



RELIGIOUS STUDIES

DOES NATURE HAVE A STRONGER INFLUENCE on human societies, or is it the other way around? Do our religions and the way they teach us - or drive our actions and our lives - have serious consequences on ecological health? These are questions that Garrett Boudinot addresses through his religious studies major.

Garrett chose the College because he was looking for a liberal arts university. He was also interested in science, so his First-Year Experience class was a geology seminar. He also took Intro to World Religions, which definitely piqued his interest.

Right away he encountered religious studies professor Todd Levasseur, whose background is ecology and religion. LeVasseur examines religions as mediators of resource consumption, and as social organization tools between human societies and the natural world. "For example," Garrett explains, "the debate around climate change is really to what extent we can have an impact on nature."

To concretize his classroom experiences, Garrett conducted an independent study with Levasseur, and used that to secure a SURF (Summer Undergraduate Research Funding) grant. They both traveled to England to study the ways that religions act as mediators of environmental impact. And the two have submitted a paper for publication. At his professor's suggestion, Garrett also turned a class essay into a paper that he presented at the Southeastern Commission for the Study of Religion.

"These experiences have had a huge impact on my résumé," he says. "I've been told that my grad school application stands out because I have a religious studies background even though I am pursuing the sciences. (Garrett is also a geology major.) Also, grant writing is a huge part of science, so having secured a \$6,500 grant as an undergraduate is a tremendous advantage. And, having the opportunity to publish as an undergraduate makes a huge impact." 📷



COLLEGE of
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OUR CURRICULUM PROVIDES STUDENTS WITH AN UNDERSTANDING OF DIVERSE RELIGIOUS TRADITIONS, AN EXPOSURE TO A VARIETY OF APPROACHES REGARDING THE STUDY OF RELIGION, AND AN OPPORTUNITY TO EXPLORE DIFFERENT INTELLECTUAL, SOCIAL-THEORETICAL AND ETHICAL ISSUES PERTAINING TO THE VARYING ROLES OF RELIGION IN HUMAN LIFE. OUR COURSES DO NOT AIM TO PROMOTE OR UNDERMINE ANY PARTICULAR RELIGION OR WORLDVIEW; THE ACADEMIC STUDY OF RELIGION SEEKS TO EXAMINE RELIGION FROM OUTSIDE THE FRAMEWORK OF ANY PARTICULAR WORLDVIEW OR BELIEF SYSTEM.

» GRADUATES HAVE ENTERED CAREERS IN MEDICINE, EDUCATION, COUNSELING AND JOURNALISM.

» COURSES HAVE INCLUDED "RELIGION AND ECOLOGY;" "MYTH, RITUAL AND SYMBOL;" "RELIGION AND FILM."