

I. Take-home Essay (30 points total)

Write a 600-800 word response to **one** of the two the prompt questions below. Be succinct but make sure to cite concrete examples from the sources and use proper citations.

1. Choose one of the schools listed below, research the mission statement, degree requirement, and general education curriculum design.

- Ohio State University <https://www.osu.edu/>
- Cornell University <https://www.cornell.edu/>
- Baylor University <https://www.baylor.edu/>
- United States Naval Academy <https://www.usna.edu/>
- Kenyon College <https://www.kenyon.edu/>
- Manhattan College <https://manhattan.edu/>
- Cuyahoga Community College <https://www.tri-c.edu/>
- University of the West <https://www.uwest.edu/>
- Gratz College <https://www.gratz.edu/>

Then, answer the following questions.

- 1) What kind of institution is the school? Public/private, religiously affiliated, 4-year, 2-year, or professional schools?
- 2) Does it have a Religion/Religious Studies Department? How about other religion-related offices or programs?
- 3) Do these departments, offices, or programs identify with a specific approach in Appendix B in the American Academy of Religion's Religious Literacy Guidelines? Cite concrete examples.
- 4) Does the school's mission statement and/or degree requirement have religion components? Do they address the AAR religious literary outcomes? Cite concrete examples.
- 5) Does the school's general education curriculum have religion components? Do they address the AAR religious literary outcomes? Cite concrete examples.
- 6) If you could make one **concrete, feasible** suggestion to the school's general education curriculum, so that it will be better aligned with the AAR religious literary outcomes, what would it be? Why do you make this suggestion?

2. Choose one of the following US government agencies/offices' web pages that specifically deal with content on religion, and read through the content.

- The Supreme Court
 - <https://www.uscourts.gov/educational-resources/educational-activities/engel-v-vitale> (Read through all "Activity Resources" and the linked article "First Amendment and Religion")

- Office of International Religious Freedom
 - <https://www.state.gov/bureaus-offices/under-secretary-for-civilian-security-democracy-and-human-rights/office-of-international-religious-freedom/>
- US Department of Labor and US Equal Employment Opportunity Commission
 - <https://www.dol.gov/agencies/oasam/civil-rights-center/internal/policies/religious-discrimination-accommodation>
 - <https://www.eeoc.gov/religious-discrimination>
- The IRS
 - <https://www.irs.gov/charities-non-profits/churches-religious-organizations/definition-of-church>

Then, answer the following questions.

- 1) How is religion defined (or not defined) in the agency/office of your choice? (You might not find a straightforward definition in most cases, so you will need to read between the lines and infer the definition.)
- 2) Why do you think it is defined in that way? Is it a sufficient definition of religion?
- 3) Give your own definition of religion. It does not need to agree with the definition above, nor does it need to serve the same function.
- 4) Then, pick one of the following organizations/activities, and answer the question:

Sports (pick any sports, or write about sports in general) | The Satanic Temple | Church of Scientology | Atheism

- a. Is it a religion? Why or why not?
- b. Does it fit into either of the definitions above?
- c. What is at stake when we call it a religion? Who benefits from it? Who might be harmed by it?