.  5263
                 Email  plennon@csuchico.edu

III. Departmental Student Learning Outcomes (SLOs)

SLO1. Students can identify the historical and cultural sources and describe the basic beliefs and practices of a given world religious tradition.

SLO2. Students can illustrate such concepts as ritual, myth, doctrine, ethics, philosophy, and material religious culture by describing and comparing examples of each.

SLO3. Students can explain how religion shapes and has been shaped by other cultural systems in history.

SLO 4.a. Students can use methods employed by the discipline of religious studies to analyze religion, literary, philosophical, or scholarly texts.

SLO 4b: Students can identify and assess major theories and methodologies in the study of religion.

SLO5. Students can engage in reasoned dialogue about religion.

SLO6a. Students can make clear, well organized, and substantive written presentations.

SLO6b. Students can make clear, well organized, and substantive oral presentations.

SLO 7. Students can produce a research project that demonstrates facility with traditional and electronic religious studies resources, and the usage of appropriate scholarly style and citation formats.
IV. Assessment Timetable

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KEY: Course key:

RELS 100: Judaism, Christianity, Islam
RELS 110: Asian Religions
RELS 180: Introduction to Religious Studies
RELS 205: Judaism
RELS 207: Christianity
RELS 212: Hinduism
RELS 213: Buddhism
RELS 281: Library Research Methods in Religious Studies
RELS 322: Religion in America
RELS 332: World Religions and Global Issues
RELS 343: Wealth, Power and Justice in World Religions
RELS 347: Cross-cultural Environmental Ethics
RELS 375: Women and Religion
RELS 480: Theory and Criticism of Religion
RELS 482: Seminar in Religious Studies

V. Assessment Method

In each case the assessment method will be an embedded assessment. In some cases this will involve using multiple choice questions from actual exams to test factual knowledge (SLO 1); in most cases this will involve the application of a standardized rubric to written or oral assignments from the specific classes listed above (e.g. for SLOs 2-7).
Among the specific courses selected for assessment, the two introductory courses required of all majors (RELS 100 and RELS 110) and the senior seminar (RELS 482) are heavily represented because all majors must take these courses, and they also tend to have large concentrations of majors in them. Furthermore, they give us the chance to assess majors as they enter the program and compare their performance when they have completed (or nearly completed) the program.

VI. Integration of Assessment Results

At least once during each semester, the Religious Studies Department will meet to discuss assessment results and use the information gained from these results to evaluate whether or not we are meeting our program goals. At this meeting we will also discuss potential changes we might make to improve the program based on the assessment results.