

**PROPOSAL: Rename the Department of Comparative Religion to the
Department of World Religion and Cultures**

Background

The Faculty Senate Executive Board has approved the renaming of the Department of Comparative Religion to the Department of World Religion and Cultures.

The current name for the department, which has its roots in the early history of the academic study of religion, often leads to confusion among students and indeed fellow faculty in other departments who often ask what religions we compare and are we trying to determine which ones are best. Furthermore, students (and often fellow faculty) tend to mistakenly believe the department teaches theology. We believe the name change better reflects our offerings. All of our courses explore aspects of religion and culture.

In addition to courses on specific traditions and regions that explore the history, teachings and practices of religions situated within broader socio-historical and culture contexts we offer many thematic courses that the new name will help to highlight (this includes courses on religion and health, death and dying, religion and the environment, religion and globalization, among others). We believe it will increase enrollment by clarifying overall course content. The name change also better reflects changes in the department's faculty over the last decade and the future direction of department offerings.

Recommended Action

Rename the Department of Comparative Religion to the Department of World Religion and Cultures.