

## ASSESSMENT REPORT REMOTE/DISTANCE LEARNING

### Theology and Religious Studies

## ACADEMIC YEAR 2020 - 2021

### I. LOGISTICS

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1. Please indicate the name and email of the program contact person to whom feedback should be sent (usually Chair, Program Director, or Faculty Assessment Coordinator).

THRS Chair, Mark T. Miller

Assoc. Prof. Jorge Aquino

2. Please indicate if you are submitting report for (a) a Major, (b) a Minor, (c) an aggregate report for a Major and Minor (in which case, each should be explained in a separate paragraph as in this template), (d) a Graduate or (e) a Certificate Program.

Please also indicate which report format are you submitting –Standard Report or Reflections Document

We are submitting an aggregate report for Majors and Minors.

3. Have there been any revisions to the Curricular Map in 2020-2021 academic year? If there has been a change, please submit the new/revised Curricular Map document.

Yes, we have changed the title of THRS 240 from Women, Poverty, and Catholic Social Thought to Gender, Poverty, and Justice. We now have two versions of Queering Religions, a CEL version (129) and a non-CEL version (131). We have two new courses working their ways through Curriculog: THRS 357 - Performing Texts, Religious Lit and THRS 205 - Faith and Nonviolence.

### II. MISSION STATEMENT & PROGRAM LEARNING OUTCOMES

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1. Were any changes made to the program mission statement since the last assessment cycle in October 2020? Kindly state “Yes” or “No.” Please provide the current mission statement below. If you are submitting an aggregate report, please provide the current mission statements of both the major and the minor program

**Mission Statement (Major/Graduate/Certificate):** No.

**Mission Statement (Minor):** No.

### **MISSION: Dept. of Theology & Religious Studies<sup>1</sup>**

The Department of Theology & Religious Studies (hereafter THRS) embodies the University of San Francisco’s (hereafter USF) mission to “promote learning in the Jesuit Catholic tradition”; offers students “the knowledge and skills needed to succeed as persons and professionals, and the values and sensitivity to be [people] for others”; “distinguish[es] itself as a diverse, socially responsible learning community of high quality scholarship and academic rigor sustained by a faith that does justice”; and “draw[s] from the cultural, intellectual, and economic resources of the San Francisco Bay Area and its location on the Pacific Rim to enrich and strengthen its educational programs.”

Religion is one of the most powerful social forces in the world. An understanding of religious traditions helps students navigate the twenty-first-century’s complexities. THRS programs critically and systematically explore religious experiences and cultural differences, assisting students in becoming familiar with major religious traditions, values, and symbols. Our faculty encourage students to appreciate the role of religion in public and private life, developing knowledge about human dignity and human rights, freedom, responsibility, and social justice. In developing an awareness of the relationship between belief and justice, students also engage in an exploration in the religious dimensions of their own lives.

3. Were any changes made to the program learning outcomes (PLOs) since the last assessment cycle in October 2020? Kindly state “Yes” or “No.” Please provide the current PLOs below. If you are submitting an aggregate report, please provide the current PLOs for both the major and the minor programs.

No.

Note: Major revisions in the program learning outcomes need to go through the College Curriculum Committee (contact: Professor Joshua Gamson, [gamson@usfca.edu](mailto:gamson@usfca.edu)). Minor editorial changes are not required to go through the College Curriculum Committee.

**PLOs (Major):**

- 1) **Human Dimensions of Religion, Theology and Spirituality:** Students articulate how religion, theology, and spirituality underlie and correlate with a broad range of human experience.
- 2) **Religious Diversity:** Students analyze various religious traditions, as encouraged by Vatican II's stance on the Catholic Church's relationship with other faiths.
- 3) **Social Justice:** Students investigate and articulate how religious and theological traditions can work effectively for social justice and for the good of the entire human family and the environment that sustains it.
- 4) **Theory & Methods of the Study of Religion:** Students demonstrate knowledge of academic methods and practices characteristic of the study of theology and/or religion, including the different contributions of textual, historical, social, and interdisciplinary studies.

**PLOs (Minor):** Same as the major.

**4. Which particular Program Learning Outcome(s) did you assess for the academic year 2017-2018?**

#1 Human Dimensions of Religion, Theology and Spirituality: Students articulate how religion, theology, and spirituality underlie and correlate with a broad range of human experience.

## II. METHODOLOGY

**5. Describe the methodology that you used to assess the PLO(s).**

We used the direct method with sample student essays that were collected from THRS 355 Philippine Theology and Revolutions, a 4-credit, core course, conducted in Spring 2021. This course was selected because it combines texts and methods from both sides of our department, theology and religious studies. It also had a relatively small group of students with a couple of THRS minors.

The prompt for the paper was to answer the question, “What role did nature, sin, and grace play in the People Power Revolution according to this section's authors?” Students were evaluated on whether they were able (1) to name and to relate key terms in Catholic theology, (2) to identify the Philippine revolutions’ primary actors and their apparent motives, (3) to analyze these motives in light of the basic terms and relations of Catholic theology. This gave a particular example for the PLO’s goal, that “Students articulate how religion, theology, and spirituality underlie and correlate with a broad range of human experience.”

A four-point rubric was designed to assess the collected student work products. A score of “4” indicated that the product exceeded expectations for the designated outcome, and a score of “3” indicated that it met expectations for that outcome. Products achieving scores of “3” or “4” were considered to have performed adequately or better on the designated outcome. A score of “2” indicated that the work product showed some signs of development in achieving the outcome, and a score of “1” indicated little to no development towards the outcome. Work products achieving scores of “1” and “2” were considered to have performed inadequately on the designated outcome.

Student work products were evaluated by two full-time faculty members, one of whom was the instructor of the course from which samples were selected. We did not review these papers for grammar or punctuation, or otherwise make judgments about their quality as papers reflecting academic scholarship in a subject matter. Rather, we examined them simply according to how well they met PLO#1, above, in particular how they how well they connected the Filipino revolutionary process with theological themes and sociological forces emanating from Church communities.

### III. RESULTS & MAJOR FINDINGS

#### 6. What are the major takeaways from your assessment exercise?

The results below reflect the average of the two instructors’ assessment scores. As indicated in the chart below, a majority of students (ten of twelve) “exceeded” or “met” expected performance on the designated outcome. Just two of 12 students performed below the acceptable level of performance, both at the “developing” level, with none at the “inadequate” level.

Score	Level	Description
4	Exceeds Expectations	4.5 (37.5%)

3	Meets Expectations	5.5 (45.8%)
2	Developing	2 (16.7%)
1	Inadequate	0 (0%)

We cannot compare this year's section to last years, as last year we submitted the alternative assessment which reflected on the department's pivot to online learning due to the Covid-19 crisis. These results will be shared with the department at the next meeting in January.

#### IV. CLOSING THE LOOP

7. **Based on your results, what changes/modifications are you planning in order to achieve the desired level of mastery in the assessed learning outcome? This section could also address more long-term planning that your department/program is considering and does not require that any changes need to be implemented in the next academic year itself.**

In 2017-2018, we conducted our last APR. That year we assessed PLO #3. In 2018-19, we assessed PLO #4. In 2019-20, we did the alternative assessment. This year, 2020-2021, we assessed PLO #1.

Next year, we hope to assess #2. The year after, we would like to conduct the Assessment for Equity.

We also hope to make sure that our course assignments are well tailored to the PLO's.

8. **What were the most important suggestions/feedback from the FDCD on your last assessment report (for academic year 2019-2020, submitted in October 2020)? How did you incorporate or address the suggestion(s) in this report?**

Our report last year focused on our adaptation to remote instruction due to the Covid-19 pandemic. We do hope to develop more online courses with the help of USF's Instructional Design, Educational Technology Services.

