

One College Initiative
Submitted by the Religion Department
10/18/06

Mission of Augsburg College:

To nurture future leaders in service to the world by providing high quality educational opportunities, which are based in the liberal arts and shaped by the faith and values of the Christian church, by the context of a vital metropolitan setting, and by an intentionally diverse campus community.

The Augsburg College Religion Department advances the mission of the college through the core curriculum, our majors and minors in religion and youth and family ministry, and our involvement in college-wide efforts serving the larger community.

Through our involvement in the Augsburg Core curriculum, including search for meaning, liberal arts foundation, and keystone courses, the Religion Department prepares Augsburg graduates to think critically about matters of ultimate concern. We challenge students to know and articulate what they believe and why, to affirm that what they believe matters, and to recognize and name the ways those beliefs make a difference in the world. In REL 100 and 200 (or 300 for advanced transfers), courses required of all Augsburg students, we introduce the theological understanding of vocation and equip our learners with knowledge of the faith and values of the Christian tradition, in dialogue with other traditions including Judaism, Islam, Hinduism, and Buddhism. We prepare them to be leaders by developing their skills of critical thinking, clear expression, and respectful listening in conversation with people whose ideas and religious experiences differ from their own. We shape their sensibilities by intentionally addressing our diverse community, creating opportunities to explore our urban setting, and engaging in study-abroad.

Through our religion and youth and family ministry major programs, we nurture future leaders in service to the world and the church. With ample opportunity to explore deeply the intersections between biblical interpretation, church history, theology, world religions, spiritual practices, and practical matters in the life and work of the church, our majors leave with the knowledge, skills, and sensibilities to work in church leadership positions, to utilize their liberal arts education for work in business or industry, to attend seminary, or to pursue graduate degrees. Religion and youth and family ministry graduates engage in sustained reflection on their roles and responses to this world at this particular juncture of time and

place. In addition, youth and family ministry majors are prepared for service to the Gospel of Jesus Christ; this preparation includes extensive field experience gained in partnership with local congregations or ministry organizations.

Faculty in our department are leaders in developing and carrying out the work of the Center for Faith and Learning (including the Christensen symposium) and the Exploring Our Gifts program (helping students, faculty and staff discern and live our vocations). The kind of dialogue in which we engage with our students (about faith and vocation and what matters) is what we seek to foster across campus, in faith communities in the region, and in the public arena. We do so in ways that are grounded in the liberal arts, guided by the intellectual freedom inherent in the always-reforming Lutheran tradition, and inclusive of voices from our diverse campus, neighborhood, and world, thus modeling leadership in service to Augsburg College, the church, and the world.