

Ulysses DGM  
Grant Dubach  
1924-1947

Ernest W. Warrington  
Ava Milam (Clark)  
1917-1950

1929-1952  
Jessie C. Clark

History of the Department of Religious Studies  
Oregon State University

Establishment of a chair of Religion at Oregon Agricultural College was authorized in the fall of 1928. The first brochure of the Department of Religion has this "Statement of Purpose": "The department is non-sectarian and seeks to maintain the same standards of authoritative scholarship demanded in the other departments of the institution. The courses are expected to develop an appreciation of the nature and processes of religion in the light of conditions affecting life today."

Mr. E. W. Warrington was the first chair, and taught four courses in 1928. These included a "Historical Background of the Bible," "Principles of Religious Leadership," and "Studies in the Sermon on the Mount." Dr. Warrington came to OAC as a YMCA Director. He was a Presbyterian minister who received training at Princeton University Theological Seminary. He soon established a distinguished reputation among the faculty who were interested in establishing a Department of Religion.

President W.J. Kerr, Dean Dubach, and Dean Milam (Clark) were instrumental in raising funds locally and state-wide to establish a Department. This was no easy task during the "depression years" and many times it seemed the venture would fail for lack of support. Still, the plan garnered support from many faculty, and received grants from the Hazen Foundation. Dr. Warrington taught courses at the University of Oregon and the College of Monmouth to supplement the fund. He also completed his resident requirements for a Doctors Degree in Religious Education at Union Theological Seminary and Teachers' College at Columbia University.

The Oregon State Board of Higher Education assumed full financial responsibility for the Department in 1935. At that time, seven courses were offered with one staff person.

The Department of Philosophy was added in 1933 (CORRECT DATE?), and Dr. Warrington became the Chairman of the Department of Philosophy and Religion. He remained in this position until his retirement in 1950. He was succeeded as chair by Dr. Warren Hovland, who had just completed his Ph.D. at Yale. Due to limited office space, Professor Hovland was assigned to an office in the old Geology Building (along with the fossils!). Professor Hovland remained with the Department until his retirement in 1987.

Several courses were added to the curriculum during the 1950s, including some upper-division courses. Additional faculty were added and the philosophy and religion programs grew to the point where each was capable of becoming a department on its own. In 1966, different chairmen were appointed for each department, Robert Dale in Philosophy and Warren Hovland in Religion.

With the growth of the College of Liberal Arts and the expansion of many departments, the name of the Religion Department was changed to Religious Studies and a major in that field was instituted (NEED DATE). The curriculum underwent

substantive changes reflecting the scholarly field of religious studies and the scholarly interests of those appointed.

The faculty at the time the Department was able to offer a Religious Studies major included: Marcus Borg, Ph.D., (Oxford), with interests in biblical studies, religion and culture, death and dying, and religion and feminism; Ronald Clark, Th.D. (Pacific School of Religion), with interests in religion and science, religion and human ecology, and religion and society; Yasuhara T. Hosoi, Ph.D. (Chicago), with interests in history of religions, Japanese religions, myth and folklore; Warren Hovland, Ph.D., (Yale), with interests in history of western religious thought, Reformation Studies, American religious heritage, contemporary religious thought, bioethics; and, Nicholas J. Yonker, Ph.D., (Columbia), with interests in philosophy of religion, religious existentialism, and process theology. Subsequently, in 1986, David Arnold, Ph.D. (Emory), was hired, with interests in western and contemporary religious thought, and religion and literature. In 1990, Courtney Campbell, Ph.D. (Virginia), joined the religious studies faculty. He was editor of the *Hastings Center Report* and is recognized as a leader in the field of bioethics.

With the expansion brought about through offering a major, the Department developed a statement reflecting its scholarly orientation: "Religious studies is a comprehensive, reflective and non-sectarian exploration of religion as a significant human and cultural phenomenon. In an atmosphere of free and open inquiry, course work examines the full range of religious expression: historical, contemporary and alternative religious traditions. Teaching and research draw on both the liberal arts and the relevant social and behavioral sciences."

In keeping with this purpose, the Department sought to expand interdisciplinary course offerings. A new course, Bioethics, was offered through the University Honors Program with a teaching team consisting of Professor Cameron, a geneticist, Dr. Craig Leman, a local physician, and Professor Hovland. Several science faculty were involved in courses on the environment. A course on "Creative Epochs in Western Thought" was team taught with Professor Shaw in the History Department and Professor Norris in the English Department.

Faculty in the Department served on many important college and university committees and councils and brought distinction to the university. A major focus of undergraduate teaching concerned the intellectual and spiritual development of students. Several of the department's faculty publications received national recognition. Warm collegiality and shared lunch hours and seminars marked this unique department.

The Religious Studies Department had the support of most administrators and faculty, and enjoyed a happy and collegial relationship with the University and the College of Liberal Arts. However, in 1991, the Department was suddenly terminated under Dean Bill Wilkins for what was known as a "financial emergency." The remaining faculty, two of whom were approaching retirement, were graciously accepted by the Department of Philosophy. Professor Marc Borg and Professor Courtney Campbell

continue to serve in the Department of Philosophy, with Professor Campbell having been appointed chair in 2002.

The legacy of religious studies continues to thrive in Philosophy. In 1993, Mr. Al Hundere presented a gift of \$1.5 million to support the work of Professor Marcus Borg, leading to the Hundere Endowed Professorship in Religion and Culture, with Professor Borg as the first chairholder. This generous gift enabled the Philosophy Department to enlarge its offerings, holdings, and activities, and has ensured the continuing presence of religious studies on the OSU campus.

C. Warren Hovland  
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