

RELIGIOUS KNOWLEDGE AMONG PRE-SERVICE SECONDARY TEACHERS OF
ENGLISH AND HISTORY

A Dissertation
by
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ABSTRACT

RELIGIOUS LITERACY AMONG PRE-SERVICE TEACHERS OF ENGLISH AND HISTORY (December 2011)

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Supreme Court justices, religious studies professors, media experts, and sociologists suggest that Americans can not have an educated, informed democracy without some religious knowledge. Recent studies have revealed that Americans do not possess the level of religious literacy necessary to understand the daily news, much less what is needed to make sense of a multicultural world. One cause of this lacuna in religious knowledge is the failure of enlightenment ideologies that promised humanity that the progress of science and societal perfection would replace the need for faith; in a nutshell, as modernity increased religion would decrease. Two world wars, atomic weapons, and empirical data destroyed those utopian dreams; all the while traditional religion increased and prospered along with modernity. Believing that schools (and their associated teachers) are institutions of ideological management (including religious literacy), this research explored religious literacy among pre-service teachers of English and History/Social Studies. The specific research questions for this study were: 1) What is the level of basic religious knowledge among pre-service teachers of History and English? 2) Do pre-service teachers of History and English demonstrate higher-level thinking skills as relates to religion in public life? and 3) What knowledge do pre-service teachers of History and English demonstrate when

confronted with a discipline specific section from a standard North Carolina textbook or an interdisciplinary text dealing with religious knowledge?

This mixed-methods study, following a concurrent embedded strategy, involved 59 pre-service teachers, majoring in either secondary Social Studies Education or secondary English Education in the Spring of 2011 at a large public university in North Carolina. Students participated via an online *Religious Knowledge Survey* which included demographics, a replicated basic religious knowledge quiz, and exploratory sections on thoughts on religion in public life and textual analysis.

The findings from this study revealed a significant relationship between students who had experienced multiple faith communities and high basic religious knowledge scores. There was no significant relationship between students who had high basic religious knowledge scores and those who had taken a college religion course. In overall scores, 66% of participants scored above the third quartile, with a mean score of 80 out of 100. These results challenge previous studies done by Prothero and the Pew Research Center. In addition, only students with higher scores in basic religious knowledge did well in the exploratory sections, although high basic scores did not predict ability in more conceptual areas. Nevertheless, student performance on the successive sections which explored higher cognitive levels revealed a decline in the ability to apply religious knowledge to the modalities of contemporary life or to the evaluation of textbooks. The study found that less than 5% of pre-service teachers are prepared to address religion in the classroom, although 80% believed they were prepared, which illustrates the Dunning-Kruger effect experienced by participants.

DEDICATION

This work is dedicated to my wife Rhonda and my five children: David III, Joshuah, Jessica, Judith, and Joanna. If there is anything good in me, that good is because of you –the bad part I did all by myself. David already knows ultimate reality; the rest of us are still on the quest.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Gratitude remains a respected virtue among Homo sapiens in the 21st Century, unless that gratitude implicates an otherwise upstanding citizen in a crime. Although my debt of gratitude extends to many, the guilt of any misdeeds must remain with me. I sure hope that statement is enough to get everyone off the hook if I mistakenly draw the short straw in the next revolution.

I would first like to thank Ozzie Ostwalt, department Chair for Philosophy and Religion at ASU. Although warning me of the consequences, he allowed me to open Pandora's jar, shake out the contents on the floor, look under the lid, and helped me put it all back at the end of the day – well at least the varmints that didn't get away. He was always willing to listen to my ideas and offer insight.

To me, Michael Dale is a philosopher of education par excellence. Michael made me think and re-think propositional ideas. His course was the last one in which my cohort was required to think hard thoughts about the horizons of significance. Without Michael, many more opinions would have masqueraded across the pages of this study as facts.

Les Bolt was my statistical guru for this study. Les also suggested a historical introduction. Without him, I would still be wandering around on the other side of the looking glass. Hunter Boylan and Charles Duke saw very early versions of several chapters. It was Dr. Duke that prompted me to consider the legal issues that affect educators. When I began thinking about the option for a quantitative approach to the study, George Olsen was the first to meet with me, encouraging me to focus on the format of the assessment and research

questions. And last but not least, Jim Killacky has been a constant encouragement throughout my entire doctoral pilgrimage – thanks, guys!

To my colleagues in cohort 16, thank you for your patience and longsuffering – all of you know the context of those words! I must also offer special accolades to my two partners in the Hickory trio: Diane Guelzow and Dr. David Stegall. We met together on several occasions after onsite classes had come to an end and always parted company refreshed and encouraged.

My mother is now beyond intelligent conversation on most days, but education was always important to her. She made sure that all of her children completed college, although she never had the chance to do so herself. That’s not to mention that all four of her children are Appalachian alumni. Thanks, mama, for teaching us about the important things in life.

And finally, to my wife Rhonda and daughter Judith, both of whom read the final drafts and helped with the necessary edits – the check is in the mail!

SDG

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

This dissertation explores a knowledge lacuna within cultural literacy denoted as religious illiteracy, and inversely termed religious literacy or religious knowledge. The Pew Research Center investigated this knowledge gap among the general public in 2010 and Steven Prothero (2007), chair of the Department of Religion and Philosophy at Boston University, researched the same phenomenon among his students and published the results three years earlier. This dissertation will examine religious knowledge among a different demographic; those whose future job will confront religion on a daily basis, comprising a population of knowledge professionals: pre-service teachers of secondary English and History. First I will describe the nature of religious literacy; then I will present the purpose, research questions, rationale, and legal context for this study; and finally I will argue why religious literacy is of importance for an informed citizenry and for persons involved in American public education.

Definition of the Problem

The Associated Press news feeds display a trend that has shown constant development over the last decade: the increasing integration of religion into the fabric of public life and world politics in the early 21st century. For example, on 12 September 2011 the Associate Press (AP) offered the following news feed: *22 Shiite Pilgrims Shot Dead in*

Iraq.¹ Submitting a search with the key word “religion” for the month of September 2011 returns 49 matches. Doing the same search with the keyword “math” returns 28 hits. Using the keyword “education” for the same month returns 187 matches, but in an identical search the keyword “Christian” returns 248 matches, the keyword “Muslim” returns 242, and the keyword “Jew/Jewish” returns 130. Searching the AP archives for the ten years between 9/11/2001 to 10/2/2011 returns 66,367 matches for technology, 39,410 for education, 4,330 for math, 33,667 for science, 12,200 for religion, 44,597 for Christian, 35,284 for Muslim, 22,827 for Jew/Jewish, and 20,373 for Catholic. Thus we see that in the first decade of the 21st century, religion makes the news with a frequency comparable to technology, education, science, and math. Prophets of modernity never saw this coming.

No Religion, Too

About a century or so ago, pioneers of modernity such as Darwin, Marx, and Freud proposed that the progress of science and other social forces would soon position the human race on high ground where the floods of traditional religions would have little influence on modern society (Berger 1999; Marshall, 2009; Sheppard & Thiselton, 2007). Marx and Freud have been dubbed the “fathers of suspicion,” and rightly so since both shared a healthy skepticism toward naïve explanations of surface phenomena (Sheppard & Thiselton, 2007), but such men were also fathers of a new faith. This incipient faith in the redemption of society via science and technology accompanied a symbiotic relationship between an enlightened reason, modern industrial processes, and linear progress (Ginger, 1952) and prophesied a human trek from faith to science to a paradise containing no ignorance, no hunger, no war, and no religion, too: a dialectical materialist’s dream come true. There may

¹ AP Archives 1998 through 2011 are available online to the public For the Associated Press search engine, see http://nl.newsbank.com/nl-search/we/Archives?p_product=APAB&p_action=keyword&p_theme=apab&.

be no better contemporary symbol of these utopian aspirations than the words penned by John Lennon in *Imagine* (1971):

Imagine there's no countries, it isn't hard to do
Nothing to kill or die for, and no religion, too
Imagine all the people, living life in peace...
Imagine no possessions, I wonder if you can
No need for greed or hunger, a brotherhood of man
Imagine all the people, sharing all the world...

But alas, the passage of time has revealed that nations, individuals, and ideas just did not turn out the way some imagined. And although this flight of fancy proved to be a fallacy (Berger, 1999), this utopian quest promising paradise on earth and “no religion, too” held the 19th and early 20th century elites in an ideological straight jacket (Berger, 1999; Marshall, 2009). On the other hand, the disappearance of religion into a technocratic paradise was the brain child of neither Lennon nor Lenin, but was begotten of an earlier generation, from an intellectual pioneer who was a disciple of the four social utopians with whom Marx (1848) took offense in his *Manifesto*. But before we name the precursor, the messiah of positive science and progress theory, it may be instructive to review the ideological origins of this faith which promised to redeem humanity from religion via the goddess progress.²

² Cremin (1964), *The Transformation of the School: Progressivism in American Education 1876-1957*, uses religious symbol when discussing educational progressivism, calling it “the radical faith (p. ix). He states that educational progressivism had four goals: 1) extending the school to the areas of health, vocation, and quality of life, both family and community, 2) using scientific research in psychology and sociology for pedagogical formation, 3) curriculum reform, based on student retention or what students considered relevant, and 4) democratization of culture. In short, progressivism sought to establish an earthly utopia. Although Cremin believed progressivism had expired by the mid-twentieth century, Hanson (2011) in “A Tottering Technocracy” believed little had changed, and David Horowitz (2011) stated that current progressives seek earthly redemption, an earthly paradise, and those who oppose it are the great Satan. Apple (2010) and Giroux (2006), continue to see progressivism as the only hope and salvation for society.

Progress as Messiah

Progress as an object of faith, including its ideological, educational, and political incarnations (Cremin, 1964), has ancient roots, going back to the foundations of Greek philosophy and the arguments on the nature of reality. In this area of ontological speculation, Heraclites (540-480 BCE) becomes the seminal voice in the question of whether ultimate reality is change or permanence. The answer to the question was 42 (Adams, 1995). Well not really, but that's close. Heraclites said "go with the flow," or literally, everything flows ($\tau\alpha\ \pi\alpha\nu\tau\alpha\ \rho\epsilon\iota$). Philosophers and historians have challenged who really made this statement, although not what it expresses, that the nature of ultimate reality is change or progress, not permanence. Change is the creedal basis of not only progress theory, but also that of evolutionary biology, social critical theory, and many diverse forms of relativism. For many, the ideological antitheses to progress are conservatism, absolutism, and perennialism. Ideologically, early 20th century progressivism covered a broad range of political, educational, and social movements. Both prohibitionists and communists were technically progressivists. It was a call to change "for the good of mankind" over a century ago, although no two groups could agree on the definition of either good or mankind (Lange, 2011).

The Age of Unbelieving

If we look closely, we will find hidden among our modern intellectual baggage that the incarnation of the progressive ideology which John Dewey would disseminate among 20th century educational circles (Cremin, 1964) was the unassuming Frenchman, Auguste Comte, a child of his age in more ways than one, an age where "science for a time replaced

religion as the staple of French education” (Durant, 1965, p. 142).³ More than any of his intellectual progenitors, “the exaltation of science in the ‘positive philosophy’ of Auguste Comte” (Durant, 1965, p. 142) germinated a secular and scientific monism, a religious replacement or substitution theory based on his hypothesis of social evolution known as the three states. Although Einstein in the next century would not venture to be so bold, stating that religion and science in their individual quests for truth often asked different questions, sought different answers, spoke to divergent aspirations, and that the hypothesis that the one could replace the other was somewhat naïve (Einstein, 1934), Comte and his followers believed that religion was a mere step in the direction toward positive science, an evolutionary or Aristotelean first cause, yet by no means the goal of the human adventure. This conflict thesis of science vs. religion continues in the post-modern world. And even though Camus stated that religious belief was philosophical suicide (Solomon & Higgins, 1997), experts in the history of science and Pulitzer Prize winning authors have questioned the mutual exclusivity between the two disciplines (Lindberg & Numbers, 2003; Robinson, 2010). Let me explain.

Will Durant (1965) aptly entitled his ninth volume on the History of Civilization, *The Age of Voltaire*, offering a defense for his long-winded exposition in the following words:

Blame for the length of this volume must rest with the author’s fascinated to exuberant prolixity by the central theme – that pervasive and continuing conflict

³ Kieran Egan (2002) stated that Herbert Spenser was Dewey’s contemporary link. See *Getting it wrong from the beginning*. Nesbit (1980) wrote in *History of the idea of progress*, that progressivism derived from Medieval Christian philosophy, and similarly Huston Smith (1991) of MIT remarked that the entire linear and teleological concept was bequeathed to western society via Judaism, Christianity, and Islam (*Religions of the World*). Spenser’s progressivism ignored other principles at work in nature, such as entropy, or static states (cf. human aging process vs. static dimensions of DNA such as fingerprints). Evolution is a misnomer for this idea, since in theory it only expresses infinite variety in species, not any teleological absolute or perfection. In addition, human technological advancement has no correlation to moral or spiritual progress. Evolutionary processes could leave humanity morally inferior to their predecessors.

between religion and science-plus-philosophy which became a living drama in the eighteenth century, and which has resulted in the secret secularism of our times. How did it come about that a major part of the educated classes in Europe and American has lost faith in the theology that for fifteen hundred years gave supernatural sanctions and supports to the precarious and uncongenial moral code upon which Western civilization has been based? What will be the effects – in morals, literature, and politics – of this silent but fundamental transformation? (p. vii)

In these few short lines, Durant points to a world where science became the last incarnate god, while all other gods perished. How such a world could be less exclusive than the religious one which it sought to replace is debatable. Yet Durant reveals a little of his own journey from faith to doubt in this title, which although noting an icon of unbelief in Voltaire, fails to honor the icon of faith just across the English Channel in John Wesley, and one might question which man did the most good for humanity – the play-write or the preacher? To a great extent, Voltaire's secret secularist worldview begot Isidore Auguste Marie Francois Xavier Comte (1798-1857), the father of sociology and positivism, the prophet of secular modernity and an intellectual framework which left the contemporary world in a conceptual "straightjacket" and without understanding of an overtly religious political context (Marshall, 2009, p. 27).

The Three States. In the *Columbia History of Western Philosophy*, Popkin (1999) noted that generations have known Comte for his law of the three states, an epistemological hypothesis and chronology that sees humanity passing through a three-fold sequence of data assessment with the goal of making sense of the natural world. Comte denotes these stages as the theological, the metaphysical, and the positive, or in other words superstition, philosophy,

and science. In the last stage, there were six disciplines: math, astronomy, physics, chemistry, biology, and sociology. Comte himself coined the term sociology. As with the three stages, the disciplines within this last stage are chronological or sequential, whereas the second is built upon the first, but can never be reduced to it, the third is built upon the second and the first, but can never be reduced to either, and so on. Therefore, although Darwin, Marx, and Freud may have mediated the progressive ideology that ended up in education via Dewey, a journey from religion to science via philosophy, it was Comte that literally set the stage, identifying religion as a linear rather than a parallel element in its relationship to science and social evolution. And it was also Comte who envisioned the dissolution of religion or superstition, to be part of the process, although there was something around the next bend in the intellectual highway for which he had not taken account. This crook in the lot, this unaccounted for phenomenon was that mankind was incurably religious, dissatisfied with an exclusive materialism, and reluctant to give up his quest for answers to life's existential questions, whether religious or philosophical: Who am I? Why am I here? Is there a purpose to life? Does God exist? (Solomon, 2008). No matter how much humanity learned about the material world, these existential questions remained. Comte's followers would stumble over humanity's religious bent for the next one-hundred years, a verity that Supreme Court Justice Stewart would inscribe as self-evident to any casual observer of American social life (*Engle v. Vitale*, 1962). Following Comte's lead, Darwin drastically underestimated the staying power of religion and overestimated the ability of science or economics to answer existential questions. Progress became a skewed⁴ version of an evolutionary paradigm.

⁴ The term skewed is used, because evolutionary theory, both microevolution and macroevolution or phyletic evolution, does not guarantee teleological or biological progress, only infinite variety. Biological evolution also has nothing scientific to say on human ethical, moral, or psychological development. Eugenics was/is an

Process or Progress. Darwin (1869) recounted his faith in a progress, a utopia in the not too distant future, in the *Origin of Species*, paralleling an almost prophetic vision saying:

We may feel certain that the ordinary succession by generation has never once been broken, and that no cataclysm has desolated the whole world. Hence we may look with some confidence to a secure future of great length. And as natural selection works solely by and for the good of each being, all corporeal and mental endowments will tend to progress toward perfection. (p. 578)

To Darwin, we were in linear mode on an upward spiral, a perpetual progression toward a materialist utopia; and since no cataclysm had to date destroyed the whole world, we may expect none to destroy it in the future – a naive assumption from a pre-atomic age.

Utopia or Dystopia. Eighteenth century Christian post-millennialism, a host of utopian communes (i.e., Oneida) and the pre-WWI elation that humanity had nearly arrived at heaven on earth were all indebted to Comte's three states, and a rather naïve optimism. Comte's mentor, Saint Simeon, was indeed a utopian optimist, one of four notables referred to as the social utopians, and railed against in Marx's *Communist Manifesto* as those who would direct focus away from the revolution at hand to some idealistic future. Nevertheless, it has often been said that two world wars cured the western society of this utopian optimism (Cremin, 1964; Gonzalez, 2010; Meek-Lange, 2011), but that is only theoretically speaking. Many folks in education, science, and politics still seem to be on a utopian quest, an endeavor which Thomas Molnar (1967) called the perennial heresy. This *zeitgeist*, this spirit of the times, this faith in the progress of science and society (technocracy) not only preached an Auguste Comte style religion of science, it also prompted the accompanying 19th and early

attempt to apply an evolutionary biological hypothesis to society, but largely replaced by genetic counseling (Thain and Hickman, 2004, p. 247).

20th century sociological phenomena of utopianism, anarchy, social-Darwinism, eugenics, and the first vestiges of international terrorism, a phenomenon which has become all too familiar to not only 21st century U. S. citizens, but to the peoples around the globe. The connecting line between all of these diverse ideologies, some constructive and some destructive, is their attempt to save the world via a forced, utopian society of one sort of another – we need think no farther than George Orwell’s *Animal Farm* with its model being Soviet Russia, or Nazi German with its utopian goal, not really the destruction of world Jewry but rather the perfection of humanity with its German foot first, for two dystopian illustrations. Thus utopia to Hitler became a hellish dystopia for the rest of the world, where Nazism became the new religion according to the words of Joseph Goebbels, minister for propaganda (Goebbels, 1928). There were definite side effects to 19th and 20th century progress theory. Freud and Marx would not have believed that traditional religion would hold such power in the 21st century. It would be unthinkable to them, and therein lays the fallacy.

Illusions, Opiates, and Supernaturalists. Freud and Marx were both careful observers of religion, although it was the sociologist Max Weber who brought the societal dynamics of religion to the forefront of social evolution in *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism* (Weber, 1905). Weber claimed that western capitalism evolved out of the ethical influence of northern European Calvinism upon the masses, and continued exploring the sociological effects of other religious traditions such as Judaism, Hinduism, and Confucianism on their respective societies (Gerth & Mills, 1946). Freud and his early associate Carl Jung stood on the vanguard of modern psychology, introducing the world to what religion taught us about the human psyche. Jung found humanity incurably religious, unsatisfied with the answers which materialism offered for existential questions, and would

go further to state that the study of the soul would be the next great frontier. Marx, even as a hostile witness, saw religion as a part of the cyclical history of mankind's revolutions. Last but not least, John Dewey who was raised a Congregationalist, remained a very astute observer of American religion, giving the Terry Lectures at Yale in 1934. Steven Rockefeller (1991), *John Dewey: Religious Faith and Democratic Humanism*, traced Dewey's social consciousness to his Christian roots and Dewey himself never saw education devoid of a religiously derived morality (*Ethical Principles underlying Education*, 1887; *Ethics*, 1908; *A Common Faith*, 1934). Dewey even expressed his educational theory in ecclesiastical terminology in *My Pedagogic Creed* (1897). Dewey, the icon of educators, was not averse to speaking of religion or what he termed "the divine." On the contrary, having published dozens of articles on religious subjects (Rockefeller, 1991, p. 634), in *A Common Faith*, he expressed a disdain for what he called "militant atheist" or "aggressive atheism," on the one hand, and the supernaturalists on the other (Dewey, 1934, p. 53). He was not looking at lay persons and backwater pulpits with the later term, but Princeton theology and professors in general and J. Gresham Machen in particular (Rockefeller, 1991). And although Dewey felt that religious conversation, especially of an ethical and moral nature, was necessary to unify the human experience, he did not expect it from those he considered extreme.

In a distracted age the need for such an idea is urgent. It can unify interests and energies now dispersed; it can direct action and generate the heat of emotion and the light of intelligence. Whether one gives the name "God" to this union, operative in thought and action, is a matter for individual decision. But the function of such a working union of the ideal and actual seems to me to be identical with the force that has in fact been attached to the conception of God in all the religions that have a

spiritual content; and a clear idea of that function seems to me urgently needed.

(Dewey, 1934, p. 35)

But by over estimating the ability of progress and underestimating the power of traditional religion (“the supernaturalists” of the 1934 Terry Lectures), Dewey may have unconsciously helped to create a culture of religious ignorance that he would have otherwise abhorred. One can only imagine how each of these pioneers of modernity would react to an issue which simultaneously appeared in early 2007 on the pages of *USA Today*, *Time*, and the *Chronicle of Higher Education*. The lead line on *USA Today* captured the essence of this issue in six words: “Americans get an ‘F’ in religion!” (Grossman, 2007).

An Uninformed Democracy

In stubborn protest to the heirs of Comte and the prophets of modernity, religion did not go away. On the contrary, religion became bigger and more expansive in the second half of the 20th century (Berger, 1999). Modern society would do well to heed the example of its predecessors such as Marx, Weber, Freud, and Dewey, by accepting that religion supplies extensive context to the human situation and aids the decisions of humanity in many instances. Therefore, for an American citizen to be ignorant of religion or to attempt to teach about the American experiment while remaining ignorant of the several parts of the whole (of which religion is one of these parts) would be foolish and absurd. A *prima face* survey may detect few dedicated religion courses taught throughout American public schools (Lester, 2007; Marshall, 2006; Moore, 2007). Nevertheless, says Harvard’s Diane Moore, religion is being taught more than we think, although not the way we would prefer:

First, it is important to note that religion is *already* being taught in classrooms across the globe in intentional and unintentional ways. Uninformed and often unconscious

assumptions about religion are transmitted on a regular basis to students who, in turn, absorb these assumptions without interrogation. Teachers who have participated in training seminars about how to teach about religion commonly lament with chagrin the false and/or problematic assumptions regarding religion that they unwittingly promoted and reproduced prior to their training. For example, one teacher in Kenya spoke about how before participating in a seminar on Islam she wrongly interpreted Miriam Ba's text *So Long a Letter* as "an indictment against Islam as inherently oppressive to women." This is one of the texts approved for use in the International Baccalaureate (IB) curriculum and she commented that her entire department made the same problematic assumptions about the text. There are dozens of other examples that I could offer along these lines. Given this reality, I believe it is better to educate about religion directly and to give teachers the training they need to do so more responsibly than they are often currently able to do. (Moore, 2006, par. 10)

Purpose of Study

Accepting as fact that the demise of religion in post-enlightenment society has been greatly exaggerated, failure to assess the level of religious literacy of pre-service teachers prevents an educational institution from moderating the transmission of stereo-typical, biased, and erroneous information about the religious doctrines, rituals, and practices of two billion Christians, and a billion Muslims, not to mention millions of Jews, Buddhists, and Hindus. Therefore, it would seem beneficial to assess the level of religious knowledge (and intervene where necessary) in pre-service English and History teachers, those who confront the religious cultures of the world's peoples on a daily basis, if for nothing else, to promote a more tolerant educational environment which is open to a wider diversity of intellectual and

spiritual models through understanding rather than through the bias that accompanies ignorance. Therefore, postulating that no other single sociological factor influences so many people on the planet as does religion, by all rationale, such an influence demands an educator's attention.

The purpose of this study is to ascertain the level of religious literacy in pre-service teachers of History and English using an instrument (Religious Literacy Quiz) developed by Stephen Prothero in *Religious Literacy* (2007a) and modified for the survey of 3412 participants by the Pew Research Center's "U. S. Religious Knowledge Survey" in 2010. The intention of this study is to contribute to the current knowledge base in the field of Cultural Literacy and its related sub-field of Religious Literacy in American by focusing on a population that has significant power over the religious literacy of the American citizenry. Additionally, by further supporting the case for the continued importance of religious literacy and knowledge, even in a secular age and society, this study could add to the on going quest to consciously include rather than exclude diversity (ethnic, intellectual, religious, and spiritual) in the educational journey and the classroom, and facilitate a renewed interest in the discussion of life's existential questions (Kessler, 2001; Solomon, 1999).

Research Questions

The primary question of this study is "What is the level of religious literacy among pre-service teachers of History and English." Guiding questions are:

1. What is the level of basic religious knowledge (religious literacy) among pre-service teachers of History (Social Studies) and English?
2. Do pre-service teachers of History and English demonstrate higher-level thinking skills as relates to religion in public life?

3. What level of knowledge do pre-service teachers of History and English demonstrate when confronted with a discipline specific section from a standard North Carolina textbook or an interdisciplinary text dealing with religious knowledge?

Rationale

Research question number one uses survey questions derived from Prothero (2007a) and modified by the Pew Research Center (2010); questions two and three are exploratory, derived from the literature (Chapter 2). The exploratory questions will attempt to assess higher level thinking skills and the practical application of religious knowledge within an academic discipline. Prothero's (2007a) study surveyed college students in general without respect to academic track, demonstrated low religious literacy scores, and were generalized to the American people at large. Such a generalized study could also be considered the weakest point in his argument: first, because the students at Boston University are not the common man on the streets, and second, because his group can be no farther generalized than college students at elite private universities. On the other hand, the Pew Research Center's study of 2010 surveyed the general population, with special emphasis on atheists, Jews, and Mormons. Yet, if we allow Prothero to generalize his research to the public at large, what risk is there if Americans are religiously illiterate in general – the individual repercussions may be insignificant, except these same people will ultimately make national decisions at the voting booths, religious ignorance becoming just one more brick pulled from the crumbling wall of Jefferson's informed citizenry. With this democratic deterioration, John Dewey would not be pleased, especially if part of the problem stemmed from education.

Teachers and Religious Literacy

In the U. S., one specific group of individuals has become a knowledge gate keeper and filter for the majority of American citizens – public school teachers (Spring, 1990). If John Doe tells his drinking pal that Thanksgiving has no religious significance, that’s a singular instance of ignorance that may be laughed off or soon forgotten; but if a public school teacher tells every class over her career of 30 years that Thanksgiving has no religious significance, either deliberately misrepresenting the pilgrims or deliberately excluding the importance of their religion from the story, this ignorance becomes a mistake of hundreds or thousands. If a college professor makes the same mistake to a class of 25 pre-service teachers, who in turn replicate the error annually to 25 other classes of 25 students each, that is an error of exponential proportions. It is an *a priori* assumption of this study that the religious literacy of instructors and teachers holds much higher stakes that does the religious literacy of other private citizens. As Michael Apple (1986) noted in *Teachers and Text*, the decision to exclude content from the curriculum can be just as powerful as the decision to include content in the curriculum.

Religion as a Dominant Sociological Force

According to the Pew Forum on Religion and Public life, 78.4% of the U. S. population describe themselves as Christian (Pew Research Center, 2008) and until recently, the largest resident population of Jews was not in Israel, but the United States (Jewish Virtual Library, 2011). Judaism encompasses 25% of the remaining “other religions” in America. The 2000 census recorded 63 million Roman Catholics, yet Catholicism only accounts for 23.9% of the Christian population. Protestants statistics total 51.3%, with evangelical churches holding the majority at 26.3%. The Pew Research Center published in a study

entitled *African-Americans and Religion* (2009) that African-Americans “were markedly more religious” when compared to other U. S. populations (Pew, 2009). Therefore, how could one truly explore critical race theory or the black experience, without giving serious attention to black religion (Raboteau, 1999)? In the last decade religion has gained increasing fiscal resources for scholarly study in Sociology (Jaschik, 2010) and rates a separate chapter in current Anthropology and Sociology college textbooks, such as Gary Ferraro’s *Cultural Anthropology* (2006), chapter 14, “Supernatural Beliefs” or Nijole Benokraitis’ *SOC* (2010), chapter 15, “Religion.” Religion remains a dominate force when considering ethnic and racial diversity, inseparable to the identity of a multitude of minority groups (Jaschik, 2010; Maalouf, 2003; Pew Research Center, 2009).

Legal Context

With the foregoing in mind, an inquiry into the religious literacy of per-service teachers and the place of religion in the public square would seem appropriate. Contrary to the popular opinion of politicians, religious leaders, and public school administrators, Charles Haynes, senior scholar at the First Amendment Center points out that *Abington v. Schempp* (1963) did not outlaw prayer, Bible reading, or the study of religion in public schools:

No Supreme Court ruling has ever banned prayer or the Bible from public schools. As legal guidelines issued in both the Clinton and Bush administrations make clear, students have a First Amendment right to pray alone or in groups, bring their scriptures to school, share their beliefs with classmates, form religious clubs in secondary schools and in other ways express their faith during the school day — as long as they don’t disrupt the school or interfere with the rights of others. (Haynes, 2003, par. 5)

Supreme Court Cases

But *Abington v. Schempp* did not exist on an island by itself, and the case was literally upstaged by more notorious players on the stage of religious dissent. The battle lines had been drawn over a decade earlier, resulting in six court cases between the years of 1940 – 1963 addressing first amendment rights and the place of religion in that portion of the public square called the public school.

Cantwell v. Connecticut (1940). *Cantwell v. Connecticut* applied the federal protections of the First Amendment to states, the free exercise clause, allowing the Jehovah's Witness Newton Cantwell to canvas without a license in a highly Roman Catholic locality. In this instance, the U. S. Supreme court ruled against the New Jersey Supreme court in a unanimous decision. *Everson v. Board of Education* was the first case to apply federal restrictions to states. This was a noted turning point in the application of the establishment clause, but in line with the legal precedents that had begun shortly after the ratification of the thirteenth, fourteenth, and fifteenth amendments, which applied federal law to individuals, often times contrary to the laws of an individual state. The *Everson* case involved reimbursement to parents for travel costs incurred during the transportation of students to and from private Catholic schools, since public school students received free public transportation. *Everson* filed suit that this was direct government aid to religion via public taxes.

McCullum v. Board of Education (1948). *McCullum v. Board of Education* contested an early release time for students in grades four through nine to participate in religious education classes taught by members of the Champaign Council on Religious Education, composed of Protestants, Catholics, and Jews. *McCullum* was an atheist and sued the school board contesting that it was in breach of the First Amendment establishment

clause and the Fourteenth Amendment equal protection clause. Although the state of Illinois ruled against Ms. McCollum, the U. S. Supreme ruled in her behalf, stating that the school board had aided by allowing religious instruction on tax-supported property. Only Justice Reed dissented, stated that the interpretation of the First Amendment by the majority had been too broad. Thus in a single decade, tax-paying religious persons were denied access to publicly funded transportation, lands, and buildings, based solely on the criteria that it was religion, and it seems that in both cases non-religion prevailed and was given the control over religion and religious persons in the public square of the public school.

Zorach v. Clauson (1952). *Zorach v. Clauson* references another release program, this time in New York City, but not involving either public funds or public property. The context was “school time,” and the adjusting of school schedules to accommodate religious functions. In reference to this case, Justice Douglas wrote a probing inquiry into just how far the separation of church and state can go before becoming hostile to religion.

We are a religious people whose institutions presuppose a Supreme Being. We guarantee the freedom to worship as one chooses. We make room for as wide a variety of beliefs and creeds as the spiritual needs of man deem necessary. We sponsor an attitude on the part of government that shows no partiality to any one group and that lets each flourish according to the zeal of its adherents and the appeal of its dogma. When the state encourages religious instruction or cooperates with religious authorities by adjusting the schedule of public events to sectarian needs, it follows the best of our traditions. For it then respects the religious nature of our people and accommodates the public service to their spiritual needs. To hold that it may not would be to find in the Constitution a requirement that the government show

a callous indifference to religious groups. That would be preferring those who believe in no religion over those who do believe. Government may not finance religious groups nor undertake religious instruction nor blend secular and sectarian education nor use secular institutions to force one or some religion on any person. But we find no constitutional requirement which makes it necessary for government to be hostile to religion and to throw its weight against efforts to widen the effective scope of religious influence. The government must be neutral when it comes to competition between sects. It may not thrust any sect on any person. It may not make a religious observance compulsory. It may not coerce anyone to attend church, to observe a religious holiday, or to take religious instruction. But it can close its doors or suspend its operations as to those who want to repair to their religious sanctuary for worship or instruction. No more than that is undertaken here. (Eastland, 1993, p. 109; *Zorach v. Clauson*, 1952)

Engle v. Vitale (1962). *Engle v. Vitale* (1962) did not address religious instruction, but rather devotional practices or school prayer. In this case, state officials were forbidden to compose an official prayer and demand that students recite it. The prayer read as follows: “Almighty God, we acknowledge our dependence upon Thee, and we beg Thy blessings upon us, our parents, our teachers and our country. Amen.” What is significant in this case is that several Jewish groups encouraged the Court to rule against the prayer, while over twenty states urged the Court to allow the prayer’s use in New York. Another interesting part of the story is the dissenting opinion of Justice Stewart that stated that the Court’s arguments were irrelevant, since it could not be proved that such a prayer would establish any one religion over another. What was really at stake, wrote Stewart, was the free exercise clause, because

this was an attempt to restrict those who wished to begin the school day with prayer. In years to come, this decision would be cited as a precedent to contest student lead prayer at graduations and invocations at football games. When we finally arrive at *Abington Township v. Schempp*, the snowball effect has become so gargantuan that it would be strange if religion had gained a court victory over non-religion at this junction in the history of American Education.

Abington Township, Pennsylvania v. Schempp (1963). What the *Abington v. Schempp* decision demanded was neutrality – neither the sectarian promotion of religion nor of non-religion, although Schempp’s objective was non-religion rather than diversity of religious traditions. His purpose in introducing the Qur’an as morning devotional readings was not for the purpose of religious or cultural diversity, but to promote the choice of non-religion (disenfranchising all religions or ignoring all religions, in contrast to understanding all religions) rather than diversity. Yet, although Schempp won the case, his goal of non-religion was not ultimately realized in the courts, even though it was realized in practice for the next half century. In antithesis to ejecting the religion from the core curriculum, Justice Tom Clark remarked that education was incomplete without it:

It might well be said that one’s education is not complete without a study of comparative religion or the history of religion and its relationship to the advancement of civilization Nothing we have said here indicates that such study of the Bible or of religion, when presented objectively as part of a secular program of education, may not be effected consistently with the First Amendment. (*Abington v. Schempp*, 1963; Eastland, 1993, p. 152)

So the original intent of the *Abington v. Schempp* decision was not the expulsion of religious knowledge from the public square, but to guard against sectarian bias, whether that bias be labeled religious (Evangelical, Catholic, or Jewish) or secular (non-religion, Marxist, social-critical theorists). *Abington v. Schempp* was eventually consolidated with *Murry v. Curlett* (1963), another school-prayer case. Justice Stewart was again the dissenting voice. It seems that the court had made a turn in the road, from non-sectarian protecting religion in the public square, to favoring the aspirations of non-religion (atheism in this case) in the public square. In a certain sense, by favoring non-religion the high court was indeed establishing a religion of non-religion as the law of the land. Justice Stewart said as much in his dissent:

If religious exercises are held to be an impermissible activity in schools, religion is placed in an artificial and state-created disadvantage.... And a refusal to permit religious exercises thus is seen, not as the realization of state neutrality, but rather as the establishment of a religion of secularism, or at least, as governmental support of the beliefs of those who think that religious exercises should be conducted only in private. (*Abington v. Schempp*, 1963; Eastland, 1993, p. 165)

Nevertheless, where the constitution allows, religion does not need to be taught from a particular worldview, such as a progressivist worldview, as Michael Apple (Personal communication, 25 April 2010) would maintain, but it does need to be taught from a non-sectarian viewpoint, whether the instructor be a fundamentalist, an evangelical, Catholic, Jew, or agnostic – all religions are allowed fair treatment, as was in the case of the Modesto experiment (Lester, 2007). Reflecting the words of Justice Clark, education without the study of religion is incomplete, and the study of religion is completely consistent with the First Amendment, a legal aspect which the American public does not understand according to the

Pew U. S. Religious Knowledge Survey (2010). Thomas Jefferson, and John Dewey after him, stated that the American experiment would only work with an informed citizenry. Therefore, with religion being a crucial element in a complete education according to Justice Clark and an acknowledged part of the identity of 90% of the country (Pew Research Center, 2008), how could a public school student become an informed citizen without their mentors and facilitators also being religiously literate?

Consequences of Non-religion

There may also be a dark side of the story; a corollary to the advocacy of non-religion, that religious illiteracy is religious intolerance. Most would agree that narratives of intolerance appear daily in the news media of the world, but few realize that it is not always the unschooled that lack toleration. There may be a new generation of well-educated, elite persons in the United States that are promoting an accepted intolerance of both religion and human injustices. According to Prothero and Marshall, these are not the conservative Pat Robertsons and James Dobsons of the world, neither are they the radical Muslims or New Age pagans, but those who on all other accounts would pride themselves in tolerance. Prothero (2007a) and Marshall (2009) state that now anti-fundamentalism is the only acceptable intolerance. As a sample of such anti-fundamentalism, one need go no farther than Michael Apple (2001), *Education the Right Way: markets, standards, God, and inequality*, or Henry Giroux, *America on the Edge* (2006). When Giroux's entitles a chapter, *Against Fundamentalism: Resisting Religious Extremist and Market Orthodoxy*, it speaks volumes. It appears to be a call to arms under a broad generalization, where all fundamentalists are extremists, rather than a call for understanding and dialogue. In the same spirit, in reference

to his 2001 title, *Education the Right Way: Markets, Standards, God, and Inequality*, Michael Apple stated

Teaching ABOUT religion, not FOR it seems wise to me. But I would insist that such teaching provide an honest history and sensitive treatment of all aspects, both positive and negative, about the ways in which religion has functioned and now functions progressively and sometimes not so progressively.” (Apples’ emphasis, personal communication, 25 April 2010)

Apple prefaced this remark with the words, “I am (usually--depending on the conditions and situation) in favor of having people understand the varying nature of religious belief and unbelief” (M. Apple, personal communication, 25 April 2010). Both Apple and Giroux are illustrative of a popular modality, which is using religion as a pretext to teach something else – religion itself not being important enough to be studied for its own sake. Apple is frank, saying religion should be used to teach social critical theory, what both he and Giroux denote as progressivism (i.e., “functions progressively”). But such a modality can itself become a sectarian religion, subordinating all other religions to be viewed through the lenses of its dogma and doctrinal purity, allowing little or no deviation from its own orthodoxy. Even the promotion of pluralism, which has become an educational touchstone appearing in university discrimination disclaimers, can become a sectarian doctrine if it restricts the intellectual diversity which would question the validity of pluralism. William Wainwright (1999) challenges John Hick’s *Philosophy of Religion* on this very point, saying such a subordination of all religions to dogmatic pluralism is just another “form of exclusivism” (Wainwright, 1999, p. 206), exchanging a religious fundamentalism for a secular fundamentalism (Wallis, 2006).

Thus we have come full circle as Justice Stewart warned, whereby a progressive constituency accuses their traditional Christian opponents of religious intolerance. Yet is it not possible that both sides promote religious intolerance to the same degree that they are religiously illiterate? At least this is the argument the progressives would take against traditional religion; why would the inverse not also be valid? If religious instruction is withheld because someone may make a mistake, or because religion is not taught from a certain worldview, as Apple would demand, or because a “fundamentalist” is teaching about Judaism, the American public will remain illiterate. Prothero would allow for a diversity of persons and worldviews to be instrumental in restoring religious literacy to the American educational system, holding that religion itself was important in its own right; Apple and Giroux would not allow the teaching of religion for its own sake, without a progressivist lenses to filter the panorama. The dark side is the danger that the self-proclaimed and doctrinally pure oppressed (progressivists) could become the oppressors and adversaries of the next generation of fundamentalists, evangelicals, Jews, Muslims, Hindus, and Buddhists, and feel as sure that they were doing the right thing. Oppressors never set out to do the wrong thing, a case in point being the Third Reich, which, through rigorous legal procedures, never did anything illegal. As Plato noted in the *Republic*, one man’s justice can easily become another man’s injustice. Sectarianism can be secular as well as religious, neither of which is helpful in a quest for religious literacy.

Prothero and other religious studies scholars, such as Harvard’s Diane Moore and James Tabor, Chair of Religious Studies at the University of North Carolina-Charlotte, say the dangers of religious illiteracy are even closer and more devastating than we may think. Prothero (2007a) believes that there could have been a religious illiteracy component in the

Bush launch of the Iraq war, and James Tabor (1997) in *Why Waco* has gone on record to show connections between the Waco disaster of 1993 and the government's (FBI, ATF, Delta Force) failure to distinguish between a hostage situation and the apocalyptic fears of a religious sect. On another front, it may also be questioned whether Osama bin Laden's rationale was religious, political, or both, or whether Islam can distinguish between the political and the religious aspirations of a people, as the West has taken for granted in its policies of church-state separation. Experience indicates that Islamic Republics experience little church-state separation, and that secular Islamic states like Turkey have continual civil conflict. But it seems nigh impossible to think critically along these vectors where religion intersects politics and society without first a basic understanding of religion, termed religious literacy by Prothero and Moore, or denoted religious knowledge by the Pew Research Center. As Cambridge professor Michael Grant observed, "A theologian's interpretations remain liable to contradiction unless he knows something of the historical background. And a historian's neglect of religion leads to even worse results" (Grant, 1977, p. 1). Therefore, it would appear reasonable that religious literacy would be most important to pre-service teachers heading toward public positions in social studies and literature.

Definition of Terms

Fundamentalism was an early 20th century Protestant movement of traditional Christianity characterized by the following three criteria: 1) traditional Christian doctrine as described in *The Fundamentals* (1910-1915), 2) *Sola Scriptura*, and 3) first and second degree separatist practices. "Fundamentalism proper is a Protestant impulse that bears only superficial similarities such movements" characterized by violence as is the case with the Islamic Wahhabi, the Hindu nationalistic Bharatiya party in India, or certain Orthodox

Jewish sects in Israel (Prothero, 2007a, p. 181). From a journalistic perspective in accordance with Associated Press guidelines, fundamentalism should only be used of those groups that denote themselves as such (Marshall, 2009), and the APA manual suggests that writers “use the more specific rather than the less specific term” (VanderBos, 2010. p. 75). Although seculars continually misuse the term as a pejorative broad category of suspect individuals, in this paper fundamentalist is reserved only for those who denote themselves as such.

Non-religion is the inverse of religion, although not without religious fervor in its adherents. Parallel technical terms are secularism, agnosticism, atheism, especially militant atheism (Dewey, 1934) and the new atheism, and the idea that the public square, including public schools, should be religion-free zones. Non-religion believes that the first amendment protects the general public from religion, rather than the first amendment protects religion from the federal government and non-religion. In this study, non-religion is used as it was in the opinions of the Supreme Court by Justices Jackson and Stewart.

Preparation is a term borrowed from media literacy advocates who posit a three-fold attitude toward all media, whether that media is print, graphic, video, or audio (Considine & Haley, 1999). The two related terms are entertainment and protection. Advocates of preparation do not believe in censorship, but address inherent dangers by education, demonstrating how media is constructed and teaching how it can be evaluated. On the other hand, advocates of protection censor media that fails their preconceived guidelines for appropriateness.

Progress theory was a teleological worldview which proposed that social evolution guaranteed the ultimate redemption of the human race from environmental ills such as poverty, ignorance, hunger, war, and related human suffering; and, biologically, that we are

moving ever so steadily toward perfection (Darwin, 1858). Intellectually, progress theory is indebted to Comte's three states: theological, philosophical, and positive-science. In Comte's epistemological evolution, humanity would ultimately redeem itself through the sciences, and religion, although a stepping stone, would become unnecessary and disappear. Events in the 20th Century, such as WWI and WWII, proved progress theory naïve and unrealistic, and destroyed this concept as an object of faith (Gonzales, 2010). Scientists now theorize that natural environment limits growth or progress (Diamond, 1999).

Progressivism is an evolving term with historical, political, and educational connotations. In Dewey's writings progressivism refers to an empirical method of education drawn from his philosophical pragmatism which promoted scientific method, observation, and hands-on learning in contrast to previous textbook recitation models. Parallel with educational progressivism was political progressivism that offered an encompassing social agenda. Current progressivism, as do other examples of critical theory such as feminism, sees all things from the political left. Progressives are sworn enemies of core knowledge and cultural literacy theorists, like E. D. Hirsh (Prothero, 2007a). The term is not identical with the philosophical progress theory. In the early cold war era, progressivism was an alternate term for Soviet Marxism (Zhdanov, 1947). In Giroux, progressivism is synonymous with a utopian amalgam of education and social-critical theory; he used the two terms radical and progressive synonymously (Giroux, 1988). For this study, the terms progressivism and progressivist are specific and reserved for those who denote themselves as such.

Protection, according to media literacy, constitutes the antithesis of preparation and promotes the censorship of content based on preconceived guidelines for appropriateness such as worldview, critical lens (feminism, gender, class, race) or sectarian agenda. For this

study, protectionists believe that the first amendment protects the public from religion, rather than it protects religion from the federal government. Protectionists would like to see the public square as a religion free zone, where religion is either ignored or highly regulated.

Religious literacy was used by Prothero (2007a; 2010a) in the same sense that the Pew Research Center (2010) used religious knowledge. Religious literacy is a sub-set of cultural literacy (Hirsch, 1987) and contests that we live in a post-Christian country or secular world; it affirms the “evidence of the public power of religion is overwhelming” (Prothero, 2007a, p. 5), and demands that we seek to understand religion rather than ignore it.

Seculars, according to Marshall, are persons either ignorant of or prejudicially opposed to religion, stating that both the media and other knowledge professions, including Higher Education, are replete with such individuals (Marshall, 2009, pp. 87-89). Synonymous terms include secularist, secular elites and secular fundamentalist (Marshall, 2009; Wallis 2005). Seculars tend to ignore the power of religion in world events, display reductionist tendencies in describing religious content, and appear oblivious to the complexity of world religious and intra-religious distinctions.

Summary

Joel Spring, in *The American School: 1642-1990*, claimed that public schools are institutions of “ideological management” comparable to other public media such as news and film (Springer, 1990, p. 378). Nevertheless, news and film as privately owned entities do not have the same obligations to the First Amendment as public schools do, since they are not taxpayer funded public trusts. Private citizens can start a Christian or Jewish school or radio station, but the state of North Carolina can not since the state gains revenue through public taxes, and North Carolina public schools cannot afford to be sectarian. According to Justice

Stewart, non-religion must also be considered as one form of sectarianism to be avoided, and as such states can no more establish non-religion than they can another sectarian belief system. Curriculum choices and course content, whether or not these will reflect religion or non-religion, are merely a part of this “ideological management.” The Texas textbook wars of 2010 make us all the more certain that the public is not only concerned whether or not religion is taught, but that there is balance given to this teaching. Applying Michael Apple’s (1988) argument from *Teachers and Texts*, to exclude religion from the teacher education, textbooks and discussion is an act of intolerance and oppression, only this time the oppressors are the secularists, protectionists, and proponents of non-religion. Wood made a similar argument when he remarked “One of the few reliable research findings in education is that the textbooks used in schools determine the curriculum” (Wood, 1992, p. 177).

Moore (2007) said that religion is already being taught in the classroom, often wrongly. Can educators continue to allow that? And even if religion is being taught, both Prothero and the Pew Research Forum say Americans continue to be woefully ignorant in religious knowledge, although reading daily world news demands an ever increasing proficiency in religious literacy. To ignore religion when it is clearly present in the fiber of human society is to promote a monistic fantasy utopia of non-religion, fulfilling the prophetic words of Justices Stewart and Clark. Therefore, since neither ignorance nor dismissal of the topic of religion is an option for teachers, the only remaining course of action is the integration of religious knowledge across the curriculum so as to recover religious literacy for the sake of an informed citizenry and a truly complete education. But the first step is to examine the current weakest link in the chain and to inquire into the literature on religious literacy in the public square, especially as it relates to public education.

CHAPTER 2: REVIEW OF LITERATURE

In chapter one, we saw how religious literacy shares a legal context with religion in the public square and first Amendment rights, and that through a series of cultural shifts and resulting Supreme court cases, non-religion gained the favored position that religion had once held. Advocates of non-religion began to preach that the first amendment protected the public from encounters with religion, especially in the public schools. The effect of this ascendancy of non-religion in several historic court battles resulted in legal precedence for a sectarian and secularist worldview: to have non-religion's own version of religion taught in public schools (even if that was none at all), to bar equal access to all other versions of religious teaching from the schools (*Abington Township v. Schempp*, 1963), and to hinder school schedules from accommodating other entities providing religious instruction (*McCullum v. Board of Education*, 1948; *Zorach v. Clauson*, 1952), although efforts in the local community had been directed toward neutrality and the spirit of the first Amendment.

Religious Literacy: Preparation or Protection?

Therefore, rather than following the opinions of the courts which specified that religious studies were a fundamental aspect of a well rounded education (Justice Clark), for all practical purposes the study of religion was excluded from public schools and non-religion had exclusive domain. A secular sectarianism replaced religious sectarianism, even though Justice Douglas commented that "we sponsor an attitude on the part of government that shows no partiality to any one group," it appears that "a religion of secularism" became

the exception as Justice Steward had warned and “religion [was] placed in an artificial and state-created disadvantage ... [resulting in] the establishment of a religion of secularism” in the schools of the nation (Eastland, 1993, p. 165). Thus Justice Clark’s concern voiced in his dissent had fallen on academically deaf ears. Even if the teaching of sectarian religion in public schools had been curtailed, the mandate to continue teaching religion as an important element in the evolution of human society and in the understanding of the American experiment became sidelined. This lacuna in religious knowledge and the voices that address this problem form the basis for chapter two.

Religious knowledge, as the Pew Research Center in its *U. S. Religious Knowledge Survey* (2010) used the term, or religious literacy (Marshall, 2009; Moore, 2007; Prothero, 2007a) has both its advocates and its critics. From the stand point of media literacy (Considine & Haley, 1999), there are those who favor educational preparation (i.e., Hayes, Marshall, Moore, Prothero), those who favor protection (i.e., Apple, Giroux, Rorty), and those who favor entertainment (mass media). This study will only survey educational preparation and protectionism with regards to religious knowledge. Suffice it to say that this is basically a methodological dialectic and debate. Within the confines of the present study, both those who favor educational preparation and those advocating protectionist practices see the importance of the study of religion within an educational content, yet what we denote as critics would mandate a particular worldview from which all religion is taught (their own), regardless of the content of religious instruction (i.e., What is a Jew? What are the seven sacraments?). This study deems protectionists, or those opposed to religious education except according to their own criteria, such as those who would use the study of religion as pre-text to further disseminate a sectarian ideology, be it atheism, feminism or Marxism on the one

hand, or orthodox Baptist dogma and practice on the other. It may be taken for granted that those on both sides of the issue realize that the practical outcome of those pivotal legal decisions culminating in *Abingdon v. Schempp* (1963) bequeathed a half-century of religious ignorance to the nation, which in turn causes those in power to misinterpret the actions of peoples,⁵ cultures, and nations (Lester, 2007; Marshall, 2009; Prothero, 2007). Both sides would also concur with the conclusion that many scholars have continued for a generation with an empirically disproved sociological model which told us that religion was on the decline, as illustrated by the 8 April 1966 cover of *Time Magazine*, *Is God Dead?* (Ellison, 1966). On the contrary, for the past 50 years, religious observance has been on the ascendancy in every region of the world except Europe, and even this region is slowly showing signs of renewed spiritual life (Berger, 1999; Marshall, 2009). This study will not address those who would find solace in the disappearance of all religion (Dawkins, 2006; Hawkin, 2011; Rorty, 2003), since there is little evidence to believe such will happen in the near future (Berger 1999; Prothero 2010a, 2011). Yet this and similar empirically disproven opinions continue prominently in some of the literature, revealing that sectarianism, both religious and non-religious, would have its views and only its views on religion to rule (Lester 20007; Marshall, 2009; Rorty, 2003; Wainwright, 1999). For protectionists, the second best option to total exclusivism in worldview or content is to have no one's views taught, which is paramount to establishing non-religion as a religion (Lester, 2007). Yet from a more inclusive perspective that fosters free educational inquiry, the alternative to sectarian

⁵ The Ruby Ridge incident under G. H. Bush (1992) and the Waco atrocity (Waco Siege) under Bill Clinton (1993) go a long way to show the bi-partisan nature of religious ignorance within two succeeding presidential administrations. Waco was misinterpreted as a hostage situation and 76 innocent men, women, and children lost their lives because of this mistake. Both were religious communities without any previous legal charges or convictions. The F. B. I and A. T. F. ignored the counsel of religious experts (i. e. Charles Tabor, UNCC). See Tabor, James D. and Eugene V. Gallagher. *Why Waco?: Cults and the Battle for Religious Freedom in America* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995).

religion (or non-religion) is not the absence of any reference to religion in the public square or the neglect of teaching religion, but the study of religion as important element of human culture in general, and of American life in particular, from a non-sectarian, although not necessarily a secular, point of view (Lester, 2007; Marshall, 2009; Moore, 2007; Prothero, 2007a). These two viewpoints, which shall be denoted as religious literacy⁶ preparation and protectionism, at times show a tendency to fall into distinct philosophical and methodological camps, with protectionists and non-religion being often associated with relativism, collectivism, critical theory, critical pedagogy, and progressivism⁷ (Freire, 1970; Giroux, 1988; Moore, 2007); preparation is then associated with realism, individualism, and educational perennialism (Hirsch 1988; Marshall 2009; Prothero 2007a).

Stephen Prothero (2010a) remarked in *God is not One: The eight rival religions that rule the world – and why their differences matter*, that to say that all the world's religions are all the same is far from the truth.

It is a lovely sentiment but it is dangerous, disrespectful, and untrue. For more than a generation we have followed scholars and sages down the rabbit hole into a fantasy

⁶ The Pew Research Center's U. S. Religious Knowledge Survey (2010) chose to use the phrase "religious knowledge" as synonymous with religious literacy. Throughout this study the phrases religious literacy, religious knowledge, and religious knowledge and understanding will be used synonymously.

⁷ Progressivism has been used so prolifically as to almost lose both its connotation and denotation. In the late 19th and early 20th century, progressivism was both a political philosophy and a movement within education often associated with John Dewey. Technically, Dewey was a non-Hegelian, non-idealist, pragmatist within the conceptual framework of William James. In the writings of Michael Apple, and even more so in the works of Henry Giroux, progressivism is equated with "radical education," the wedding of Marxism and the public school, and pedagogy of the oppressed (Giroux, 1988, *Schooling and the Struggle for Public Life*). This later 20th century progressivism would equate democracy with socialism, the same idea that appears in the writings of soviet Marxists of the cold war era. It is doubtful that Dewey's view of democracy and progressivism could be equated with Giroux's socialist collectivism rather than American democratic individualism. Currently, the self named "Progressive Majority" is an anti-conservative political action committee (PAC). Although claiming "majority" status, it is difficult to see how a 50,000 member network is a majority. The published agenda lists economic justice, civil rights, health care, education, environment, and reproductive freedom, all of which terms may be seen as code words of sectarian interests and posturing for political power under the pretext of social concern (see <http://www.progressivemajority.org/>). Therefore, it becomes difficult to use the term "progressivism" or progress across the 20th - 21st centuries without clarification.

world in which all gods are one. This wishful thinking is motivated in part by an understandable rejection of the exclusivist missionary view that only you and your kind will make it to heaven or Paradise. For most of world history, human beings have seen religious rivals as inferior to themselves The Age of Enlightenment in the 18th century popularized the ideal of religious tolerance, and we are doubtless better for it. But the idea of religious unity is wishful thinking nonetheless, and it has not made the world a safer place. In fact, this naïve theological groupthink – call it Godthink – has made the world more dangerous by blinding us to the clashes of religions that threaten us worldwide. It is time we crawled back out of the rabbit hole back to reality. (Prothero, 2010a, pp. 2-3)

In this 2010 offering, Prothero continues to promote the thesis from *Religious Literacy* (2007a) that religion significantly influences economic, political, and cultural systems, and to ignore religion, to fail to possess religious literacy, further removes an individual from the reasons for the events taking place in our contemporary world. In both books, Prothero questions why religious literacy is so much ignored in schools and colleges.

Persistent legal battles over religion offer a window into the significant place that religion plays in the public square, although authors such as Richard Rorty (2003), *Religion in the Public Square; A Reconsideration*, could wish that such a phenomena did not exist.

... the government offers toleration, and various special privileges, for almost anything that chooses to call itself a religion. In exchange, the churches are suppose not to use the pulpit, or church funds, to support political candidates and proposals – or at least not to do so in so blatant a way as to loose their tax-exempt status. (Rorty, 2003, p. 141)

Such statements reveal a lacuna, bereft of any personal acquaintance with African-American Christian congregations or the context of Martin Luther King's ministry, whom Rorty mentions with approval in the article or the phenomena in 2000 where the Jewish community in South Florida threw the 2000 elections into a barrage of counts and re-counts? (Sarna, 2004). The practice of the Democratic Party candidate in the 2004 elections, John Kerry, also put these religious groups high on the contact list. Nevertheless, Rorty, who believed that religion was a private matter to be restricted in the public square "in exchange" for certain "special privileges," is by no means a singular voice. And although he decries the "bigoted exclusivism," (Rorty, 2003, pp. 145-146), William Wainwright (1999) would say that no religious exclusivism is worse than that one which excludes religious folks from the public square. Since Rorty mentions no religious opinions that wish to exclude his atheism or devotion to John Stewart Mill from the public square, religion seems to be a good deal more tolerant than Rorty's non-religion in this instance. What this illustration reveals is a key to the literature on religious literacy and how this is a part of many larger issues, such as religion in the public square and the conceptual frameworks of educational institutions. Beginning with an historical sketch which locates the arguments within the framework of public education, the literature on religious literacy addressed here offers the views and arguments from the contemporary literature appearing in accordance with a single objective, which is the importance of religious knowledge or literacy within the framework of an informed democracy.

Historical Perspective on Religious Literacy

Near the end of the 19th century, John Albert Broadus (d. 1895) despaired that the entrance of public education into American life would leave the country a nation of religious

illiterates (Robertson, 1910). Broadus was the only Southern Baptist to ever give the Lyman Beecher lectures at Yale and, in his time, was considered the University of Virginia's most famous alumnus. He had been both a grade school teacher and a Seminary professor, and knew both worlds of private and of public education. Broadus was an early proponent of public schools, although the commonwealth of Virginia did not support this educational adventure until 1870. Thus, it was not that Broadus wanted to make everyone become a Baptist; rather he realized the difficulty of offering public religious education that would be acceptable to Baptists, Presbyterians, Methodists, and Catholics all at once. He believed that instead of struggling with the problem, administrators may give up altogether.

From the generation that followed Broadus, Dr. George Albert Coe (1903) of North Western University presented the argument for religious literacy in syllogism:

The modern conception of religious education takes the form of an argument. True education, it says, must develop all the normal capacities of the mind; religion is one of these normal capacities; therefore true education includes education in religion. If, for any reason, the state does not impart religious training, then the home and the church must assume the whole task. This task is no mere appendix to general education, but an essential part thereof. It is not a special or professional matter which, like training in the fine arts, may be left to individual taste or ambition. Religious education must be provided for all children, and institutions that provide it for any children are organs of the general educational system. This view is modern in the sense that a new awakening to it is upon us; it is modern in the sense that the exclusion of religious instruction from the public schools has given it peculiar emphasis and peculiar form; yet, in one form or another, it is as old as civilization.

The theory that there can be any education that does not include religion; the theory that looks upon our so-called secular schools as a scheme of general education, leaving religious training as a mere side issue, is so new as to be almost bizarre. (Coe, 1903, p. 44)

The echo of this bugle call could still be heard a half-century later in the *Journal of Educational Sociology*. Professor Lissovoy (1954) claimed that

One of the areas studied in the introductory sociology course is "Religious Institutions of the Community". It is our belief that it is important for the prospective teacher to understand, not only the structure and function of religious institutions found in most communities, but to have knowledge and understanding of the basic religious principles which are inherent in the major denominations. Similar views in this matter are clearly stated by the Educational Policies Commission in *Morals and Spiritual Values in the Public Schools*. (Lissovoy, 1954, p. 419)

According to Avis Sebaly (1959), editor of *Teacher Education and Religion*, several research projects were spawned from 1947-1959 by the Committee on Religion and Education of the American Council on Education such as the five year study financed by the Danforth Foundation, although it must be admitted that much of the focus was derived ethics and values rather than religious literacy (Prothero, 2007a; Sebaly, 1959). These studies not only held the interest of teachers in the field, but the National Educational Association (NEA). There is a significant distinction between the early 20th century proponents for religious literacy and their 21st century counter-parts. Those promoting religious literacy in the first part of the 20th century were by and large professors of Education; those promoting religious

literacy in the 21st century are by and large professors of Religious Studies. The tables have somehow turned, and the date for the pivot was 1963.

The tumultuous 1960s and the landmark *Abington v. Schempp* (1963) case which banned devotional Bible reading in American public schools upset the delicate balance of religious literacy that had previously existed in American Public Schools (Prothero, 2010a). Whether devotional reading of the Bible aids in religious knowledge may be parallel to asking if reading a daily sonnet from Shakespeare adds to one's literary knowledge? What this devotional use of Scripture did show to students and teachers was that neither the Bible nor religion in general was on the banned books list. The crucial aspect that the *Schempp v. Abington* played was the illicit application of what educators through the courts had said. It seems that the word "devotional" was in the small print, but Bible reading came out in all capitals.⁸ Playing on a biblical metaphor, Prothero labels the era preceding this time "Eden" or "What we once knew" – "Once upon a time, Americans were a people of the book" (Prothero, 2007a, p. 59-86), adding a further Qur'anic allusion ("people of the book") to what Jews and Christians were called by Muslims. Sometime in the mid 20th century, pens fell silent and it would be a generation before educators began to discover what had been lost in the process of social unrest and the resultant curriculum reform. This would have been of little consequence except for the fact that Darwin, Marx, and Freud were wrong about religion's speedy demise. It did not go away; it became a bigger than ever in the later half of the 20th century (Berger, 1999). Yet Prothero stated that the seeds that produced the great demise of the 1960's were nearly a century old (Prothero, 2007a) when Schempp brought a Qur'an to school for the devotional readings of the day. It was not until the 1980s that

⁸ One of the questions in the recent study by the Pew Research Center's Religious Knowledge Survey asked the following: According to rulings by the U.S. Supreme Court, is a public school teacher permitted to read from the Bible as an example of literature, or not? The majority of participants answered "no."

academics began to explore the avenues of cultural literacy (Hirsch, 1987; Nation at Risk, 1983) which included religious knowledge and understanding that the familiar chorus of Broadus, Coe, and Lissovoy returned to the educational horizons. It would be another 20 years before the lead line of “religious illiteracy” appeared on 8 March 2007 the front page of *USA Today* (Grossman, 2007).

Perspectives in Preparation for Religious Literacy

Stephen Prothero wrote “Worshiping in Ignorance,” for the *Chronicle of Higher Education* and *Religious Literacy: What Every American Needs to Know – And Doesn’t* (2007b). Some will see a reflection of E. D. Hirsch (1988), *Cultural Literacy: What every American needs to know* in the title. As Weber and Dewey before him, Prothero sees religion as a significant element in American culture.

Prothero begins his article discussing the reason for his book, which is a 15 question quiz on general religious knowledge which he gives to all students taking his introductory religion courses, with question such as:

- Name the four Gospels
- List the five books of Moses
- What is the golden rule?
- What is the holy book of Islam?
- List Buddha’s four noble truths.

The second paragraph relates some of his findings in recent years:

In their quizzes, they inform me that Ramadan is a Jewish holiday, that Revelation is one of the first five books of the Hebrew Bible, and that Paul led the Israelites on the Exodus out of Egypt. This year I had a Hindu student who couldn't name one Hindu

scripture, a Baptist student who didn't know that "Blessed are the poor in spirit" is a Bible quote, and Catholic students unfamiliar with the golden rule. Over the past two years, only 17 percent of my students passed the quiz. (Prothero, 2007b, p. B6).

Prothero uses emotionally charged words throughout the article, stating that religious illiteracy “imperils our public life...is a scandal... [and leaves us] not equipped for citizenship” (Worshipping, p. B6). He accuses Harvard,⁹ his *alma mater*, of negligence when in 2001 the mandatory religion course, *reason and faith*, was purged from the curriculum. In cultural and historical studies, he blames the melting pot myth and calls for a return to contrasting identities and a pride in diversity. He charges “tolerance” with substituting a naïve relativism for religious differences and failing to recognize religion as a contemporary force in society, and claims the price we had to pay for “tolerance” (i.e., naïve relativism) was ignorance; faith may not move mountains, says Prothero, but it moves elections and armies. In closing, Prothero references Noah Feldman (2005), *Divided by God*, which is an exposition of the American intersection of religion and politics, saying we must not sweat the small things, allowing a *crèche* at the court house at Christmas and save our energies for bigger battles, such as global terrorism. Both authors call for an end to the culture wars, and Prothero suggests renewed efforts at religious knowledge via a cultural literacy model.

Joanne Marshall (2006), “Nothing New Under the Sun: A Historical Overview of Religion in U. S. Public Schools,” based her research upon a humanistic educational paradigm and spiritualistic theory in particular, using a qualitative methodology and a

⁹ Prothero is not the only voice of despair raised against Harvard. Over a decade earlier, Paul Farmer (M. D., Ph. D., Harvard 1990), a pioneer in bringing modern medical treatment of TB to third world communities, stated ironically that religion was so maligned at Harvard during his residency that there must be some truth to it (i. e. religion). Farmer was often seen in his clinic in Haiti wearing a large wooden cross. He commended Liberation theology, yet rejected its Marxist roots. See Tracy Kidder (2004), *Mountains beyond Mountains*, NY: Random House, p. 85.

feminist lens. She mapped U. S. religious diversity by state, sort of like the red-state, blue-state model of recent elections, identifying a state by the predominate religion (Christian denomination). For example, the South from Virginia to Texas shows up as Southern Baptist, and New England is predominately Catholic. But there is a tendency of generalization to the point of error. For example, Marshall did not paint New York City or North Miami Beach as Jewish! She does explain that her source actually colored by counties, rather than by state, which would be a good deal more accurate. Or perhaps, Marshall is ironically revealing a little of the ambiguity of religion within education. Nevertheless, this is an historical sketch and addresses the phenomenon of religious education in America from the early days until *Abington v. Schempp* in 1963. Marshall declares that schools already prepare teachers with courses in diversity and law, though stating this is not enough. She also notes that teachers must be prepared to teach about religion from a non-sectarian viewpoint. Her relative satisfaction with using a session of diversity education rather than specific religious courses, such as those mentioned by Haynes (2007), Moore (2007) or Prothero (2007a), does not seem to account for the profundity and complexity of American religious life.

Rachael Kessler (2000), *The Soul of Education*, addressed religion in the public square in a novel and refreshing fashion, avoiding conflict thesis and proceeding directly to existential questions among public school students. In the forward to this book, Parker Palmer stated that 20th century education became a soul starving experiment:

the educational soup became so thin – and our hunger for real life so deep – that in the last decades of the 20th century people started seeing right through it ... [and decided] to reclaim the integrity of teaching and learning so that it can once again become a process in which the whole person is nourished. (Kessler, 2000, p. v)

Palmer affirmed that those who take Kessler seriously will cease to tolerate an education that does not address the inner self, in other words, those aspects of humanity that have formerly been considered in religious and philosophical texts. Kessler’s constant question was, “if not us, then who?” For example, in the legal debate over a moment of silence to begin the school day, which seculars said was a ruse for school prayer, Kessler asked if school does not teach silence or offer a time to experience silence, then who would provide this needed aspect of psychological health to students. Kessler responded to critics that no one has the right to dictate what happens during the silence – that would be up to the child. In this instance, it was the seculars demanding exclusive non-religion rather than the religious folks asking concessions. Kessler’s work has been accepted from a wide consensus of persons with a diversity of political, educational, and religious viewpoints:

Critical readers from across the political spectrum enriched this book and supported my efforts to create a bridge of understanding and respect between constituencies in education who have long suffered estrangement and polarization.

I feel immensely blessed by Perry Glanzer, former education and religious liberty analyst for Focus on the Family, who read and responded to each chapter in the early stages to help me understand and respect the point of view of traditionalist Christian¹⁰ educators. (Kessler, 2000, p. vii-viii)

Kessler began this exploration into the human soul as a non-religious Jew, yet she found religious practices and ideology such as silence and transcendence a significant, although missing part, of human development within education.

¹⁰ Here is an example of the critical acumen of Kessler, using the precise term “traditionalist Christian” rather than the broad and indistinct term “fundamentalist,” although in a certain sense Focus on the Family could technically be called a fundamentalist para-church organization. Kessler has chosen a far better option.

Nel Noddings (1993), *Educating for Intelligent Belief or Unbelief*, originated from the 1991 John Dewey lectures for the Teachers' College of Columbia University. At times Noddings parallels topics appearing in Kessler (2000), especially when addressing the metaphysical and existential questions that can arise in the classroom:

- Is there a God?
- Where do I come from?
- What is the meaning of life? (Noddings, 1993).

The author claimed that a great deal could be addressed in high school math and science class, "although a complete course in religious thought would be a welcome addition to the curriculum" (Noddings, 1993, p. 1). If wishes were granted, which of the teachers would be prepared to teach this course in religious to a classroom full of teenagers? Noddings outlined an entire high school program integrating religion, mortality, ethics, and the politics of religion. "If I can convince readers that we can educate for intelligent belief or unbelief in mathematics classes, they may be convinced that we can do it anywhere!" (Noddings, 1993, p. 1). We may note that many would consider Noddings (2003) a critical theorist in reference to her ethics of care, although some feminist care to differ with such an assessment.

Emile Lester (2007), "A more neutral liberal education: Why not only Liberals, but Religious Conservatives should endorse comparative religious education in public schools," approached religious literacy from a first Amendment perspective, making a case that the only way for government to satisfy constitutional neutrality is to mandate a compulsory Comparative Religions / World Religions course for every high school student. In the design of this course, local religious officials would have the responsibility to make sure that their faith communities were presented from an insider's rather than an outsider's viewpoint,

represented rather than misrepresented. Such a method has the beneficial outcome of precluding criticism from the local religious communities, and put the ball of validity in their court. This sort of program was tested in Modesto California beginning in 2000 and received across the board approval from all local faith communities, which in fact is the region of the California Bible belt. In an interesting assessment of the process, Lester said the fundamentalist¹¹ element was so insignificant as to be easily ignored, although at the same time liberals were challenged with their stereotypes of conservative Christianity. This presents an interesting turn of events in itself, as liberals became concerned whether they had misunderstood or generalized religious knowledge and persons.

Stephen Prothero (2007), explored the religious literacy of college students taking a introductory religious studies course in *Religious Literacy: What every American needs to know – and doesn't*. Paul Marshall, Lea Gilbert, and Roberta Ahmanson (2009), *Blind Spot – When Journalists don't get religion*, explored the religious literacy of the media. In the quest

¹¹ Lester used “fundamentalist” in its proper historical denotation, distinguishing it from evangelicals, conservatives, Catholics, et al. Prothero (2007a) and Marshall (2009) were also careful to use the term in its historic sense, and go farther to address intolerance to fundamentalists in the media and among progressives. (See George Dollar (1973), *History of Fundamentalism*; Prothero (2007a), p. 9, 247 note 18; Marshall (2009), p. 148). Fundamentalism is historically confined to a phenomena of American mainline Christianity in the early 20th century, and is not to be associated with other world movements or religions denoted “fundamentalist” in the popular media or print, seeing that it lacks the necessary component of violence that the others (Jewish, Islamic, and Hindu) often contain. The term was coined by Baptist journalist Curtis Lee Laws in 1920 for those who held to the Protestant doctrinal distinctives contained in a series of twelve pamphlets entitled, *The Fundamentals* (1910-1919). At this time, fundamentalists were a significant force at Princeton University, with well respected scholars including J. Gresham Machen, B. B. Warfield, and Robert Dick Wilson. Machen never liked the term, but accepted his compatriots. Presidents Warren G. Harding and Woodrow Wilson were sympathetic with early fundamentalist causes, and early founder John Roach Straton promoted civil rights, women’s rights, and spoke out against capitalistic abuses (Dollar, 1973, p. 142). Fundamentalists were a mixed bag from the beginning with constant splits and splinters; therefore, to portray the movement with any homogeneity other than basic (the historic meaning of fundamental) theological agreement would be a mistake, and to associate American Fundamentalism with violence would be totally erroneous. Marshall (2009), together with the *Associated Press Stylebook* suggests that the term “fundamentalist” should not be used except when a group uses the term for itself (Marshall, 2008, p. 148). The term is greatly confused with conservative Christians of all faith communities by the popular press. Books such as those by Karen Armstrong, *The Battle for God* (2001), did not help and added to the confusion by grouping the “fundamentalists” of all religions into one basket. Fundamentalism, like the word literacy in educational circles, has lost its historical denotation and is now a rather non-descript, pejorative term (Dollar, 1973; Marshall, 2009; Prothero, 2007a).

to assess the religious level of in-service teachers, Harvard professor Diane Moore (2007) wrote *Overcoming Religious Literacy: A Cultural Studies Approach to the Study of Religion in Secondary Education*. Prothero viewed the American landscape from the vantage point of a Professor of Religion at Boston University; Marshall surveyed the horizon from the vantage point of a journalist; and Moore takes on the persona of a case worker in the field. Where Prothero used first year religion students as a population, Marshall used the news and what journalists make of it. In both situations, the results revealed significant religious ignorance such as journalists who could not navigate the distinctions between Shia and Sunni Islam, and college students who thought that Sodom and Gomorrah were lovers. To these two authors, it revealed a complexion of ignorance that was more than skin deep, an ignorance that could also prove dangerous because it dictates how people view one another, how they solve problems, and how some determine political action. Neither Prothero nor Marshall sampled the population of teachers, either in-service, as did Moore, or pre-service.

Moore (2007) addressed both in-service and pre-service teacher preparedness in chapter 4, “What teachers need to know,” and chapter seven, “Incorporating the teaching of religion across the curriculum.” She defined religious illiteracy as follows:

By religious illiteracy, I mean the lack of understanding about

- the basic tenets of the world's religious traditions;
- the diversity of expressions and beliefs *within* traditions that emerge and evolve in relation to differing social/historical contexts; and
- the profound role that religion plays in human social, cultural, and political life in both contemporary and historical contexts. (Moore, 2006, par. 2)

The author continued by presenting a further specification for Religious literacy.

Religious literacy entails the ability to discern and analyze the fundamental intersections of religion and social/political/cultural life through multiple lenses.

Specifically, a religiously literate person will possess

- a basic understanding of the history, central texts (where applicable), beliefs, practices and contemporary manifestations of several of the world's religious traditions as they arose out of and continue to be shaped by particular social, historical and cultural contexts; and
- the ability to discern and explore the religious dimensions of political, social and cultural expressions across time and place. (Moore, 2007, pp. 56-57)

To Moore, the consequences of religious illiteracy were profound, including the fomenting of culture wars, historical misunderstanding, and religious bigotry. Both Prothero and Marshall could affirm this vice list and included examples of religious bigotry by uninformed media and academics (Marshall, 2009; Prothero, 2007a). Although spending a great deal of time with public school teachers over the last decade discussing and exploring religious literacy, Moore offered no statistical data on her criteria for how religious literacy may apply to either the population of teachers that she explored or the level of religious literacy that those same teacher posed before either entering the classroom or coming under her tutelage. And although Moore focused on teachers, her method was case studies similar to the work done by Gravett (2003), limiting detailed analysis and the generalization of the findings. Moore's criteria of using "lens" could also indicate that religion is not the primary concern.

A most important addition to the inquiry into America's religious literacy was the study done by the Pew Research Center, *U. S. Religious Knowledge Survey*, released 28

September 2010. Prothero was on the panel of the study and the Pew Research Center stated analogous goals to those appearing Prothro's 2007 book, *Religions Literacy*.

[We] set out to gauge what Americans know about their own faiths and about other religions. The resulting survey covered a wide range of topics, including the beliefs and practices of major religious traditions as well as the role of religion in American history and public life. Based on an analysis of answers from more than 3,400 people to 32 religious knowledge questions, this report attempts to provide a baseline measurement of how much Americans know about religion today. (2010, Preface, p. 1)

The results of the survey were interesting, since this is the first religious survey of its kind for the general public. Among the population studied, the Pew Research Center made it a point to make follow-up calls (this was a telephone survey) to atheists, agnostics, Jews, and Mormons. The published findings showed slightly higher scores with this group of four when compared with their evangelical compatriots. This highest performing group score was 66% with the evangelicals coming in second at 50%, and Catholics at 44%. Without padding the grade book, everyone still failed the final. The questions were similar to Prothero's and relatively simple. The following are an example:

- Which Bible figure is most closely connected with the Exodus from Egypt?
- What was Mother Teresa's religion?
- What was Joseph Smith's religion?
- What religion do most people in Pakistan consider themselves?
- Which of the following is not one of the 10 commandments?

Several questions in the survey that addressed religion in America derived from Prothero's survey. On the other hand, it is difficult to know who would have produced the better scores, had the survey concentrated on the literary side of American Christianity and the Bible, rather than the historical and cultural side. Nevertheless, the Pew study is a thoroughly executed and analyzed study, much more in depth and with a greater sampling than any study to date. Prothero (2011) claimed it was unique, the first of its kind.

Protectionists: Secular, Religious, and Legal

Every semester, students in my World Religions courses tell me that Americans are religious illiterates because the courts removed prayer and Bible reading from the public schools in 1964. Yet to blame religious ignorance totally on non-religion or secular folks ignores the Bible wars of the 19th century between Catholics and Protestants, resulting in the decision to give up teaching the Bible in the public schools (Prothero, 2007). It is true that some of Prothero's critics are secularist, but others are very religious folks – what may be a correlation between these religious and secular critics could be an amalgam of sectarianism and exclusivism. It is possible that authors who champion human progressivism and triumphalism are natural enemies to religions that challenge these ideologies, such as Christianity and its theology of the cross. This is a deep hermeneutical issue, rather than a reductionist Draper-White conflict thesis of modernity vs. religion (Sheppard and Thiselton, 2007). Protectionists may be categorized according to three basic issues: proponents of radical church-state separation, secularists who see the first amendment as offering protection from religion and wish all mention of God or religion eradicated from the public sphere, and the idea that instituting a program of religious literacy will cause religious wars (Lester, 2007).

Everyone does not see religious literacy as E. D. Hirsch saw it in *The Dictionary of Cultural Literacy* (1988), as an important component of cultural literacy, giving 30 pages to the topic World Literature, Philosophy, and Religion (pp. 81-110). Protectionist critics¹² continue to see religion as the problem and the eradication of it as the solution. Examples of this attitude have acquired the denotation of the new atheism, with proponents such as Richard Dawkins (2006), *The God Delusion*, Daniel Dennet, *Darwin's Dangerous Idea: Evolution and the meaning of life* (1996), and *Breaking the Spell: Religion as a Natural Phenomenon* (2006), and they oppose religion in any shape or form. Opposition to religion, either its practice or teaching about it, is as old as the Greek atomists, but the protectionist opposition to religion in educational circles from both non-religion and anti-religion may be traced to Karl Marx and social-critical theories, which Michael Crotty so aptly demonstrates in *The Foundations of Social Research*, are the "Marxist heritage" (Crotty, 1998, p. 112-138). Critical theory, promoting conflict theses such as Freire's *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* (1970), based upon Marxist theory, found such a welcome home in 20st century education (Apple, 1988; Bertrand, 2003; Giroux, 1997). Marx was both serious and honest in his assessment of religion; "For Germany, the *criticism of religion* has been essentially completed, and the criticism of religion is the prerequisite of all criticism" (Marx, 1843, n. p.). Since the criticism of religion is *a priori* for Marx, and not out of character with his

¹² Critics of religious knowledge and understanding should not be understood to include all critics of religion. It would not be uncommon to find a critic of religion that would suggest that ignorance of religion, not the practice of religion, is one of the root causes of evil. Thus the charges of new atheism (echoed by both Giroux and Rorty) tend to appear as reductionist critiques. The term "critics" in this study incorporates the classic Marxist description, where criticism of religion is the first step in all criticism, the purpose of which is displacement of religion rather than increase religious knowledge and understanding. In this study, most critics are those who have a *de facto* "faith" in the badness of all (or most) religion. It is progressivist ideology rather than critical theory that links Giroux, a critical theorist, with Rorty, a neo-pragmatist (Sheppard and Thiselton, 2007). On the other hand, Liberation Theology and a current population of "social justice Christians" may be considered critical-theorists, having borrowed from Marx's oppression or alienation narrative, yet these persons do not see religion as *de facto* bad, although they can be severe critics of contemporary religion, especially Christianity. Jim Wallis, editor of *Sojourner's Magazine*, is a case in point (See *God's Politics*, 2005).

theoretical heirs, one may expect great sincerity, along with a great battle to ensue based on any number of themes or critical code words such as gender, power, politics, and oppression. The following titles are illustrative, not exhaustive, yet covering the majority protectionist criticisms of religious knowledge and understanding.

Sharon Crowley (2006) displayed a classic conflict thesis between liberalism¹³ and fundamentalism in *Toward a Civil Discourse: Rhetoric and Fundamentalism*. To Crowley, as to other critical theorists, everything is political and demands revolution (conflict thesis).¹⁴ She attempted to solve this complex problem which she has constructed with an English teachers' tool bag, using the wrench of rhetoric. She realizes how important argument, discourse, and rhetoric are to public life. If we quit talking to one another, both sides loose – as John Kaye would say, “no matter who wins, we can't pay the cost” (*Monster-America*, 1967). Although informative, a critical-theory approach to religious knowledge and understanding is apt to succumb to the “limitations of the conflict paradigms,” presenting a filter or lens through which to view religion rather than explorative experience for the learners (Marshall, 2009, pp. 111-112).

To be fair, it must be admitted there is a new breed of Christian critical theorists that do not lump all religions and religious knowledge into a single pile of either superstition or right wing conspiracies. Jim Wallis (2005), *God's Politics*, defies such past stereotypes,

¹³ Liberal or liberalism has economic, political, and religious connotations. Political liberals may also be economic and religious liberals, but not necessarily so. For example, Jim Wallis (2005, *God's Politics*) is a theologically conservative evangelical Christian, yet he holds to a liberal social agenda and a strong social justice component that is often associated with socialist ideologies. This recent amalgam as illustrated in Wallis defies old classifications. Classic *laissez faire*, capitalism, or economic liberalism has gained pejorative denotations from critical theorist such as consumerism and neo-liberalism, although capitalism was a genuine liberal, enlightenment ideology (see Adam Smith, 1776, *Wealth of Nations*). Therefore, the term “liberalism” has become generalized and as devoid of meaning as have the terms fundamentalist and literacy, lacking specific characteristics and only denoting a contrast or antithesis in many cases.

¹⁴ Moore (2007) relies on Paulo Freire's *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* (1968/1970) as the hub around which religion rotates.

revealing that he belongs to the ranks of social-justice Christians. Yet we find Henry Giroux and Michael Apple, notable authors in education, and Richard Rorty, renown in philosophical circles, lumping religion, especially in its Christian manifestation, with right wing politics, where one is bad and the other is worse. Marshall (2009) suggests that such reductionism would be unacceptable to serious scholars in any other field. In the preface of *American on the Edge*, even before the thesis is apparent, Giroux mounts an anti-fundamentalist diatribe, contrasting that of Lester, that “Fundamentalism of various stripes now provide the most powerful governing principles in American society” (Giroux, 2006, p. ix). In following remarks, he calls for eradication of fundamentalism rather than understanding or toleration. Both Prothero and Marshall reject such invectives as unhelpful at the least, filled with misinformation, erroneous and destructive in their ends (Marshall, 2009; Moore, 2007; Prothero, 2007).

In the short chapter, “Rapture Politics and the Passion of the Religious Right,” Giroux stands as the antithesis to religious knowledge, religious toleration, and the ability to differentiation religions. His views are clear when he quotes Nobel Prize winner Wole Soyinka: “religion has become the central problem in the twenty-first century” (Giroux, 2006, p. 84). Where Prothero attempted to distinguish, Giroux stereotypes, denigrates, and disenfranchises all those religious folks that dare to question progressives. A self-professed champion of pluralism, he justifies his secular bigotry by claiming to defend “democratic politics and religious tolerance” (Giroux, 2006, p. 84) In such situations, William Wainwright (1999) observed, “tolerance of a plurality of views (its refusal to judge) conceals an implicit adverse verdict: Religions don’t have the kind of objective truth their members attribute to them.” Furthermore, in an attempt to promote an idea which “seems to respect all

religions equally, in fact, it devalues most of them,” (Wainwright, 1999, p. 204; see Moore, 2007, p. 34, 47). Professor Wainwright concluded that such positions, while decrying exclusivism, in the process create a new exclusivity, “just one more religious worldview and, as such, deserves to be taken neither more nor less seriously than Christian exclusivism” (Wainwright, 1999, p. 209). Jim Wallis (2005), *God’s Politics*, would denote Giroux as a secular fundamentalist. With such an identification, the conflict often considered as progressives aligned against fundamentalists would in actuality be a civil war of two fundamentalist factions, one secular and the other religious – an interesting concept.

Handbooks on diversity and pluralism in education are common and have been around for a long time, but neither do these always speak from an informed perspective or treat religion fairly. Take for an example Ricardo L. Garcia (1991), professor of education at the University of Nebraska, *Teaching in a Pluralistic Society*, a small teacher’s handbook that is to be commended for its inclusion of religion under the chapters on communal ideologies and socio-cultural factors. Yet within his brief discussion Garcia errs gravely, leaving a false impression of primitive Christianity because of ignorance of common religious texts.

The use of black to connote evil and white to connote good has its origins in Christian theology and the *Holy Bible*. A negative bias toward black is easily caught given the long history of the bias (Garcia, 1991, p. 74).

The only problem here is Garcia’s statement is based on misinformation, because the Bible, especially in its Christian New Testament section never uses the word “black” (μελας) in connection with evil or dark-skinned people. In point of fact, there was a disciple named Niger (Latin for black) and Simon of Cyrene (another black man) who carried the cross of

Jesus and held a position of honor in early Christian thought. The word black only appears in the New Testament three times, and in all three instances it is the color of hair: once of human hair, once of horse hair, and once of hair-cloth. In the New Testament, it is also the root for the common word for ink, “black.” So if it is the source of the conceptual connection of black with evil, then the entire Christian New Testament was written in evil, which is quite ludicrous. Although the contrast of light and darkness (σκοτία) does appear, possibly borrowed from the Zoroastrians, this contrast is not the same as the racially charged “black and white” contrast. Garcia thus promotes a non-existent stereotype, a practice which his book classes as unacceptable for teachers (Garcia, 1991, pp. 101-121).

Nelson, Palonsky, and McCarthy (2007), *Critical Issues in Education*, appeared contemporaneously with the writings of Prothero and Moore. Chapter 6, “Religion and Public Schools – Unification or Separations,” carries a moderate and inquiring tone, beginning with the First Amendment, and then surveys legal, historical, cultural, and curricular issues. Following Feldman (2006), *Divided by God – America’s church-state problem and what we should do about it*, the authors called for greater toleration and display of religious symbols and practice in the public arena. It is concluded that “public schools no longer balance these two aspects of the First Amendment. The perspectives of religious believers have almost been eliminated from public school curricula” (Nelson, Palonsky, & McCarthy, 2007, p. 154). These authors clearly realized the marginalization of religious knowledge in the classroom. Following the initial discussion, there is a response and dissenting viewpoint, centering on the legal aspect of church-state separation, after school clubs, sex education, and spontaneous generation. Yet within the opposing view, there is no vindictive, and in stark contrast, the authors state that what Giroux labeled as “the most

powerful governing principles in American society” belongs rather to “a minority of Americans” (Nelson, Palonsky, & McCarthy, 2007, p. 160), a similar conclusion derived by Lester (2007) in the Modesto California experiment. If this assessment is valid, it puts Giroux in a moral dilemma, for he appears to be suppressing the views of a minority, a position which he often condemns.

Richard Rorty (2003) published *Religion in the Public Square: A Reconsideration* because he decided that he had been rash in his former assessments of religion outside of the cloister. He makes no apologies that the cloister is where he wished religion would stay until it passes into oblivion, yet understands that his fondest dream, which he calls “this secularist utopia” (Rorty, 2003, p. 141) was not yet a reality. Thus he morphs his former anti-religious non-religion into “anti-clericalism” to make a ruse of tolerance. In the place of total anti-religion, he resolved to only attack “Catholic bishops, the Mormon General Authorities, the televangelists, and all other religious professionals who devote themselves not to pastoral care but to promulgating orthodoxy and acquiring economic and political clout” (Rorty, 2003, p. 141). Although Rorty will allow the existence of Gustavo Gutierrez, the father of Liberation Theology, and Martin Luther King, “history suggests to us that such organizations will always, on balance, do more harm than good” (Rorty, 2003, p. 142). The article is filled with red herrings and name calling. In comparison, Rorty makes all the errors of what Marshall (2009) considers a secular journalist who is ignorant of religion. Mainly a rant against Christianity, Rorty considers a good religious person one that keeps his mouth shut and keeps the Bible under the mattress. Throughout his career, Rorty claimed to be a bourgeois liberal, with a two fold approach: establish what was wrong (religion in this case), then describe the utopia that would exist without the offending element (Ramberg, 2009).

According to Greg Forster (2008) in *The Contested Public Square*, Rorty's idea of religious liberty would be more akin to the toleration of religious minorities in the middle ages in Europe, than the ideas that developed in the American colonies and produced the first amendment (Forster, 2008, p. 145). Nevertheless, there may also be traits of Comte here as they exist in Marx, making for a common origin, holding the failed ideology that religion was merely a step in human intellectual evolution (Berger, 1999).

The protectionist criticisms of religion, religious literacy, and Prothero are diversified in origin and sentiment. Some oppose Prothero because they do not think he has gone far enough with his assessments of religious illiteracy or prescriptions for recovery. There are others who think there is a danger of overstepping certain legal or ideological aspects of religious studies, especially first amendment rights. Neither of these critics opposes students gaining skill in religious knowledge and understanding, yet they do oppose Prothero's methods for obtaining religious literacy. One such person directs the First Amendment Center at Vanderbilt University, Charles Hayes. It was not with the state of religious ignorance that Hayes differs with Prothero, but with the fix. Hayes (2007) saw no place in the curriculum of American public education to place the courses in Hebrew Bible, New Testament, and World Religions that Prothero demands. Hayes was perfectly happy to see offerings in World Religions alone. He also stated that this would be less difficult to defend legally compared to a more radical solution. What distinguishes Prothero and Hayes is the difference between a cultural literacy and a legal perspective. Prothero is looking at an informed democracy, needing to know and understanding the religious context of the American experiment. Although Hayes may say that Muslims and Jews may protest Bible courses, and take schools to court. Prothero would retort that like it or not, Christians hold

the lion's share, both now and in the past, and to ignore Christian literature would be to remain ignorant. In contrast, the Qur'an's or Talmud's influence on American law and society is a non-issue.

Summary

There are many voices encouraging a more detailed inquiry into religion. Research like the 2010 U. S. Religious Knowledge Survey from the Pew Research Center not only considered religious knowledge as a worthy subject of inquiry, but also concluded that religious knowledge and understanding is seriously lacking in a great majority of Americans. It is the purpose of this study to explore this lacuna in religious knowledge more specifically by inquiring into the level of religious literacy among pre-service teachers of English and History. Secondary teachers have become the public filters of religious knowledge and understanding for the vast majority of American citizens in their formative years. What secondary teachers carry with them into the classroom and pass on to their students ultimately becomes the data which is collected in the surveys given by Prothero to his freshmen students in Introduction to Religion or given by the Pew Research Center conducted by telephone to the general public. The persons who participated in both surveys at one time passed through the classrooms of high school English and History instructors, and it is these teachers that will also carry the lion's share in transforming the next generation of Americans into an informed citizenry for intelligent belief or unbelief (Noddings, 1991). As Moore (2007) noted, these teachers will teach religion, whether correctly or incorrectly is the only variable left in the equation.

The forgoing review informs the methodology of Chapter 3, requiring that not only basic literacy, as regards to terms and concepts of religion, be assessed in pre-service

teachers, but also that higher level thinking skills, those abilities which allow instructors to enter into a rich discussion with students on existential questions, be explored. The 2010 study by the Pew Research Center and Prothero's religion quiz give field-tested examples the survey format and individual questions which can be used to assess basic religious knowledge. Berger, Moore, Marshall, and Wainwright (1999) offer suggestions for questions that could be used for a more qualitative approach in an attempt to discover facility in higher order thinking skills and practical textual analysis of discipline specific and multidisciplinary texts and textbook where religious content is encountered. A mixed-methods approach seems to be the best methodology for the current study, as will be discussed in Chapter 3 on methodology.

CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY

Having established the importance of religious literacy for an authentically educated American citizen in Chapter 1, we proceeded to survey contemporary literature on the topic beginning with an historical overview in Chapter 2 and saw that the literature fell into two categories: authors who promoted educational preparation to acquire religious knowledge, and authors who felt that society should be protected from religion or that religion should be taught from a particular conceptual framework or not taught at all. Based on the literature (Berger, 1999; Hayes, 2007; Jaschik, 2010; Lester, 2007; Marshall, 2006; Marshall, 2009; Moore, 2007; Prothero, 2007a, 2010a, 2011) we assume that religious knowledge is of perennial importance for an informed American and 21st century global citizen, and that educational preparation with a multidimensional approach to religious literacy rather than a monolithic protectionist model, would be the most beneficial course of action. Therefore, at this juncture it is necessary to discuss a plan to assess the level of religious knowledge and academic preparation thereof in a select population that has heretofore been ignored: pre-service secondary teachers of English and social studies.

Concurrent Embedded Strategy

The research for this study proposed a census of the selected population using mixed methods, concurrently collecting both qualitative and quantitative data. Creswell identifies this approach as “concurrent embedded strategy” (Creswell, 2009, p. 214). The primary quantitative aspect used an instrument generated by Stephen Prothero (2007) for his research

among students at Boston University taking introductory religion courses during the years 2005-2006, which was in turn modified by the Pew Research Center and used in its 2010 religious knowledge survey. The secondary qualitative aspect of the study used open-ended participant feedback and theme coded analysis as has become common in the field (Creswell, 2009; Glesne, 2005; Maxwell, 2004). The instrument used for data collection, contained 40 questions in four categories: demographics (including academic track), basic religious knowledge, religious thought, and textual analysis. After the twelve question section on demographics, which included six questions on academic track, there were fifteen survey questions on basic religious knowledge derived from the Pew Research study and Prothero, following closely the pew format: objective and simple completion. A third section of eight questions attempted to assess higher level thinking skills, a level of inquiry used by neither Pew nor Prothero, drawing questions from the literature which focus on religion in American public life. This third section, religious thoughts, included a qualitative feedback opportunity for all participants and employed a four-point forced Likert scale. The fourth section, textual analysis, focused on qualitative, open-end feedback providing separate sections for English and History majors, and an inter-disciplinary section in which both majors participated. English majors were offered the table of contents from a current North Carolina world literature book, and asked to describe what is missing. History majors were given a scenario, following the chapter on the Crusades in a current North Carolina world history textbook. Following these introductory scenarios, both English and History majors were prompted by three questions on the validity of the textual scenario using a four-point forced Likert scale, followed by open-ended feedback from participants. The multiple-disciplinary scenario used a two question prompt, repeating a question asked earlier in the demographics/academic

track section inquiring into educational preparations as relates to religious literature, then followed with open-ended feedback.

Prothero presented his survey instrument in several public formats, including *USA Today* (Grossman, 2007) and in the appendix of *Religious Literacy* (Prothero, 2007a). Along with the instrument, he supplied answers and tips of evaluating the results. Prothero did not present the format of his demographics, although certain of the questions can be implied from the text of his book. For example, he mentioned that Catholic students did better on listing the seven sacraments than do either Protestants or Jews. Therefore, it can be deduced that Prothero had some demographic that distinguished the specific faith communities of the students who took his survey. On the other hand, Prothero did not reveal statistical analysis of any of these demographics in the book other than their uses for forming categories and generalized percentages. He used basic ratios, such as half, one-third, more than a third, and ten percent; some of this data came from sources other than his own survey, and mentions Gallup polls, Barna, David Gibson, and the Association of Religion Data Archives. Realizing that the book is a popular narrative, one can not expect to find the statistical tables that only specialists find interesting.

Moore's (2007), *Overcoming Religious Illiteracy*, falls more into the realm of a qualitative study, offering cased studies, auto-ethnography, and strategies for teachers who have already entered the classroom. Although addressing the education of pre-service teachers along with current teachers, she did not attempt to demonstrate any statistical methods used in her research. Paul Marshall (2009), *Blind Spot*, presents another narrative centered upon journalism; again, his is not a statistical study.

Prothero (2011) claimed that the Pew Research Center's U. S. Religious Knowledge Survey (2010) study was the first scientifically based and fully documented study on basic religious knowledge that has been conducted on a sample of the entire U. S. population. The Pew study used a sample of over 3,412 individuals and released the data and documentation to the public. The documentation contained the following reports:

- Preface
- Executive Summary
- Who knows what about religion
- Factors linked with religious knowledge
- About the project
- Methodology
- Survey questionnaire

Target Population, Sample, Role of Researcher

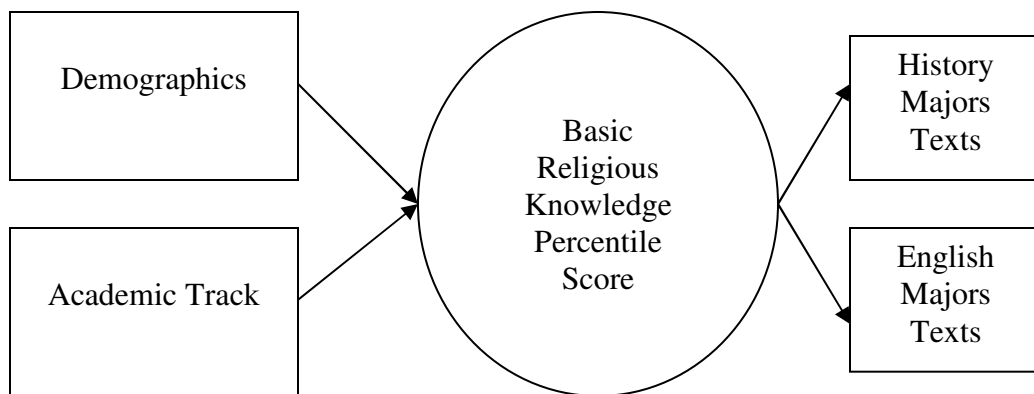
The target population of this study was pre-service teachers in a large public university majoring in secondary education with concentrations in History (major code HIS 116A) and English (major code ENG 234A). The census participants were as follows:

- 150 students in English/History were prompted via email to complete the survey
- 59 students completed the survey
- 1 was unusable due to invalid data
- 58 was the final N for the sample¹⁵

¹⁵ One record, P60, was excluded from demographic statistical analysis of data set one because the participant had taken no education courses and was new to the program. P60 was also an outlier, exceeding two standard deviations below the mean. The actual survey data for P60 was not corrupted and was included in the data description, although this record was excluded from t-test and cross tab analysis.

Distribution of the survey via email occurred in the Spring of 2011 through the directors of the teacher education programs in History and English. The surveys were distributed anonymously using student email accounts drawn from the database for pre-service teachers in their respective departments. Neither the researcher nor the program directors had any direct contact with students. The researcher received a list of email addresses that were polled, but there was no link between participants and completed survey: results were totally anonymous. Based on the registrar's data for undergraduate majors ENG 234A and HIS 116A at the beginning of the 2010-2011 school year, the census perimeter consisted of 150 students. There was also one double major among the HIS 116A students. The researcher had no record of student identities, other than a time-stamp and numeric indicator generated by data import as a unique identifier, for example Participant 1 (P1), Participant 2 (P2), and so on. Therefore, the research took place under double-blind conditions, with the researcher holding a relative objectivist-observer position.

Conceptual Framework



In the simplest terms, our understanding of complex structures is based on previous basic knowledge. This concept appears in authors from Vygotsky to Hirsch in various forms. For example, English teachers can not fully understand American literature without some previous knowledge of American history from which the literature derived (Hirsch, 1988). As Michael Grant (1977) observed, the consequences of a historian's neglect of religion are a great deal worse than a theologian's neglect of history. Therefore, it becomes doubtful that either history or English teachers can properly address texts that contain religious content if they lack religious knowledge or understanding of religious people.

Independent and Dependent Variables

- Independent: Demographics, Academic Track
- Dependent: Religious Literacy Survey
- Dependent: Thoughts on Religion
- Dependent: Textual Analysis

Philosophical Assumptions

Based on the conclusions of Supreme Court Justices, religious studies professionals, media experts, sociologists, and experts in the field of education, it is assumed that an authentic 21st century global education includes adequate religious knowledge. Secondly, although not argued, I hold that valid data, either quantitative or qualitative, can be collected electronically. The first assumption betrays perennialist inclinations¹⁶ and the second reveals

¹⁶ Perennialism in educational theory holds that there is a body of knowledge and understanding that is of perennial or on going interest to humanity because of their foundational or germinal qualities. In western civilization books like Homer's Iliad and Odyssey belong in the list, in English literature Beowulf, Chaucer, and Shakespeare gain a place, and in American literature, Cotton Mather, Franklin, Hawthorne, Irvin, Samuel Clemons, and Dubois share the stage. There are many more, but these authors offer future generations an insight

a trust in technocracy. In the 20th century, Mortimer Adler's experiment at the University of Chicago and the literature that proceed from his pen such as *How To Read a Book* (1940/1972) represented the dominant path of perennialism which became embodied in the Paideia schools¹⁷ and later in E. D. Hirsch's Core Knowledge foundation.¹⁸ Although critical of Paideia school methodology, Apple (1986) confessed in the conclusion of *Teachers and Text* that within his alternate system, *The Network*, he had no intention of discarding Adler's great books. Hirsch (1988), *Cultural Literacy*, accepted the torch of perennialism from Adler in the mid-1980s and continues to publish in this field. Hirsch's Core Knowledge philosophy has been implemented in 44% of public schools and 35% of Charter schools by some estimates (Core Knowledge Foundation). On the other hand, Core Knowledge has been attacked by critical theorists, contesting those who determine this official body of knowledge or charging its adherents of ignoring minorities (Apple, 1988; Apple, 2001; Giroux, 1988, 2006). Lentricchia (1980) in *After the New Criticism*, described the Hirsch's core knowledge concept as "the hermeneutics of innocence" in contrast to the post-modern hermeneutics of suspicion promoted by Rorty, Derrida, and Foucault (see Sheppard & Thiselton, 2007). Perennialist philosophy maintains that certain books, ideas, knowledge and understanding hold perennial or on going value for contemporary society and an informed citizenry, and that this same body of knowledge should be included within the curriculum of a liberal

into the origins and culture upon which modern society was built and therefore remain of perennial interest to all future generations.

¹⁷ Begun in 1971, Paideia attempts to incorporate a strict egalitarian educational philosophy across all sociological lines of demarcation. Key concepts for Paideia are "informal" and "individualized." Popular media has called Paideia "progressive," and although true within the context of Dewey's educational philosophy, it could not be identified with collectivist ideology or political progressivism. On the contrary, Paideia holds to a high level of individualism within its structure, while at the same time promoting the perennialist hypothesis as illustrated by Adler's list of Great Books. The University of North Carolina at Chapel has maintained a Paideia Center since 1988. See <http://www.paideia.org/content.php/system/index.htm> and Mortimer J. Adler, (1998), *The Paideia Proposal: An Educational Manifesto*. New York: Touchstone.

¹⁸ <http://www.coreknowledge.org>

education. This study assumes the continued education value of the study of religious ideas and texts.

The field research for this dissertation also employed an electronic means of data collection, Google Survey. As to the technocratic assumptions of this choice, I would maintain that that *vox populi est vox dei*,¹⁹ and that both scholarly and popular consensus has precluded me; the preponderance of this method of collecting data by electronic means is ubiquitous in 21st society, and that green, environmental, efficiency, accuracy, and ethical arguments favor the practice of obtaining data electronically rather than using paper and pencil and face-to-face formats. Let me illustrate by examining the ethical argument.

In mixed methods research which incorporates elements both quantitative and qualitative, a chief concern is the protection of the interest and identities of participants (Creswell, 2009; Glesne, 2005; Maxwell, 2004). Although this is often an easy task in quantitative research using double-blind procedures which separate researcher and subject, it can become rather difficult and pose an ethical dilemma with qualitative procedures such as interview (Glesne, 2005; Maxwell, 2004). Using electronic means for data collection, as Google Survey for this study, not only shields the identity of each participant by means of a virtual wall of separation, but may reduce the possibility of the Hawthorne effect which can challenge the data validity.

Survey Description and Detail

- 6 questions on Demographics (objective, completion)
- 6 questions on Academics/Course Track (objective, four-point forced Likert)
- 15 questions on basic religious knowledge (objective, completion)

¹⁹ “the popular voice is the divine voice”

- 8 questions on religious thought and religion in the public square (four-point forced Likert scale)
- 5 questions on textual analysis (four-point forced Likert scale)
- 3 questions asking for open-ended feedback

All permissions were obtained from Prothero (see Appendix A), HarperOne Publishers (see Appendix B), and the Pew Research Center (see Appendix C). The survey was made available online via Google Survey. Student participants were emailed the URL link to the survey on three consecutive dates. A complete survey appears in Appendix D.

Demographics

Chi-square, cross tab, and *t*-test statistical tests were used to determine the extent that the demographic and educational characteristics relate to student performance on the Religious Literacy Survey.

- Gender
- Ethnic identification
- Age
- Faith community: heritage (Religion of parents or grandparents?)
- Faith community: current
- Faith community: frequency of attendance (__annual, __month, __week, etc.)
- Academic Major: English, History
- High School religion courses taken
- College religion courses taken
- Course current enrolled

- Educational critique
- Praxis critique

Religious and educational heritages

As part of the demographics, several questions were used to poll the religious heritage and current practice of participants. Accompanying these three questions addressing faith and practice were four questions that addressed religious preparation from an academic viewpoint: high school religion courses, college religion courses, educational critique (has your major prepared you to address religion in the classroom), and praxis critique (how have your professors addressed religion in the classroom), providing data used for comparative analysis with participant performance on the Religious Literacy Survey. A four-point forced-Likert scale was used for the two critique questions; multiple choice questions were used for high school and college religion courses, and currently enrolled educational courses.

Basic Religious Literacy Questions (Pew Research Center, 2010; Prothero, 2007a)²⁰

1. When does the Jewish Sabbath begin? (Friday, Saturday, Sunday, Don't know)
2. Which religion celebrates Ramadan? (Judaism, Christianity, Islam, Hinduism, Buddhism, Don't know)
3. What is the holy book of Islam?
4. Which of the following religions aims at Nirvana, the state of being free from suffering? (Judaism, Christianity, Islam, Hinduism, Buddhism, Don't know)
5. In which religion are Vishnu and Shiva central figures? (Judaism, Christianity, Islam, Hinduism, Buddhism, Don't know)
6. What is the first book of the Hebrew Bible of Old Testament?

²⁰ See Appendices A, B, and C for permissions. See Appendix D for complete survey.

7. What are the names of the four Gospels, the first four books of the New Testament?
8. Where, according to the New Testament, was Jesus born? (Jerusalem, Nazareth, Bethlehem, Jericho, Don't know)
9. Which of the following best describes Roman Catholic teaching about the bread and wine used for communion or Eucharist?

The bread and wine becomes the body and blood of Jesus

The bread and wine are symbols of Jesus' death

Jesus is present in the sacrament in a mystical way

Don't know
10. Which of these religious groups traditionally teaches that salvation comes through faith alone? (Catholic, Protestant, both Catholic and Protestant, Don't know)
11. Which of the following are not one of the 10 Commandments

Do not murder

Do not steal

Do not commit adultery

Do unto others as you would have them do unto you

Honor your parents

Sanctify the Sabbath

Do not covet

Don't know
12. Which Bible figure is most closely associated with the Exodus? (Abraham, Elijah, Job, Moses, Don't know)

13. Which of the following statements best describes what the U. S. constitution says about religion?
- Christianity should be given special emphasis by the government
- The government shall neither establish a religion nor interfere with the practice of religion
- The Constitution does not say anything one way or the other
- Don't know
14. According to rulings by the U. S. Supreme Court, is a public school teacher permitted to read the Bible as an example of literature in class? (No, yes, don't know)
15. Which one of these preachers participated in the period of religious activity known as the First Great Awakening? (Jonathan Edwards, Charles Finney, Billy Graham, Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., Don't know)

Thoughts on Religion

The third section of the survey presented the students with a series of contested ideas drawn from the literature of preparation (Berger, 1999; Marshall, 2009; Prothero, 2007a; Wainwright, 1999) and is entitled *Religious Thoughts*. This is the first of two experimental sections which go beyond the surveys of Prothero and the Pew Trust in an attempt to assess higher level thinking skills as relates to religious knowledge. Students were asked to express their views on the following concepts using a forced four-point Likert scale (strongly disagree – disagree – agree – strongly agree):

- Modernization (modernity) leads to a decline of religion, both in society and in the minds of individuals. (Berger, 1999, considered this a fallacy).

- Fundamentalism may be defined as any sort of passionate religious movement. (This is a fallacy of generalization, noted by Berger, 1999, Leister, 2007, Marshall, 2009, and Prothero, 2007a. The *APA Publication Manual* (6th ed), stated that writers should be “sensitive to participants’ preferred designation,” VandenBos, 2010, p. 75. Marshall (2009) noted that Associated Press guidelines are similar to APA.)
- It is socially acceptable to regard fundamentalist religions with a degree of caution and suspicion. (Marshall, 2009; Prothero, 2007a, consider this a fallacy.)
- It is outside the interest and mission of a public university to foster and nurture a learning environment conducive to the promoting of awareness, knowledge and understanding of religion, spiritual values, and creed. (ASU published discrimination disclaimer considers this a fallacy.)
- Americans live in an increasingly secularized world. (Berger, 1999, considered this a fallacy.)
- American public schools should be religion free zones; students should check their faith traditions at the door upon entering the classroom. (President Clinton, 1995, considered this a fallacy.)
- Pluralism (commitment to religious diversity) is non-exclusive and takes the truth claims of all religions equally valid. (Prothero, 2010a; Wainwright, 1999, considered this a fallacy.)
- Non-religion (atheism, agnosticism, secularism) is by nature more objective, fair, and honest than any religion. (Justices Stewart and Jackson considered this a fallacy.)
- Comment on or explain any of the choices which you made in the section entitled *Thoughts on Religion*.

Textual Analysis and Open ended Feedback

Taking heed to Parker Palmer's observation, that education had become a thinning of the academic soup in the 20th century, it became the objective of this study to present more than names, terms, dates, or personal opinions, and the relative knowledge level of pre-service teachers to reproduce that data. In other words, we would prefer a thick educational soup, composed of all the best ingredients: memory, understanding, application, analysis, evaluation, and creation. Although it has been realized since Bloom (1956) that factual knowledge and memory was foundational for all learning, educators also realize that conceptual, procedural and meta-cognitive knowledge build upon and expand these foundations (Richland, 2006). The fourth part of the present study attempted to assess pre-service teachers' religious knowledge and understanding beyond terms and definitions, exploring their abilities to analyze, evaluate, and fill textbook created lacuna.

Science, World Literature, and History. At what point does religion intersect the specific academic environments of secondary school teachers? Just exactly how does a biology instructor, whose lesson for the day happens to be *the 19th century origins of evolutionary theory - Lamarck, Wallace, and Darwin* - deal with a room full of students with diverse backgrounds? Many of these students have attended enough Sunday school to have heard that "In the beginning, God created the heaven and the earth." Without going to either the extreme of calling them all superstitious, religious idiots, or avoiding the entire topic by stating that the leader of the *Human Genome Project*, Francis S. Collins, became an intelligent design advocate during the process, what is a teacher to do? Is a Draper-White style conflict thesis necessary, or can there be a teaching moment on the history of religion and science through the ages, or what were the circumstances that precipitated the rise of modern science in Christian Europe, rather than Muslim controlled lands or the Far East?

Another scenario occurs in a standard world literature textbook (Kinsella, 2007), where religious authors and worldviews fill section of the book entitled “Origins and Traditions.” The writings of Confucius and Lao Tzu may appear here, but it is also necessary to sample selections from the Hebrew Bible, the New Testament, the Qur’an, the Vedas, the Bhagavad Gita, and the Pali sermons to get a glimpse into the major religions that have influenced the world and the west in particular. Secondary English teachers cannot avoid religion at this juncture in the curriculum. As Moore (2007) stated, public school teachers do teach religion, although they have had no training to do so. A similar scenario occurs in world history textbooks, whether addressing the Hebrew nation in antiquity or the Crusades of the high Middle Ages – history teachers will have no choice but to teach about religion, Judaism, Christianity, and Islam, when coming to these topics.

Religion in North Carolina Textbooks. Currently, several publishers produce textbooks for the state of North Carolina. This study used a world literature text from Prentice-Hall (Kinsella, 2007) and a world history text from Holt, Rinehart, and Winston (Ramirez, 2008). These texts ask general, Prothero or Pew survey type, questions, but also prompt students with pointed religious questions that require a knowledge and understanding far beyond anything contained in basic religious knowledge surveys. Section four of the survey was exploratory, drawing on scenarios from current standard North Carolina world literature and world history textbooks in an attempt to assess religious knowledge among pre-service teachers of history and English through the following scenarios.

- **World History:** While reviewing a current edition of a standard North Carolina World History textbook, you encounter a section entitled “The Crusades: Disaster and Treachery” (Ramirez, 2008, p. 403). In the overview, “Before you Read,” the textbook poses the

question, “Why did the Europeans launch the Crusades?” The textbook then presents a short passage from the eye witness, Raymond d’Aguilers (11th century), and supplies the following formation: 1) European Christians launched a series of four religious wars called Crusades to regain Jerusalem from Muslim control, 2) The Egyptian Fatimads controlled the Holy Land and the Turks bordered the north (possibly persecuting Christian pilgrims), 3) The Byzantine Emperor turned to Pope Urban II (Council of Clermont) for help. The following testimony is offered from Raymond d’Aguiler’s account: “It was necessary to pick one’s way over the bodies of men and horses.... In the Temple and porch of Solomon, men rode in blood up to their knees and bridle reins.... The city was filled with corpses and blood.” What is your professional opinion of this short overview of the Crusades? Has the textbook covered all major aspects and viewpoints? Does the eyewitness testimony of Raymond d’Aguilers provide additional credibility to the textbook’s emphasis on European responsibility? Would you accept the textbook question as stated: “Why did the Europeans launch the Crusades?” Explain your previous answers. (Ramirez, 2008).

- While reviewing the table of contents of a standard North Carolina World Literature textbook under the headings of “Sacred Texts” and “Origins and Traditions,” readings from the following primary texts appear: Hebrew Bible (Genesis, Ruth, and Psalms), Qur’an, Rig Veda, Upanishads, Bhagavad-Gita, Tao Te Ching, and Analects of Confucius (Kinsella, 2007). What is your professional assessment of this section? Does the list appear to be complete, a fair and balanced representation of all major faith traditions? Would you accept the textbook and its selection of texts? Explain your answer.

Section four, Textual Analysis, presented fallacies, this time taken directly from textbooks in current use. The textbook selections are flawed. The World Literature book omits all Christian texts, the New Testament in particular. The World History textbook begs the question, and offers an eyewitness account which scholars dismiss as a fabrication and imitation of the language of the Apocalypse (Revelation 14:20).

Multidisciplinary. A multi-disciplinary section was provided in this fourth section of the survey, allowing both English and history majors to examine a text that carries both historical and literary import. John Kay's (1967) protest song, *Monster-America*, provided the textual example.

Once the religious, the hunted and weary
Chasing the promise of freedom and hope,
Came to this country to build a new vision,
Far from the reaches of kingdom and pope.
Like good Christians, some would burn the witches;
Later some got slaves to gather riches.

Participants then receive the following prompts and were asked to reply on a four-point, forced Likert scale as follows:

- My education has equipped me to address religious images and statements such as the ones given in the above example.
- The sequence of events and their descriptions referenced in this protest song are historically valid and accurate as relates to the American experience.
- These two prompts are then followed by open-ended feedback, asking the participants to explain their choices.

IRB Approval and Pilot Study

The proposal for this study was submitted to the IRB for approval on 7 March 2011 and assigned Study number 11-0241. The IRB asked for two changes, clearly stating the voluntary nature of the survey and minimum participant risk. Following these two corrections, the IRB approved the study on 14 March 2011 to be exempt under category two as an anonymous educational test, survey, interview, or observation under 45 CFR 46.101(b).

After final IRB approval, the question banks of the survey were piloted to a selection of religion, history, and English professors and a class of 10 graduate students enrolled in Religion in Appalachia (REL5400). Participants were directed to an online survey and onsite graduate students received a paper survey. Feedback from the pilot was incorporated into the final draft of the online survey to provide a more uniform format, and to improve the clarity, integrity, and reliability of the survey.

The final form of the instrument was a mixed methods, online survey which concurrently collected both quantitative and qualitative data, and yielded four data sets: demographics, basic religious knowledge, religious thought, and textual analysis (see Appendix D). Demographics were gleaned using multiple choice, completion, and forced Likert formats. The first focus, an assessment of basic knowledge, used multiple choice and completion questions; the second section on religious thought and third sections on textual analysis used a four-point forced Likert scale. The last two question sets were accompanied by a qualitative, open-ended feedback option, allowing students to respond in their own words in support of the answers which they had given. Division chairs in History and English Education supervised online recruitment and distributed the Google Survey URL to the population in a census modality via email.

Summary

The field research for this dissertation followed a concurrent embedded strategy, a mixed methods methodology in which both quantitative and qualitative are collected at the same time (Creswell, 2009). Stephen Prothero (2007a) developed the basic religious knowledge survey instrument, which was in turn modified by the Pew Research Center for their *U. S. Religious Knowledge Survey* (2010) and adapted for the present study. Beginning with a twelve question demographic questionnaire, then continuing with fifteen questions on basic religious knowledge followed by eight questions on contemporary religious thought drawn from the literature, the survey concluded with a section on textual analysis including a World History scenario (Crusades), a World Literature scenario (the missing New Testament), and a 1969 protest song by Steppenwolf. These last two sections were experimental, in an attempt to go beyond basic religious knowledge into analytical and higher critical thinking skills and collect both quantitative and qualitative data. The survey was advertised to participants by major code via email and Google Survey hosted the entire survey instrument. In Chapter 4, I will describe the data which was collected through the religious knowledge survey instrument.

CHAPTER 4: FINDINGS

The purpose of this study was to assess the general level of religions knowledge among pre-service teachers of History and English. Three research questions guided the study, with the first question based on previous studies done by Stephen Prothero (2007a) and the Pew Research Center (2010), and the last two questions being of an exploratory nature, attempting to reach beyond previous studies to access the use of higher level cognitive skill levels in common tasks encountered by secondary teachers which require facility in religious knowledge that exceeds the basic levels investigated by Prothero (2007a) and the Pew Research Center (2010). The guiding research questions were as follows:

1. What is the level of basic religious knowledge (religious literacy) among pre-service teachers of History (Social Studies) and English?
2. Do pre-service teachers of History and English demonstrate higher-level thinking skills as relates to religion in public life?
3. What level of knowledge do pre-service teachers of History and English demonstrate when confronted with a discipline specific section from a standard North Carolina textbook and an Interdisciplinary text dealing with religious knowledge?

Chapter 4 presents the demographic and statistical findings of this study based on data collected by an online survey given in April 2011. I used a combination of Microsoft Access, Excel, and the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) Version 17 to accomplish data cleaning, collation, and statistical analyses.

Participants

The population was selected based on criteria from the registrar that determines candidacy in the College of Education rather than mere enrollment as a secondary Social Studies or English major. According to the University registrar, the total population for this group at the 2010-2011 school year census date was approximately 150 (N=150), with 103 History Education Majors and 47 English Education Majors. These numbers were corroborated by the initial recruitment email list from the division of History Education, which were 103 recipients. All recruitment was done anonymously via email and all survey data was collected through Google Survey. Of the 150 who were polled, 59 (n=59) or 39% responded by completing the survey and comprised the sample for this study. It is possible that the last participant (P60), an outlier, shows partial data corruption, and was therefore omitted in comparative tests as noted where n=58.

The first section of the online survey incorporated ten demographically related questions that provide the necessary information to profile the sample (see Table 1). Gender in the sample parallels those ratios commonly seen in American Universities, with females as the majority. On the other hand, the ethnic and minority diversity within this study comprised less than 7% of the total, making the sample by and large confined to Caucasians. The age grouping is also monolithic, with 91% of students falling into the traditional grouping of 18-24 years of age. For academic track, the number of History majors exceeded English majors, although English majors had a higher per capita response. Taking the University registrar's student data as a basis, History/Social Studies majors show a response ratio of about one to three (34%), whereas English majors show a ratio of one to two or 50% participation.

Table 1: Demographics 1 of Sample, $n = 59$

Gender	Female	30	50.85%
	Male	27	45.76%
	Transgender	2	3.39%
Ethnic	Caucasian	55	93.22%
	Native American	1	1.69%
	Mixed Race	3	5.08%
Age	18-24	54	91.53%
	25-34	4	6.78%
	35-44	1	1.69%
Major	History	36	61.02%
	English	23	38.98%
Religion Course	High School	13	22%
	College	36	61%
Self-assessment	Not prepared	17	28.81%
	Prepared	42	71.19%
Instructor	Negative	2	3.39%
	Positive	57	96.61%

Of those who responded, 61% had taken a college religion course and 96% believed that religion had been treated fairly and objectively in the all other courses they had taken at the university level. On the other hand, only 22% of participants had taken a religion course during their High School days. Based on previous experience and current education, the vast majority (71%) of Social Studies and English majors were confident that they had been prepared to address religious questions that would arise within their chosen field.

Demographic questions for personal religious history: heritage, current practice, and frequency of attendance. Although no relationship could be drawn between gender, ethnicity, or having taken a college religion course, to higher scores on basic religious knowledge, a significant relationship with basic scores was discovered for those with a variance between religious heritage and current practice for Caucasians (Table 2).

Table 2: Significance of Mean Scores and Demographics, $n = 58$

	Sample	Mean Score	Std. Dev	t	Significance
Gender				-1.404	0.166
Female	30	11.53	2.345		
Male	27	12.37	2.133		
Major				0.461	0.647
History	36	12.06	2.203		
English	22	11.77	2.369		
College Religion				-1.067	0.291
No	22	11.55	2.324		
Yes	36	12.19	2.202		
Change Affiliation				2.228	0.030
Yes	25	12.68	1.492		
No	33	11.39	2.573		

It should be noted in Table 2, under the category of Change Affiliation, the significant difference between mean scores that can be associated with a change of religious affiliation. This relationship will be addressed in the analysis of Chapter 5.

Table 3 represents the Demographic data associated with the religious heritage and current practices of the participants. The sample is by and large Christian, predominantly Baptist by heritage (41%). In current practice, there were losses in all main line denominations except for Lutheran, and gains for agnostics, spiritual, and non-denominational and alternative Christian traditions.

Table 3: Demographics 2 (Religious) of Sample, $n = 59$

Faith Community	Heritage		Current	
Roman Catholic	16	27%	7	11.86%
Baptist	24	41%	17	28.81%
Methodist	8	14%	4	6.78%
Lutheran	3	5%	4	6.78%
Presbyterian	3	5%	1	1.69%
Pentecostal	1	2%	2	3.39%
Episcopal	0	0%	2	3.39%
Jewish	0	0%	1	1.69%
Atheist	1	2%	2	3.39%
Agnostic	1	2%	6	10.17%
Spiritual	1	2%	6	10.17%
Other: (Christian)	1	2%	7	11.86%

Attendance	Participants	
Weekly	21	35%
Monthly	7	12%
Holydays	11	19%
Annual	7	12%
Never	13	22%

Results

Following the demographics section of the survey instrument, participants answered fifteen questions on basics religious knowledge, eight questions on religion in American public life, and five questions on religious knowledge integration within the academic disciplines of secondary social studies, English, and multidisciplinary studies. These three areas of inquiry are of increasing difficulty as relates to cognitive skills, critical thinking, and discipline specific knowledge application. The composite data from the survey appear in Table 4, followed by the relationship of the data to each of the three research questions.

Table 4: Composite Data Summary

	Data 1: Basic Knowledge	Data 2: Religious Thought	Data 3: Textual Analysis
Mean	11.864	4.102	2.254
Std. dev	2.323	1.658	1.481
Median	12.000	4.000	2.000
Skew	-1.001	-0.355	0.072
Mean %	79.10%	51.27%	45.08%
3rd Quartile	66.10%	3.39%	22.03%

Research Question 1: What is the level of basic religions knowledge?

The central tendency in the data set that contained questions for basic religious knowledge was remarkably high when compared to the previous studies of Prothero (2007a) and Pew Research Center (2010). A majority (39) had scores ranging from 12-15 correct answers, indicating that 66% of participants showed a 75% or above performance rate. There was a negative skew, which is common with high overall test scores, with a mean of 11.9. The sample did extremely well compared to the Prothero and Pew studies; therefore an inquiry into higher level cognitive skills in religious knowledge seemed appropriate. In previous studies, the low scores of participants did not warrant further pursuit of higher knowledge.

A breakdown of the data on basic religious knowledge into the individual questions appears in Table 5. Participants showed lower mean scores on question 1, “When does the Jewish Sabbath begin,” and question 14, “According to rulings by the U. S. Supreme Court, is a public school teacher permitted to read selections of the Bible in class as examples of literature?” According to question 13, participants realize the ramifications of the First Amendment to the Constitution in the Bill of Rights to religious practice and government

interference, but only 52% believed that using the Bible in similar fashion to any other piece of world literature was permissible.

Table 5: Basic Religious Knowledge Detail

Question	Survey Average	Pew Research Center Average
1. Sabbath	43%	45%
2. Ramadan	79%	52%
3. Muslim Scriptures	97%	58%
4. Nirvana	79%	36%
5. Shiva-Vishnu	86%	38%
6. 1st Book of the Bible	93%	67%
7. 4 Gospels	97%	49%
8. Jesus' Birth Place	86%	74%
9. Eucharist	98%	40%
10. Sola Fide	66%	16%
11. Exodus	79%	72%
12. 10 Commandments	83%	55%
13. Constitution	93%	75%
14. Supreme Court	52%	23%
15. 1st Great Awakening	64%	23%

Participants' basic religious knowledge was analyzed with demographic data as independent variables and tested for statistical significance. As noted previously, gender, academic major, and previous college religion courses showed no statistically significant differences. On the other hand, when a variable comparing the difference between faith community of heritage and faith community of current practice was used to test a difference within basic religious knowledge scores, a statistical significance was identified and those who had changed faith communities showed higher mean scores and lower standard deviation for all 15 questions (Table 6). This observation will contribute to the evidence in Chapter 5 challenging one of the assumptions of Prothero, Hayes, and Marshall (i.e., more religion classes increase religious literacy).

Table 6: Basic Religious Knowledge correct responses and change of religious affiliation

	Change	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
Correct	Yes	25	12.68	1.492
	No	33	11.39	2.573

Research Question 2: Do pre-service teachers of History and English demonstrate higher-level thinking skills as relates to religion in public life?

Inquiry into question 2, the first of two exploratory queries, was undertaken in section three of the survey under the heading of *Thoughts on Religion*. This is the first of two exploratory sections. The questions addressed religion in public life and were drawn from the literature (Berger, 1999; Marshall, 2009; Prothero, 2007a; Wainwright, 1999). Beginning with this section, participants used a four-point, forced Likert scale. In subsequent quantization of the data, reduction yielded a nominal 0 or 1 response, with 0 answering to “disagree” and 1 corresponding to “agree.” This third section used contested concepts and, for this study, incorporated a fallacy in all questions derived from the literature (see pp. 66-67), with the result that participants who detected fallacies would choose to disagree (0). In a following open-ended qualitative data set, students were prompted to supply reasons for their choices.

The central tendency of the data for research question two and the associated questions on *Thoughts on Religion* (data set 3) converges on 51.27% with a mean score of 4.1 out of 8, the median and mean becoming almost identical, and the predominant score or mode being 3. Standard deviation was 1.658, with a maximum score of 8. Only about 4% of students fall into the fourth quartile, contrasting the two-thirds that fell into the same quartile in basic religious knowledge. This data set could be graphed as a classic bell curve, although

the majority of participants demonstrate a low average compared to the section on basic religious knowledge (Table 7).

Table 7: Thoughts on Religion Detail

Question	Disagree	Agree	Detect Fallacy
1. Modernization leads to a decline of religion, both in society and in the minds of individuals.	27	32	45.76%
2. Fundamentalism may be defined as any sort of passionate religious movement.	31	28	52.54%
3. It is socially acceptable to regard fundamentalist religions with a degree of caution and suspicion.	19	40	32.20%
4. It is outside the interest and mission of a public university to foster and nurture a learning environment conducive to the promoting of awareness, knowledge and understanding of religion, spiritual values, and creed.	42	17	71.19%
5. Americans live in an increasingly secularized world.	9	50	15.25%
6. American public schools should be religion free zones - students should check their faith traditions at the door upon entering the classroom.	47	12	79.66%
7. Pluralism (commitment to religious diversity) is non-exclusive and takes the truth claims of all religions equally valid.	14	45	23.73%
8. Non-religion (atheism, agnosticism, secularism) is by nature more objective, fair, and honest than any religion.	53	6	89.83%

Three points from this third data set may prove of great importance for educational policy and practice. Almost 80% of these pre-service secondary school teachers concur with former president Clinton (1995) that public schools are not religion free zones and students should not be expected to leave their religious opinions at home. Secondly, 90% of the participants question the *prima facie* objectivity of non-religion over religion. Finally, only 23% percent of students question the assumptions of pluralism. Analysis of this data set, including participant open-ended feedback, will be conducted in chapter 5.

Research Question 3: What is the level of knowledge integration apparent in textual analysis?

The third question and the fourth data set demonstrate the most challenging aspect of the study for both participants and researcher. This second exploratory section of the survey attempts to grapple with the real world knowledge of every instructor, regardless of academic discipline. All teachers have a duty to critically appraise textbooks and determining their validity and relevance by using the tools of critical evaluation and knowledge each one possesses to recognize error and fill in the gaps. Question 3 explores religious topics in primary texts (i.e., Bible, Qur'an, Rig Veda) and standard textbooks, and the ability of pre-service teachers to address these topics and texts.

Social Studies majors were asked to evaluate a scenario describing The Crusades drawn from a North Carolina approved textbook, *World History: Human Legacy* (Ramirez, Sterns, & Wineburg, 2008), as appears in Table 8. This textbook is currently in use in North Carolina secondary schools. Following the responses via a four-point, forced Likert scale, participants were allowed to support their answers in their own words in a feedback forum. This feedback will be discussed in the final section of chapter 5.

Table 8: Social Studies Scenario

	Disagree	Agree
<p>SCENARIO: While reviewing the 2008 edition of a standard NC World History textbook, the instructor encounters a section entitled: "The Crusades: Disaster and Treachery." In the overview "Before you Read," the textbook poses the question: "Why did Europeans launch the Crusades?" The text offers a short passage from the eye-witness, Raymond d'Aguilers (11th Century), and incorporates the following information: 1) European Christians launched a series of four religious wars called Crusades to regain Jerusalem from Muslim control, 2) The Egyptian Fatimads controlled the Holy Land and the Turks boarded the north (possibly persecuting Christian pilgrims), 3) The Byzantine Emperor turned to Pope Urban II (Council Clemont) for help. The following testimony was gleaned from d'Aguilers on the conquest of Jerusalem: "It was necessary to pick one's way over the bodies of men and horses.... In the Temple and porch of Solomon, men rode in blood up to their knees and bridle reins....The city was filled with corpses and blood" (d'Aguilers).</p>		
1h. It appears from the scenario that the textbook has covered all major aspects and viewpoints of the Crusades.	86.11%	13.89%
2h. The reliable eyewitness testimony by d'Aguilers provides additional credibility to the textbook's emphasis of European responsibility.	63.89%	36.11%
3h. I would accept the textbook question as it stands: "Why did the Europeans launch the Crusades?"	44.44%	55.56%

Social Studies majors revealed a dichotomous central tendency in this encounter with a North Carolina approved textbook. While the overwhelming majority questioned both the breadth of coverage (86%) and the reliability of the chosen eyewitness (64%), over half (56%) concede the authority of what participants themselves consider a defective textbook. The majority of participants (55%) were unwilling to challenge the authority of the textbook, although they did not believe the textbook to be factually valid.

English majors were asked to evaluate a scenario containing an actual table of contents from a North Carolina state approved world literature textbook, *Prentice Hall*

Literature: World Masterpieces (Kinsella, 2007), as appears in Table 9. This textbook is in current use in the secondary schools of Catawba County. Following the responses via a four-point forced Likert scale, participants were allowed to support their answers in their own words in a feedback forum. This feedback will be discussed in the final section of the results.

Table 9: English Majors Scenario

	Disagree	Agree
SCENARIO: While reviewing the table of contents of the 2007 edition of a standard NC textbook, <i>World Masterpieces</i> , under the heading of "Sacred Texts" and "Origins and Traditions" readings from the following primary texts appear: Hebrew Bible (Genesis, Ruth, Psalms), Qur'an, Rig Veda, Upanishads, Bhagavad-Gita, Tao Te Ching, and Analects of Confucius.		
1e. The list appears to be complete, containing readings from all major world religions.	47.83%	52.17%
2e. The selection is a fair and balanced representation of all major faith traditions.	47.83%	52.17%
3e. I would accept the textbook and its selection of sacred texts.	30.43%	69.57%

English majors are divided nearly 50/50 over whether the selection of text is a balanced selection of text; eight participants out of 23 did not respond. Over two thirds accept the textbook's decision to exclude Christian literature, although nearly half consider this decision flawed. In the open-ended responses, seven participants (P12, P13, P16, P25, P28, P31, P48) note that there is no selection of Christian scriptures or the New Testament. Since the New Testament represents nearly two billion persons, one could probably consider it a substantial oversight. A single student (P48) mentions that no Buddhist scriptures, such as the Deer Park sermon or the Lotus Sutra, exist in the list, a gap representing another 400 million persons. 70% of English majors fail to note that, from a religious viewpoint,

Christianity, or 40% of the world's population, has been deliberately ignored and their voices silenced in this world literature textbook.

Following the two discipline specific selections of textual analysis, both Social Studies and English majors were asked to analyze a verse from a 1960s war protest song. The selection was taken from the 1967 song of Steppenwolf entitled *Monster-America* and demonstrates numerous cultural, historical, and religious allusions to the American experiment. This song was chosen because although showing a great deal of early American history in poetic form, hardly a single detail in this verse is factually correct. The multiple disciplinary responses appear in Table 10.

Table 10: Multi Disciplinary Scenario

	Disagree	Agree
Analyze the text of this 1967 protest song by Steppenwolf. Locate three religious references and reflect upon the context, chronology, and validity of the statements contained therein:		
Once the religious, the hunted and weary; Chasing the promise of freedom and hope, Came to this country to build a new vision, Far from the reaches of kingdom and pope. Like good Christians, some would burn the witches; Later some got slaves to gather riches.		
4. My education has equipped me to address religious images and statements such as the ones given in the above example.	16.95%	83.05%
5. The sequence of events and their descriptions referenced in this protest song are historically valid and accurate as relates to the American experience.	40.68%	59.32%

Although 19% of participants did not respond to the multi-disciplinary text (11 participants), the majority of those who did respond (83%) feel that their education had prepared them to analyze such passages as Steppenwolf's *Monster-America*, although only

half that number (41%) can detect the numerous errors in the selection, such as no people ever came to America to flee the Pope, and no one burned witches in Salem, Massachusetts or any other place or time in America. Witchcraft was a felony and the punishment for a felony in Massachusetts was hanging, which sentence was executed on all but one in Salem. Giles Corey was crushed by stones – a common procedure used to gain a confession at that time in early America. And although there were trials for witchcraft before the magistrates, the judges concluded there were no witches in Salem. One may also say that it was the Christians which stopped the atrocity, but it was almost exclusively women who gave the false testimony against their neighbors that began it. There is some indication of the Dunning-Kruger effect at play here, which will be explored in Chapter 5, since 83% overestimate their knowledge and abilities at the beginning of the multidisciplinary questions (see question 4).

Qualitative Inquiry and Open-Ended Responses

For both exploratory sections of the survey, *Thoughts on Religion* and *Textual Analysis*, participants were given the opportunity to substantiate and explain their responses given on the Likert scales, or provide other open-ended feedback. For these feedback sections, the participants told their own story without the constraints of a four-point scale. Almost two-thirds of participants responded within their disciplines, and 81% of all participants responded with feedback to the multidisciplinary scenario (see Table 11). As in the textual analysis with the Likert scale responses, several students from both Social Studies and English responded to questions not in their specific discipline. Quantitative out of discipline responses were ignored, but their individualized comments are given equal consideration in the feedback section.

Table 11: Open ended feedback

	Response	%	No-Response	%
History	23	64%	13	36%
English	15	65%	8	35%
Multi-disc.	48	81%	11	19%
Thoughts	11	19%	48	81%

Qualitative evaluation employed a simple system of coding based on word and concept frequency to determine consensus and shared concerns. Out of 48 participant responses, four topics became predominant: Muslim viewpoint, balance of sources, a tendency to avoid conflict with authority (textbook), and a tendency to moralize. Each of these topics requires further explanations and illustration to demonstrate the relevance to the qualitative parts of the study in data sets one through three.

Where is the Muslim Viewpoint? A consensus of Social Studies majors demanded a Muslim testimony and/or balanced viewpoint, apparently seeking an alternate narrative to evaluate the testimony of the good Christian chronicler d'Aguilers. For example, one participant replied that “saying that all the viewpoints are covered is ridiculous. You have to look at both sides of the Crusades and get more than one account. An eyewitness account makes something credible...” (P 4). Nearly 50% of those who responded used the words Muslim, viewpoint, or bias.

Something is Missing? 70% of English majors chose to accept the textbook, even though 52% did not believe that the textbook was complete or balanced. Only 26% of total English majors specifically state that readings from the New Testament have been omitted, yet taking into account that only 15 out of 23 English majors provided feedback, nearly 50% of the respondents realize that specifically Christian texts are absent. A single respondent stated that both Christian and Buddhist texts were lacking. To answer the query as to why

one would identify a lacuna but nevertheless allow the gap to go unchallenged, participants most often answer that nothing is perfect and they do not expect all aspects to be covered. For example, P 18 and P19 both use the word impossible, such as “I [felt] that it would be impossible to cover all religions in such a short amount of time.” This response from the English students offers a contrast to the Social Studies folks who were only 55% in agreement with keeping the textbook. Nevertheless, both groups having discovered an error of omission, one lacking a Muslim testimony and the other lacking a selection of readings from the New Testament, are in the majority to let it be. The answers are different, but the practical outcome is the same.

Both Social Studies and English majors commented on the multidisciplinary query into the historical, literary, and religious content contained in Steppenwolf’s *Monster-America* (1967). The response rate is higher here than for either discipline specific feedback, with an overall 81% feedback of a substantive nature. Forty-eight out of 59 participants choose to give an opened ended response to the multidisciplinary scenario, whereas the exact inverse was true of the open-ended response to the second section of questions, *Thoughts on Religion*, where only 11 out of 59, or a 19% response rate. In the following feedback, only a single participant (P29) disputed the burning of witches in America. Another two participants recognized that it was not the Pope, but the English monarchs that caused problems with the early Americans.

Summary

Participants’ scores trump Prothero and Pew Research Center averages in basic religious knowledge, demonstrating an overall mean score of 80%. When moving into *Thoughts on Religion*, where participants needed to reflect rather than just fill in a blank or

choose from several provided answers, participants show an overall mean near 50%. When participants are instructed to critically analyze approved North Carolina textbook passages, participant responses become inconsistent and contradictory. Although errors in fact are detected nearly 50% of the time, the majority still chose to remain faithful to the textbook. The consensus wishes to have its academic pie, and eat it too. In the multidisciplinary selection, one begins to see further indications of the Dunning-Kruger effect, yet even though participants believe their education has prepared them to deal with religious images, symbol, and language within popular culture, a maximum of 40% can accomplish the task, and, as relates to the multi-disciplinary selection where both majors participate, only 5% (three participants), show any ability to detect and explain the fallacies in the Steppenwolf text. What remains to be done is an analysis and interpretation of these phenomena, a process which shall be undertaken in Chapter 5.

CHAPTER 5: ANALYSIS OF FINDINGS

Chapter 5 provides an analysis of the data presented in Chapter 4, including connections with the literature surveyed in Chapter 3, followed by a list of limitations and suggestions for future research. On a personal note, this study has caused me to modify the wisdom of my third grade teacher who passed away in her 99th year. She graduated from ASU in 1939 and was the first woman in the Caldwell County School System to receive a Master's Degree. On her own confession, she never allowed the discussion of religion or politics in class, including those classes she taught in adult education for GED preparation after retirement. With religion in the headlines of the national and international news on a daily basis, educators may no longer have the luxury to avoid the hard questions that either religion or politics asks, as the two continue to evolve a more symbiotic relationship in the 21st century. According to Berger (1999) the world can expect to see a greater influence of traditional religion in the coming century, not less as enlightenment ideology prophesied would be the case.

Analysis

Chapter 4 findings form part of the religious literacy story; comparing that data with student feedback and the literature constitutes the rest of the story. The three major research questions presented in Chapter 3 form the outline for the discussion.

Research Question 1: What is the level of basic religions knowledge?

In contrast to previous studies (Pew Research Center 2010; Prothero, 2007a), participants in this study demonstrated significantly higher scores, surpassing Pew national averages by as much as 60% and excelling other college students, the overall highest rated demographic, by 10%. The participant scores of the present study contest the March 2007 headlines in *USAToday*, “Americans Receive an ‘F’ in Religion.” The participants in the present study did not make an F in religion. With the mean score of 11.9 out of 15 correct answers, and an average standard deviation of 2.2, the majority of participants selected between 10-14 correct answers, with a perfect score falling only slightly outside of one standard deviation. This translates into an overall excellent performance on basic religious literacy by all participants. It is interesting to note that although 60% of participants had taken religion courses in college, this demographic showed no statistically significance difference ($p < .05$), although a shift in faith community did show a statistical significant, with $p = .030$, showing that it is extremely unlikely that this phenomenon was a random occurrence. In addition, persons with low scores on *Basic Religious Knowledge* did not do well on the two following sections. One may entertain at least two explanations for these higher scores.

1. Those that change faith communities have engaged in dialogue, making their choices based on deliberate comparison and contrast learning to differentiate faith traditions by details offered by observant and experts, requiring specific understanding of multiple faith traditions (Prothero, 2010a).

2. Those that change faith communities have learned by doing, having hands-on experience accompanied with personal observation and interaction with multiple faith traditions (Kimball, 2002; Prothero, 2011; Richlin, 2006).

Either scenario could explain higher scores for persons who have changed religious affiliation, and each has some support from religious studies experts, such as Prothero (2010a) who claims religious traditions maintain their individual identities from their distinctive beliefs, not by their likenesses to other faith communities (i.e., pluralism). Dewey (1897) stated in *My Pedagogic Creed* “that all education proceeds by the participation of the individual in the social consciousness of the race,” a hands-on learning style including observation and experiment, activities we associate with the scientific method (Archambault, 1964, p. 427). Yet in contrast to Prothero (2007a) and Hayes (2008), it was not merely religion class but something more akin to religious experience or religious interaction that preceded participant higher scores. This active learning explores religious experience with a small “e” rather the personal religious Experience with the capital “E” of William James’ *The Varieties of Religious Experience*, 1902/1999). This may suggest that religion courses without a field study component or observations, as are common in teacher education, fall short of the goal of increasing religious literacy. Participants were not offered the opportunity for feedback within the first section of the survey on *Basic Religious Knowledge* (see Appendix D). This section required bivalent replies, strictly correct and incorrect answers, in objective and fill in the blank format. Students either knew the answers or they didn’t, and in every case “I don’t know” was considered a valid answer, although such a response was rare.

The average scores neared 80% on the first fifteen question section, but the scores of two questions sank below 60%, the boundary beyond which even instructors with liberal

grading schemes consider that a student has done poorly. These two questions were numbers 1 and 14 (Appendix D), and both could be related to previous participant experience in the classroom and previous participant experience with different religious traditions. Under the heading of *Basic Religious Knowledge* in the survey, students were asked “When does the Jewish Sabbath begin?” Only 43% choose the correct answer, which means that participants had little familiarity with Jewish liturgical practice or the way ancient Hebrews began a day at sunset rather than midnight as illustrated by Hebrew cosmology in Genesis. Anyone who had planned a synagogue visit would know that the Sabbath begins at sundown on Friday. Those who erred on this question for the most part choose Saturday, the seventh day on the contemporary Julian calendar. The slightly higher scores national U. S. Religious Knowledge Survey (2010) of 45% compared to this study’s 43% may have some relationship to the fact that the Pew Study gave extra attention to households containing Jews, Mormons, or atheists.

Question 14 asked if it was legal to read the Bible in a classroom as an example of literature, with correct responses slightly above half at 52%. Only slight fewer, 48% responded in the negative, a response that tells an interesting story. In the first instance, had even half of these participants ever seen a teacher use the Bible as an example of literature in a public school classroom? Secondly, one may also ask if previous teachers of the participants were also unsure whether or not the use of the Bible as literature was legal, and therefore abstained from the practice. And finally, we may speculate that many teachers have a vague idea that some legal problem has attaches itself to the Bible and they believe that problem somehow restricts the Bible, or places it in a unique category, out of all other books on the planet. Of all questions in the basic religious knowledge section, this one applies directly to teachers, and of all questions this one holds the second lowest score. At a very

rudimentary level, pre-service teachers misunderstand the integration of diversity as illustrated by Jewish and Christian religious texts in the classroom. Teachers fail to realize that these religious texts are possibly our only examples of ancient documents written by oppressed groups, the losers of their day: Jews were exiled to Babylon; Jesus was killed by Pilate; and St. Paul is left in jail at Rome when the New Testament ends. It is a small step indeed to project that the participants will imitate what was modeled to them by their mentors.

Low scores on questions 1 and 14 may suggest a re-evaluation of the two self assessments, one in the demographics and one in the third section on textual analysis, and the educational assessment of the participants. In both self-assessments, the majority of students claim that they are prepared to address religious issues that arise in the normal daily activities of teaching within their chosen content areas. Participants were not asked if they were prepared to teach a course in Old Testament, New Testament, or World Religions. They were only queried on readiness within their own disciplines. Yet nearly 50% don't even know if they can use the Bible for a literary illustration, even though selections from Psalms appear in the standard North Carolina Literature textbooks as appears in the scenario, *Textual Analysis*. There appears to be a breakdown between knowledge and practice, or according to the revised Bloom cognitive taxonomy, no pathway from factual and conceptual to procedural knowledge (Richlin, 2006). Higher level thinking skills were apparently not here.

Based on the replies in the section *Thoughts on Religion*, participants appear to be under-prepared in the areas of diversity and inclusiveness as it applies to religious minorities, such as fundamentalists (Berger 1999; Marshall 2009; Prothero 2007a), the equal place and access that the Bible holds with other world literature, and a tendency to overlooking bias, if

the bias is socially acceptable. Secondly, if indeed no instructor has modeled using the Bible to illustrate literature, it could imply that the educational evaluation of participants is also flawed. If instructors' deliberately avoid using the Bible or referencing religion when it is appropriate for the subject content, why is this different than ignoring any other aspect of diversity, such as race, gender, or economic status? It is difficult to see how the Jews could be understood without their religious books, or for that matter the Puritans, the Medieval Catholic Church, Blake or Coleridge. Is such an oversight by design or a mistake on the part of teacher education programs or those who teach other aspects of diversity?

As previously seen in an example from the literature review (Garcia, 1991), authors and teachers of diversity studies can become advocates of discrimination and fallacy when they are under-prepared and ignorantly broadcast falsehood about religion. Marshall (2006) suggested that religious understanding should take place within the context of diversity studies in teacher training programs, but she failed to specify the level of religious expertise that such a professor in the teacher training program should possess. Women's Studies experts and courses (feminism, gender studies) are often spread across college and disciplinary boundaries, with public University Colleges of Education being a host to several of these professionals and their courses (see Appendices E and F; <http://ws.appstate.edu/>). Women's Studies also offers its own major with a specific curriculum constantly crossing disciplinary boundaries (130A/05.0207, see Appendix F), yet there are no such opportunities for students to be mentored by professors with religious expertise outside the department of Philosophy and Religion. Gender courses are also spread throughout the graduate school curriculum (see Appendix E). Within the graduate certificate and the undergraduate major, students are guided to courses taught by particular faculty with gender expertise. The

Women's Studies check sheet points out cross disciplinary gender based courses in the departments of English, Religion, Philosophy, History, Psychology, Anthropology, and Sociology (see Appendix F). For an interesting example, between 26 October 2011 and 7 December 2011, Women's Studies offered six public lectures on gender from a Frankfurt School viewpoint, some of which were conducted by an expert holding the title of Professor of Sociology and Women's Studies, but in contrast there is no professor of Sociology and Religion. There appears to be two professors in the school of education with research interest in religion in K-12, but it does not appear they are experts and no courses in religion and education or professors of education and religion exist. Therefore we may infer with Moore (2007) that religion is being taught, although it may very well be taught badly – since there are no qualified instructors and no authoritative instruction on teaching religion correctly, in contrast to gender studies which reaches across disciplines and hosts many professionals in the field.

We should not become too complacent with the ratio between Pew Research Center religious literacy scores and those of the target population of this study, pre-service teachers. Although the current study reveals scores which exceed those of either the Prothero (2007a) or Pew Research Center (2010) studies, there is no basis to boast. It is roughly the equivalent to college student performance on third grade multiplication tables, since the *Basic Religious Knowledge* questions are simple facts. Prothero and the Pew Research Center admit to formulating a very elementary questionnaire, and include elements which folks should know if they want to read the daily newspapers with comprehension. The content is far below a standard Praxis assessment required for teachers, if a praxis with religious content existed.

Research Question 2: Do pre-service teachers of History and English demonstrate higher-level thinking skills as relates to religion in public life?

According to Richlin's (2006) analysis of Bloom's taxonomy and the 2001 revisions done by Anderson and Krathwohl, higher cognitive levels include the ability to apply, analyze, evaluate, and create based on recollection and understanding. This holds true for all knowledge dimensions, whether factual, conceptual, procedural, or meta-cognitive (Richlin, 2006). Students who can draw together multiple elements to form a whole and arrange them in a structure that did not previously exist demonstrate advanced cognitive abilities, often described as critical thinking (Angelo & Cross, 1993). The questions used in section four, *Thoughts on Religion* (see Chapter 3 and Appendix D), present interwoven ideas on religion in public life, including questions on modernity, fundamentalism, secularity, pluralism, non-religion, freedom of religion and tolerance, and public schools. Questions do not ask, "do you believe in freedom of religion," but present several statements that demand comparative analysis. For example, a cluster of statements asked students what is a fundamentalist, if selective discrimination is socially acceptable for this group, and if students should enjoy religious liberty in the public school classroom. An affirmation that includes religious toleration and liberty for the whole (classrooms are not religion free zones), should prompt an affirmation for religious toleration to the parts (fundamentalists should not be held under suspicion). Common sense would teach us that if toleration is only for those with whom we agree, then the word has lost its meaning; surely American religious liberty (Taber & Gallagher, 1997) should go beyond the medieval toleration suggested by Rorty (2003). Therefore, if participants fail to make comparisons, to analyze, and to evaluate their own responses, their creative solutions and response to another question can appear conflicting,

revealing a lack of higher-level thinking skills. Let me offer an example how this phenomenon played out in the *Religious Knowledge Survey*.

The pre-service teachers responding to this survey agree with former president Bill Clinton that public schools are not religion free zones and teachers can not suspend first amendment rights that relate to religious liberty in the public square. 80% of participants in this study do not believe that students need to leave their religion on the door step when entering the classroom. This majority response affirms with Prothero (2007a), Moore (2007), Marshall (2009), and the Pew Research Center (2010), that religion is an inseparable part of American human experience, although only 45% of participants agree with Berger (1999) and believe that religion will not decline with the increase of modernity.

In contrast, 20% of participants do not affirm religious liberty in the classroom and believe that students should leave their religion behind when entering a public school. This minority opinion betrays a popular, although unconstitutional, belief that the first amendment protects individuals *from religion* (Prothero 2011). To turn the tables, the tendency to religious liberty in 80% of participants (47 out of 59) probably does not include what the participants consider fundamentalists, since 68% (40 participants) believe that the fundamentalist should be approached with caution and suspicion (see Table 7). This leaves a mere 12% (7 participants) that approach religious liberty for all. One history major responds that fundamentalism is a reaction to modernity and that people “lacking a heterogeneous background are more likely to support fundamentalism.” But this student also states that it is critical to understand “the other” (P9). Another participant notes that pluralism can not tolerate religious exclusivity (P8), implying that to some extent even pluralism is intolerant. We may note both P9 and P8 scored 100% (15) on the basic section, although P9 only

considered three out of eight propositions in *Thoughts on Religion* to be fallacies, whereas P8 believed six out of eight to be fallacies. P9 opted to treat fundamentalists with suspicion; P8 suggested such a practice was unacceptable. Neither held that schools should be religion free zones or that non-religion is by nature more objective than religion. In this example, increased basic knowledge and higher-level cognitive skills are both present to some extent, but do not translate into a decision for greater tolerance – a choice demonstrating internal consistency. P9 proposes a less than admirable rationale for becoming a fundamentalist and does not decide to include them with “the other,” demonstrating a discontinuity of thought. Why then does P9, with equal basic religious knowledge, opt for what would appear to be religious intolerance? We might ask if ideological presuppositions have derailed the logical conclusion that religious liberty for the whole implies religious liberty for the parts, but in reality this is an example of reaching the limits of the data without an answer to some of the questions.

We should remember that P8 stated that pluralism “cannot tolerate religions that claim exclusivity,” bringing pluralism under suspicion of intolerance. Such an assessment occurred in a minority of students. The majority of participants (45 or 76%) do not agree with Wainwright (1999) that pluralism does not accept the truth claims of all religions as equally valid, but is rather another exclusivist orthodoxy which demands that Christians, Muslims, Jews, Buddhists, and Hindus relinquish some of their most cherished beliefs. For example, for Hick’s vision of pluralism to be effective, orthodox Christians and Muslims must forfeit their belief in the virgin birth of Jesus for the sake of Jews, and Jews must relinquish their monotheism and teleology for the sake of Buddhists and Hindus. We may note that P8 is in constant contact with religious people, denoted by an indication of weekly

attendance from demographics. In contrast, P9 indicated at most a biannual participation in a faith community. P8 and P9 differ in their assessment of pluralism. P9 either does not see this inconsistency within pluralism or may have accepted pluralism's intolerance as acceptable, believing that pluralism takes the truth claims of all religions seriously; P9 possibly made choices based pluralistic utopian claims that can not exist according to Wainwright (1999) and Berger (1999).

In the practical application of how one treats "the other," P8 shows a greater respect toward religious liberty. It is only fair to say that both P8 and P9 exhibit a greater degree of higher-level thinking skills than the majority of other participants, possibly because both had college religion courses. But P8 claimed twice as many fallacies in *Thoughts on Religion* as did P9. The greatest significance between these two is the indication of greater tolerance toward those with whom one does not agree. In this instance, knowledge of religion and a positive assessment of pluralism do not translate into greater levels of tolerance. It is also interesting that P8 claims to be simply "Christian," specifying no association with mainline or other denominations, whereas P9 claims to be "spiritual." With this example in mind, it may be enlightening to explore the relationship between higher-level thinking skills, basic religious literacy scores, and responses to the last question on the objectivity of non-religion (Appendix D).

Section three, *Thoughts on Religion*, contains a series of contested religious concepts, which for this study were considered fallacies when incorporated in a single data set (see pp. 66-67). Therefore, and for the sake of this study, all of the questions in *Thoughts on Religion* would be false if presented in a bivalent format (true/false). One interesting example is the positive response to the final question on non-religion: *Non-religion is by nature more*

objective than religion. 10% (6) agreed with this assessment of non-religion; 90% of participants disagreed. Of those who agreed, not one scored 100% on the *Basic Religious Knowledge* section. The highest score of this group was the mean score of the entire group (12); the lowest score of this subgroup was the lowest score of all participants (5). The majors of this sextet were evenly distributed and both genders are represented, males accounting for 66%. For these six participants, the assessments of their educational preparation to address religion were evenly distributed; half believing they have been prepared to address religion within their field and half claiming inadequacy. Of this group which believes that non-religion is more objective than religion, all but one approve of the selective discrimination of fundamentalists, that modernity implies less religion, and that pluralism is level ground (84%). The majority (65%) of this group also believe that public schools should be religion free zones. These same participants have little or no interaction with religious persons based on the attendance question in demographics (4 none, 2 seasonal). The current faith community of the group is as follows: 1 atheist, 2 agnostics, 1 spiritual/none, and 2 Baptists – constituting a challenge to Pew study. Thus we have lower scores on the basic religious knowledge combined with decreased religious tolerance, and possibly reduced higher-level thinking skills. Some may consider such a connection between lower scores in basic religious literacy and decreased higher-level thinking skills or intolerance a little hasty. So we must keep in mind that the sextet was prompted to give a reason for their responses, but all save one spoke never a word, and the one replied “this is a great survey,” an accolade which reveals no higher-level thinking skills derived from a participant whom McKeachie in *Teaching Tips* would call “the flatterer” (McKeachie, 2006, p. 182). Not one of the six cared to explain themselves, and experts feel that a written

creation, employing analysis, evaluation, and synthesis demonstrate higher level thinking skills (Angelo & Cross, 1993; McKeachie, 2006; Moore, 2007; Richlin, 2006). These findings are in direct contrast to the findings of the Pew Research Center, which published that atheists (non-religion) demonstrates higher levels of basic religious knowledge than religious persons. In this study, atheists score the same and act the same as their Baptist compatriots! This conclusion may appear humorous, but it also presents an example of identical outcomes deriving from two divergent orthodoxies. It has been previously argued in this paper that a protectionist stance on religious knowledge can come from divergent ideological spectrums. What is uniform in this apparent diversity is a devotion to a single position, an orthodoxy of sorts, which gives no quarter to alternate viewpoints.

Conflicting responses in *Thoughts on Religion* may indicate a lack of cognitive synthesis and gaps in continuity of thought. The questions relating to religion free zones (religious liberty) and social acceptability of profiling fundamentalists (whoever they are) could be indicative of compartmentalization and the acceptance of official discrimination as present in totalitarian regimes of the recent past, although presented here in its innocence. Only 17% participated in open-ended response for *Thoughts on Religion*; one female English major (P35) requested a “don’t know” in the Likert scale, especially as it related to questions on non-religion, although she contributed no other comment.

This third data set, *Thoughts on Religion*, witnessed the departure of three out of seven of participants who scored highest (15) on *Basic Religious Knowledge* (P6, P9, P51). All three had taken college religion courses and all three registered a favorable view of pluralism. Religious affiliation for these participants was two spiritual and one Jewish. Aside from divergent scores in the third section, what distinguishes these three departures is an

absence of current participation in any faith community. We may ask if the participants were unaccustomed to thinking about or discussing religious subjects, but here again the data fails us. In contrast, out of the fifteen participants in this sub-group who scored above the third quartile for *Thoughts on Religion*, 66% (10) register weekly participation in a faith community. Prothero (2011) suggested that religious dialogue is an important aspect of religious literacy.

The majority of participants must either believe that no fundamentalists will be in their classes or that the privileges of religious liberty must be selectively applied. On the other hand, and thanks to the media (Marshall, 2009), participants could completely misunderstand the term. High scores in section two, *Basic Religious Knowledge*, did not always translate into logical consistency or tolerance in section three on *Thoughts on Religion*. Religious tolerance requires more than basic knowledge. Regardless of the cause, participants could be demonstrating decreased higher level think skills when not providing a written explanation for responses (i.e., can not give a reason for choices), and a degree of intolerance to the extent that they have no problem profiling fundamentalists, a minority so small in number as to be of little consequence according to Lester (2007). This tendency to religious discrimination and intolerance in academia is supported by a study done by the Institute for Jewish and Community Research (2007), which stated that Evangelicals were viewed with contempt by university professors, a conclusion that agrees with similar statements made in other studies (Berger, 1999; Marshall, 2009; Prothero, 2007a; Tobin, Weinberg, & Ferer, 2009). Participants do not appear to manifest any cognitive dissonance between a prejudicial view of fundamentalist sects and challenging that schools are religion

free zones. The majority of participants appear content to hold contradictory views, and no participants mentioned the contradiction in the open-ended feedback.

During the reign of the Roman emperor Trajan (98-117 C. E.), Pliny the younger, the governor of Pontus and Bithynia (111-113 C. E.), writes the following:

It is my practice, my lord, to refer to you all matters concerning which I am in doubt. I have never participated in trials of Christians. I therefore do not know what offenses it is the practice to punish ...whether the name itself...or only the offenses associated with the name are to be punished. ...I have observed ... that the sum and substance of their fault or error had been that they were accustomed to meet on a fixed day before dawn and sing responsively a hymn to Christ as to a god, and to bind themselves by oath, not to some crime, but not to commit fraud, theft, or adultery, not falsify their trust, nor to refuse to return a trust when called upon to do so..... But I discovered nothing else... I therefore postponed the investigation and hastened to consult you. (*Letters*, 10.96-97)

Trajan's reply was explicit:

You observed proper procedure, my dear Pliny..... [Christians] are not to be sought out ... [and] anonymously posted accusations ought to have no place in any prosecution. For this is both a dangerous kind of precedent and out of keeping with the spirit of our age. (*Letters*, 10.96-97)

Based on the responses to *Thoughts on Religion*, I am not sure that the majority of the participants in this survey could rise to the level of tolerance exhibited by Trajan, especially, if the word "fundamentalist" was substituted for "Christian."

Research Question 3: What is the level of knowledge-integration apparent in textual analysis?

Although participants received discipline specific textbook scenarios and a separate multi-disciplinary problem, the entire section, *Textual Analysis*, presents the multidisciplinary terrain which secondary teachers navigate on a daily basis. In the social studies scenario, participants are not limited to their history skills, but also must incorporate literary analysis and religious knowledge. In the English scenario, participants are not limited to their literary background, but must make informed decisions on religious demographics and the content of ancient religious texts. Evaluation and analysis are higher level cognitive skills (Angelo & Cross, 1993; Richlin 2006). The fourth section of the survey asked participants to evaluate a discipline specific textbook selection. English majors encountered an assessment described as the empty outline (Angelo & Cross, 1993) and were instructed to fill in a literary gap relating to world literature and religious texts. Social studies majors encountered a problem recognition task that drew on previous historical knowledge and required multi-disciplinary analysis (Angelo & Cross, 1993). Twenty-three social studies majors (64%) responded with open-ended feedback; 65% of English majors responded with open-ended feedback. There was a combined 64% overall response rate for all participants. 36% of pre-service teachers in this study did not provide a reason for their choices.

A Story of Teachers, Texts, and Feedback. Social studies majors who did not provide a reason for their answers in the section on *Textual Analysis* have a basic religious knowledge mean score of twelve, the same as the combined mean for both groups in this study; there were no perfect scores among history majors which did not provide feedback. Therefore average scores on basic religious can not predict feedback participation rates. On

the other hand, all five social studies participants with perfect scores of fifteen also participated in feedback and gave reasons for their answers. This observation also holds true for the two English majors who had perfect basic scores. All participants with perfect scores of both majors (P4, P6, P8, P9, P18, P48, P51) also believed that they had been academically prepared for the task. Thus, for this study a positive self-assessment coupled with a perfect score on basic religious knowledge tends to identify participants who will complete both quantitative and qualitative parts of the assessment.

Although the current study revealed a mean score of 80% for all participants in basic religious knowledge, contrasting an 80% failure rate in the Prothero study, less than 50% of this current study's participants can satisfactorily navigate a scenario taken directly from a standard North Carolina textbook (Ramirez, 2008) when the content arrives at the intersection of high school literature and religion, high school social studies and religion, or pop culture and religion. At the inception, one can honestly dismiss the argument that pop culture has lost its fascination with religious subjects, realizing that Lady Gaga released the song and video "Judas," in April 2011, just in time for Easter. A cursory review of the imagery and lyrics reveal extensive reliance on religious themes, symbols, persons, and events. In an internet world, pop culture becomes an opportunity for a teaching moment – yea, the mention of Lady Gaga may be the first time all students of the classroom become awake. Therefore, to believe that society has lost its fascination with religion, either as a façade or as an integral part of personal identity, is contested by both the Literature (Berger 1999; Maalouf 2003) and empirical evidence (i.e., Steppenwolf, 1967, *Monster-America*, or Lady Gaga, 2011, *Judas*).

This is the Muslim Viewpoint. In the *Book of the Jihad*, Ali ibn Tahir al Sulami (d. 1106) labels the Franks of the First Crusade, conquerors and attackers, and called on the Sultan of Egypt and rich Muslims to defend Islam and enter the Jihad. As early as the 12th Century, Muslims were on the defense against what they considered western aggressors. As noted in the findings of Chapter 4, open-end feedback demonstrates why social studies participants question the textbook – they want to know what happened to the Muslim viewpoint. It seems clear to social studies majors that the eye witness account by a man trained to be a monastery clerk, Raymond d’Aguilers, presents the Christian side, so for balance the text should provide a Muslim testimony (see Table 8 and Appendix D). The fact of the matter is that the scenario, faithfully reproducing information appearing in a standard North Carolina world history textbook, is the Muslim viewpoint. This view is the culmination of Muslim sentiments that evolved over hundreds of years, since first the Muslims of Palestine thought they were fighting their age-old enemies, the Byzantines, whom they considered Romans (*Rum*), then it was the Franks, then other Europeans, and finally the British. Thus, the Muslims did not initially believe the Crusades to be a pan-European action, even though early on the First Crusade was considered unprovoked, although prophesied, aggression. It is now common in the Arab world and with radical Muslims to refer to Americans and Europeans as Crusaders in a pejorative sense. It is still the Muslim viewpoint that the Europeans started the Crusades as an act of unprovoked aggression, aside from the internal problems with the Egyptian Shiite Fatimid dynasty, especially as they relate nearly a century before to al Hakim (d. 1021). John Riley-Smith, professor of church history at Cambridge and author of *The Oxford History of the Crusades*, maintains that contemporary scholarly opinion would suggest that Jews and other Christians

(Byzantine Greek Orthodox and heretics) suffered more than Muslims throughout the Crusades, and that numbers reported by “eye witnesses” inflate casualties by more than ten times. Muslim documents from the era of the Crusades suggest 3,000 casualties for the battle of Jerusalem, rather than the purported 70,000 of Christian sources (Smith, 2000).

It is also notable that Raymond d'Aguilers, the eyewitness given by the textbook (Ramirez, 2008), is unreliable and rejected by scholarly opinion for a number of reasons. A clue to d'Aguilers flight into fancy is his use of biblical allusion stating that “men rode in blood up to their knees and bridle reins.... [T]he city was filled with corpses and blood” (see Table 8 and Appendix D). The New Testament describes the Apocalypse at the end of the world, when God judges the forces of evil in the following words: “And the winepress was trodden without the city, and blood came out of the winepress, even unto the horse bridles, by the space of a thousand and six hundred furlongs” (Revelation 14:20). The image is a winepress as a symbol of God’s wrath, as used by the great prophets of Israel (Isaiah 63:1-6). This is not a mysterious parallel of circumstances, but an incidence of intertextuality – d’Aguilers deliberately used the biblical image of God’s wrath against the wicked, because he believed that in the battle of Jerusalem God’s wrath was directed against the Muslims.

Another clue to Raymond d’Aguilers’ inaccuracy or ignorance is his reference to the Jerusalem Temple and Porch of Solomon, structures that had not existed since Jerusalem fell to the Romans in 70 C. E. This was a prominent chronological error and I had hoped to see student responses to this error in the feedback. Only two participants rejected the textbook based on its naïve approach to the complex problems of the Crusades; neither participant identified errors associated with the Jerusalem temple. The Crusades were chosen because they form a major event in European history and the imagery continues to be used by

Muslims of all persuasions. The participants are not to be blamed, since what is lacked is preparation, not intelligence. As for the textbook publishers, editors, and authors, they have no excuse, whether it is for their ignorance or their bias. And as for why the old North State would choose such a textbook is a question for another research project.

The Missing New Testament. Half of all English majors in this study would not argue that the Christian New Testament is a piece of literature that is equally as important as the Hebrew Bible, the Qur'an, the Bhagavad Gita, Tao Te Ching, and the Analects of Confucius. 70% of English majors did not contest a standard textbook (Kinsella, 2007) which ignores 40% of the world's population and silences their voices. As noted in the findings of chapter four, only seven participants (P12, P13, P16, P25, P28, P31, P48), less than one third of all English majors, note that there were no New Testament readings in the approved world literature textbook. This phenomenon is extremely difficult to explain.

As far as textbooks are concerned, all media is constructed – nothing is omitted or included by accident (Considine & Haley, 1999). Kinsella (2007) chose to exclude the New Testament from the “Origins and Traditions” section of the *Prentice Hall Literature: World Masterpieces*. Secondly, why the state of North Carolina chose this textbook and why Catawba County shows its approval by using this text is a topic for another dissertation. This choice marginalizes the great majority of North Carolina residents, including significant populations of African Americans and Latinos who are Christians. Through this single and deliberate choice, the state of North Carolina and Catawba County schools have chosen to participate in selective discrimination against Christianity as a religion. Requiring this book may constitute a breach of the first amendment to the Constitution of the United States on the part of the state. These textbook editors have put states and counties in jeopardy of legal

action by their decision to include all religions except Christianity, demonstrating an example of a selective religious discriminatory practice. There are no participant responses that approach this rationale; student comments take another route.

As previously mentioned, not all participants left feedback. Of those who did leave feedback, half had no problem with selective discrimination as promoted in the textbook. Therefore, what can these seven dissenting voices tell us? Three participants missed more than the New Testament, and suggested a number of other readings. P13 suggested readings from Pagan (Wicca), atheists, and agnostic texts.²¹ P31 thought that indigenous traditions should be included. This is a technical term denoting religions based on oral traditions, such as Native Americans. A look back to demographics reveals that P31 took a college religion course. P48 suggests selections from Buddhist holy books, while approvingly mentioning that it was rare to see Vedic literature mentioned in a reading list for world literature. Demographics reveal that P48 also took a college religion course.

Four other participants (P12, P16, P25, P28) simply respond that the textbook omits the New Testament. Two participants state that students are not asked to believe the New Testament, but to read and study it (P12, P16). Neither of these students had taken a world religions course or regularly participated in a faith community, so their ability to identify the gap in the literature derived from sources other than college educational preparations. The faith heritage of both was Roman Catholic, which mandates catechism and confirmation classes for its members, although that is speculation. With the preponderance of those who do not miss the New Testament in the list, it is doubtful if these two participants obtained

²¹ During the 2010-2011 school year, one world religions professor at ASU included non-religion readings (agnostic and atheist) on his course syllabus. It would be interesting to investigate a possible connection between his classes and this student.

their knowledge from their academic training; P12 questions her academic readiness to confront religious topics, although P16 does not.

P25 and P28 show a common thread. Both have taken academic religion courses, P28 in College and P25 in High School. They are both Protestants, both of whom have retained the faith community of their heritage, and both of whom regularly participate in a faith community. In the feedback section, both of these students identify the ubiquity of Christianity as a reason for including readings from the New Testament. “As most of the world is Catholic or Protestant, the New Testament should also be represented” (P25). “At least the Gospels of the New Testament should be included as an example of Christianity, especially since Christianity is one of the world’s biggest religions” (P28). These responses, beg the question, “Why are the textbook authors so blind?” We also wonder why two-thirds of English majors can not supply a bridge to span the chasm left by the textbook.

Do Poets Tell the Truth? According to Plato, poets not only don’t tell the truth, they are at least thrice removed from it by nature (*Republic*, Book X). The story goes like this. Humans observe copies, and we get so enamored with the copies that we don’t always accept the real McCoy, the ideal form or archetype (εἶδος). Plato illustrates this principle in the allegory of the cave (*Republic*, Book VII). Poets²², or other artistic types, remarked Socrates, are worse than the rest of us, since they create copies of copies. Therefore, they are not to be trusted, along with rhetoricians and a host of other scoundrels. Now admittedly, that is a paraphrase, but the lesson rings true – we do not go searching for fact or accuracy among artists, since they are given a wide berth as interpreters rather than primary sources. Whether truth is there or not, is another matter. The last exercise in the Survey of Religious

²² Our word poet comes from the Greek word ποιεῖν, to make. In the *Republic*, poets are folks that make things, whether those things are Epics, paintings or sculptures.

Knowledge asked students to evaluate a protest song from 1967 by Steppenwolf, *Monster-America* (see Appendix D). I wanted to know how the participants, future history and English teachers, could handle a document confronting the juxtaposition of religion, literature, history, American life, and pop culture, for that is the world in which we all live.

Participant feedback was 81%, compared to a 19% response via feedback for *Thoughts on Religion*, and 64% response via feedback for discipline specific *Textual Analysis*. After presenting the first verse of *Monster-America* (see chapter 4, Table 10, and Appendix D), students were prompted for self-assessment with the following query: *My education has equipped me to address religious images and statements such as the ones given in the above example.* The majority (83%) responded in the affirmative, a gain of 12% over the same question when asked in *Demographics*. This gain is cause to consider the contribution of the Hawthorne effect, students' performance improves when they realize they are being studied. Students may have also felt good about their previous performance up to this point, or believe that although some of the previous questions were a little difficult, this looks easy. To say this is over confidence is an understatement. Let me explain.

There is hardly a line in *Monster-American* that is factual. All the folks that came to America were neither hunted nor weary, and Tories had no problem with the crown. Anglicans prospered in the South until after the revolution. Secondly, no one came to America to escape the Pope; the Spanish and the French actually came with the Pope's blessing. By the time the English got to America, they were no longer under Papal control. New England was a Protestant affair. Finally, witches were never burned in America, not even in Salem. Those convicted in Salem of witchcraft were hung; Giles Cory was crushed to death during interrogation. In spite of these historical fallacies, 60% or 35 participants

believe the song is true to the American experiment. If the survey was addressing incurable romantics or recidivist hippies who grew up during the Steppenwolf era, the response is understandable. But these participants are on the track to becoming professionals. Therefore a 40% success rate becomes unacceptable, especially since the reasons for the choices have yet to be examined. What say the 24 dissenters?

Six of the 24 gave no reason for their dissent (P18, P19, P38, P50, P53, P56). One of these even claimed they did not know (P50). One claimed that she ran out of time (P18). How can one disagree without a reason? Demographic indicators and *Basic Religious Knowledge* scores offer no help on why these students can give no reasons or chose not to give reasons for their choices. Not a few would conclude that the choices without reasons are random guesses. P34 rejected the historical validity of the song under analysis, but stated in the feedback that “the lyrics are valid and follow a clear chronological order,” constituting a conflicting response. P35 claimed that although the song was harsh, it was accurate for the American experience. P59 stated that “this song is too graphic and biased for high school students. I am not equipped to teach this and not offend someone.” This response is in contrast to the same participant’s self assessment, that she had been academically prepared to address the intersection of religion and pop culture in the classroom. Such responses do not specifically question historical validity of any single point. Among the sixteen remaining participants, we can dismiss those associating papal abuse or Catholic persecution with emigration (P2, P8, P11, P16, P20, P48, P52). Our dissenters have been reduced by 16, leaving us with eight, a mere 14% who have an argument for challenging the validity of *Monster-America* rather than the 40% previous believed. What are these arguments?

Not all participants argue from an historical basis. At least three participants argue on the basis of logical fallacy or historical criticism. P29 and P55 contest the validity of *Monster-America* based on the fallacy of generalization, stating not all came for religion freedom, were Catholic, or burned witches. Although this argument may not address specific errors relating to the history of Christianity in America, it does show critical thought. Two other participants (P6, P51) charge the song with cynicism and content that a strictly negative approach to a subject is a one-sided argument. Here again, students who lack the expertise to address validity from an historical perspective find another way to explain their choices. P12 did not believe that America was really founded upon religious principles, but does agree that religious folks committed atrocities. This participant argued that slavery had more of an impact on America than did religion, and she may have also believed that witches were burned at the stake, although this is not clear.

P3 contended that the picture painted by these lyrics was one-sided, but thought the imbalance derived from another source: the American educational system. “The American education system mostly focuses on Christian immigrants and the events associated with that particular group” (P3). This Pentecostal female, who affirmed regular attendance in a faith community, scored 13 on the basics section and shows a tendency to social justice issues in the section on *Thoughts on Religion*, censoring fundamentalists, but affirming religious liberty in public schools, pluralism, and the necessity of a public university to pursue understanding of creeds, religions, and spirituality. She has also studied religion in college, and experienced a change in religious affiliation from Roman Catholic to Pentecostal. I propose that her response arose from her sensitivity to critical theory, pedagogy of the oppressed, rather than academic expertise or the rules of logical fallacy, since she does not

address particular errors such as the pope or burning witches. She could possibly accept these errors, while rejecting the poet for reasons of power or privilege, which she may even consider greater than some elusive concept of truth. It does not appear that she made a decision based on knowledge of religion or history, and if given the opportunity, she may use religion as a gateway for what she considered a more pressing need. Here again the data comes to an end before all our questions can be answered.

We are left with a duet, plus P29 must be recalled for additional testimony. Out of 48 total responses in the multidisciplinary section, only three question the lyric: "...some would burn the witches." P10 claimed that witch hunts were common in Europe, but this was America where folks sought to find freedom of conscious, but not necessarily to build a new nation. P29 makes the only unequivocal statement: "Also as far as I am aware, witches were not burned at the stake in the U. S." P41 stated "some glaring falsehoods exist. First the most notorious sect to emigrate were the Separatists who being Anglican, owed no allegiance to the pope as it was the King who presided over the Church of England. What's more it is important to emphasize the context of the Salem trials and possible justifications on both sides of the argument" (P41). At this juncture, one may be justified to say that three in 60, or 5% of participants are actually prepared to address religion on a multidisciplinary level, which is the plane on which most Americans confront religion.

"The challenges of the 21st century cannot be solved by the thinking of any one discipline" (Richlin, 2006, p. 71). The multi-disciplinary example of textual analysis was selected for a number of reasons. 21st century academic disciplines continue to develop increasingly complex symbiotic relationships and interactions. Scientists must talk to philosophers, religious studies experts must talk to educators, and educators must talk with

everyone. In the *Monster-America* text, the poet should have talked with the historian and the religious studies expert, because this poet offers his listeners an overtly fabricated view of the American experience in its infancy. Neither have the poets ceased to draw on historical and religious themes, as is the case with Lady Gaga's April 2011 song, *Judas*. Although most may not go first and foremost to the poets, the songmeisters, or the media for truth, fact, history, or religion, that consensus does not prevent either the public or our students from doing such. 95% of all participants could not see the errors in the Steppenwolf song, did not get a clue from the mention of protest genre, and apparently did not know the difference between Puritans and Catholics. One may speculate that these pre-service teachers had no critical thinking skills, but it is possible that the problem is not with the participants, but with a hypothesis which contends that critical thinking is possible without knowledge of the laws of logical fallacy or some expertise in the discipline under consideration. Given Moore's (2007) criteria for religious literacy as the ability to discern and analyze the fundamental intersections of religion and social/political/cultural life through multiple lenses, the majority of participants do not possess acceptable levels of religious knowledge, and do not thoroughly understand those aspects of religion that Prothero (2007a) specified that every American needs to know.

Gaps in Previous Studies

The studies by Prothero (2007a) and the Pew Research Center (2010) were terminal assessments, offering no further inquiry into those participants who performed well on their surveys. The conclusion of Prothero was the need for more religion classes, which seems almost a plug for job security for religious studies professors, a little vested interest to say the least. Yet Prothero does not state that it was a preponderance of religion classes that reversed

the religious literacy rates in America. As a matter of fact, Prothero offers no proof that the religion classes that are normally taught in public schools and universities actually enable a person to fulfill the wish of the Scarecrow on the Wizard of Oz, which was to think deep thoughts. On the contrary, this study revealed that there was no statistical difference between those who had taken college courses in religion and those who had not, as relates to basic religion knowledge, those questions which were drawn verbatim from Prothero and the Pew Research Center. Therefore, one would be in error to suggest that merely more religion courses was the cure for religious illiteracy; this would be on a par with saying that more schooling or more hours devoted to the same failed practices would cure America's current educational malaise. What is wanted is not more classes, in either religion or any other subject matter, but better ones. As far as this study is concerned, a better religion class, or a better teacher education class in diversity awareness that focused on religion rather than economics, race, or gender, would be one that had a direct interaction with multiple religions. On the whole, participants scored higher on basic religious knowledge who had contact with multiple religions demonstrated by a change of religious affiliation. A better religion course or a better diversity awareness course that focused on religion would be one that required field study, where students met and talked with persons representing the majority religious traditions in America.

Limitations of the Study

1. The study takes for granted the validity of online communications and survey distribution, and that all students who were polled via email actually received, read, and were able to access the survey instrument, yet purposefully decided not to

- participate. The study does not take into account the possibility of a flawed system of recruitment or distribution because of the nature of current communications systems.
2. Although attempting a census, the participant return of surveys was a 39% sample of the total population. This results in an acceptable, but limited, external validity.
 3. The study was not longitudinal and was limited to a single window of time within one semester using a solitary survey to collect both quantitative and qualitative data. Such a process could pose a limitation on internal validity.
 4. This study was exploratory, and therefore subject to all the drawbacks that accompanies maiden voyages and like intellectual adventures, such as ending with more questions than the collected data could address.
 5. This study focused on a limited number of scenarios to demonstrate religious knowledge.
 6. Because the setting was limited to a particular regional university, the generalizations to other universities would also be limited.
 7. Because the participants were limited to pre-service teachers in Social Studies and English, the generalizations to other pre-service teachers in such disciplines such as Math, Science, Fine Arts, Music, Business, and Technology, would also be limited.

Revisiting the Conceptual Framework and Research Procedures

Traditional modes of data collection, such as interviews or proxy distribution of paper surveys, carry with them additional risks of compromising anonymity and the increased influence of the Hawthorne effect, the participant's response to being studied. Using online anonymous electronic data collection via a tool like Google Survey becomes increasingly beneficial for clarifying observer-participant roles without the need for a third party, offers

the most protection to student identity, and provides the greatest possibility for a mode of data collection closest to a double blind study. Although the Hawthorne effect can not be totally dismissed through use of a virtual medium, it does fully eradicate any direct professor to student pressure to perform.

On the other hand, online data collection also can reduce the number of participants, because no external or academic reasons exist to participate in data collection. It is a two-edged sword: both increasing anonymity and decreasing actual participants. Anonymity has a way of decreasing responsibility, which in this study would be completion of the data collection survey. There were also questions that arose during data analysis that could have only been answered by returning to the participants, which was impossible given the method used and the anonymity maintained throughout the research. Such a dilemma could only be resolved by establishing distinct participant identities throughout the research, which would alter the survey format and methodology to leave the option open for private interviews.

In retrospect, some aspects of data collection could be refined. For example, the choice to only survey English and social studies majors could have skewed the results to imply an overly optimistic conclusion. Neither does the textual analysis offer a one-to-one correspondence in difficulty between majors. Social studies majors are given a rather involved scenario, whereas English majors were offered a sequence and asked to fill-in-the-blank. Although both scenarios require higher level thinking skills, the puzzle for social studies majors contained significantly more pieces. Secondly, there are pre-service teachers in many other disciplines, such as Fine Arts, Business, Science, Math, Music, and Technology. One can not be sure that religion is any less significant for these areas.

Implications

As a group and in accordance with the criteria for religious literacy offered by Prothero (2007a) and Moore (2007), the majority of participants of this study were not prepared to address religious topics in future classroom settings. This is not a pink slip presented to the participants for incompetence, but a memo informing those who design teacher education that something of global significance is missing, something that is of the utmost importance to an informed democracy and a free world. Both J. Marshall (2006) and Moore (2007) made a case for the inclusion of the religious aspects of society as a part of diversity awareness in teacher education, yet the failure to see the importance of religion as a lens through which a great many persons view the world becomes the weak link in an otherwise substantial academic chain. Educators have become familiar with the racial lens, the ethnic lens, and the gender lens, yet none of these ways of viewing the world encompass as great a percentage of the American population as does the religious lens. Take for an example the gender lens, even if this contained the interpretive framework for all women, it could only represent 51% of the American population. On the other hand, the Christian religious lens represents 75% of the American population, and if all religions are included this lens would represent 85% of the population. According to Peter Berger (1999), to ignore such a pervading influence on humanity puts us at great peril.

It is not uncommon for a history department of a public university to have at least one prominent expert in religion. Yet the same can probably not be said for other schools in the university, as the English Department or the College of Education, although it seems that attention to diversity issues would include such (Marshall 2006). For example, according to published check sheets, gender studies (feminist studies) are spread across public university colleges and curriculums (see Appendices E and F). It also appears from published university

statements on inclusion and diversity that religion is an important part of American life, and there is some reason to believe that religion may be a greater part of minority identity than it is to the Caucasian majority identity. Therefore to either underrate or ignore religion in teacher education is a greater affront to minorities than it is to the majority population. Until colleges of education pursue experts in religion with the same fervor that they pursue experts in race and gender, minorities will continue to be marginalized and intolerance engendered.

This study recommends that the conceptual frameworks of educational colleges, departments, and professors be re-evaluated, together with the level of importance given to religion in the curriculum as documented in their syllabi. Secondly, it is suggested that resident experts in religion be distributed across the university, as is the case with gender and feminist studies. Thirdly, it is paramount to assess whether religion has obtained an equal importance to other elements of the university diversity statements, and that inquiry into the place of religion across the curriculum has obtained an equal standing to such interpretive lenses as feminism, gender studies, and social justice. Finally, we must insure that religion, as has English and History in some cases, has not been used as a pre-text for alternate worldview inculcation, a practice that could prove to be an infraction of the First Amendment. In our present world, there may be no political philosophy or social experiment which speaks more to the human identity, and especially to the identity of minorities and the poor, than religion.

Further Research

Although ethnic minorities account for only 7% of the sample, or four participants, it was interesting to note that none of these four had changed religious affiliation between childhood and college. With Caucasians, this was the only demographic that showed

statistical significance. One avenue for future study would be the importance that minorities place upon their religion of heritage as a dynamic in their current identities, and whether this religious identity was traditional religion, which Berger (1999) claims is on the increase, or a more accommodating form of religious expression. A point of departure to begin this inquiry may be the Gospel Choirs within the University of North Carolina system.

An extremely fruitful part of this research was the query into textual analysis and observing how pre-service teachers apply their content skills to real world teaching scenarios that every one of them will encounter in their first teaching appointment. Time and space limited the extent to which this study could pursue this line of inquiry. The survey only presented one discipline specific scenario and one multidisciplinary scenario. This could hardly do justice to the many crossroads where religious and literature or religion and social studies intersect. At least five additional studies could be undertaken, with three for English majors and two for social studies majors. The scenarios for the English majors could be drawn from the American literature textbooks for one study, the English literature textbook for a second study, and the world literature textbook for a third. For social studies majors, one study could be based on scenarios from American history texts, while a second could be based on current world history textbooks. In this manner, more extensive inquiry could be made into a greater range of topics. The *Religious Knowledge Survey* could be used to screen participants for research to screen for higher order thinking skills in the area of religion. Such a project, with both pre-service and in-service teachers, would be a great tool in assessing religious literacy for those in teacher education, diversity studies, and religious studies.

There may also be a better way to promote religious literacy as an integral part of an informed democracy by creating partnership for Religious Literacy following the successful

model for Holocaust studies which is conducted annually at ASU under the sponsorship of the Rosen family and offers Continuing Education Units (CEU) for teachers. Seeing a similar lacuna in holocaust studies, the Center of Judaic, Peace, and Holocaust Studies at Appalachian State University offers an Annual Holocaust Seminar with scholarships and Continuing Education Units for teachers, training 30-40 new fellows every July who will carry this information back to students and fellow instructors. This would be a great model on which to construct a program of post-graduate religious literacy training for in-service teachers which could provide instruction and CEUs in the culturally relevant areas of Bible, World Religions, Religion in America, and Religion in Public Life. Regardless of protectionist or other criticisms to such a proposal, I think that we can all agree that religious ignorance is unacceptable for a 21st century informed democracy.

Conclusions

Moore (2007) stated that it may be unconstitutional to omit the study of religion in public education; Berger (1999) affirmed that ignoring religion puts us at risk; and Prothero (2007a) said religious ignorance can prove fatal. We may seriously doubt that those who died on 9/11 would agree that religion is of little or no consequence. Other assessments aside, suggestions within academia and society that we may politely ignore religion and be none the worse go a long way to prove Alfred North Whitehead's hypothesis. Over half a century ago Whitehead (1948) said that education had become irrelevant, focusing on abstractions and inert ideas, teaching technical skills and leaving humanity ignorant of the one subject-matter for all education: life. "If in the troubled times which maybe before us, you wish appreciably to increase the chance of some savage upheaval, introduce widespread technical education and ignore the Benedictine ideal. Society will then get what it deserves" (Whitehead, 1948,

pp. 68-69). Although we may agree that religion moves nations, determines elections, and flies jets into buildings, this study revealed that we are sending out teachers ill equipped to address religious issues. If the seculars are correct, we have nothing to fear. Yet if Berger, Moore, Prothero, and Whitehead were correct, then are we willing to say of 9/11, an undeniable savage upheaval, that we deserved it because of our penchant to ignore religion?

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APPENDIX A: Permission: Prothero

----- Original Message -----

From: Stephen Prothero

To: David E. Smith

Sent: Wednesday, September 29, 2010 21:50

Subject: Re: Dissertation - David Smith

David E. Smith has permission to use or adapt the religious literacy

survey or other relevant information for dissertation purposes.

All best,

Steve

Stephen Prothero, Professor

Department of Religion

Boston University

prothero@bu.edu

<http://www.stephenprothero.com>

twitter: sprothero

Quoting "David E. Smith" <dave.musicsmythe@charter.net>:

> Steve,

> I also need you to reply to this email with a formal permission to

> use the survey found on pp. 235-239 of Religious Literacy (2007)

> specifically, or other parts of you book in general, for a doctoral

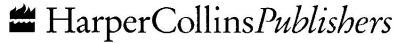
> dissertation at the Reich College of Education, Appalachian State

> University, Boone, NC. The dissertation will be completed in 2011.

APPENDIX B: Permission: HarperCollins Publishers

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Telephone 212 207-7000



NOVEMBER 8, 2010

DAVID E. SMITH
4382 MAGNOLIA LANE
HUDSON, NC 28638

Re: STEPHEN PROTHERO / RELIGIOUS LITERACY

Dear DAVID E. SMITH,

Permission is granted for the use of the religious literacy quiz (pp. 235-239) as specified in your application of SEPTEMBER 28, 2010, in your doctoral dissertation. The credit line should include title, author, copyright year and copyright holder(s) and notice that the material has been ADAPTED and reproduced by permission of HarperCollins Publishers. Permission is granted for a maximum of five copies. Permission is not granted for *publication* in any medium. The excerpt, only as it appears in your dissertation, may be included in your university's digital archive but in no other, and it may not, as part of that archive, be shared outside your university.

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APPENDIX C: Permission: Pew Research Center

----- Original Message -----

From: Greg Smith

To: dave.musicsmythe@charter.net

Sent: Friday, November 12, 2010 14:01

Subject: RE: Dissertation Research: ASU

Dear Mr. Smith,

Thank you for your message and your interest in our work. My colleague, Alan Cooperman, forwarded your message to me. Please feel free to replicate and/or modify any of our questions from the Religious Knowledge Survey (and from any of our other surveys) in your own research. As with all of our survey data, the dataset from our Religious Knowledge Survey will be made available for secondary analysis via download from our website. We anticipate posting the dataset to our website by March or April of next year, and I hope it will be useful to you in your research.

Best wishes,

-Greg Smith

Gregory A. Smith
Pew Forum on Religion & Public Life
202.419.4578

APPENDIX D: ASU Religious Knowledge Survey

RELIGIOUS KNOWLEDGE SURVEY

Principle Investigator: Dave Smith
Dissertation Chair: Michael Dale
ds78177@appstate.edu

You can view the published form here:
<https://spreadsheets.google.com/spreadsheet/viewform?formkey=dGE5cDlwTm9tTjlzQjVQc0xKeFp3dVE6MA>

Demographics

[1]Gender

- Female
- Male
- Transgender

[2]Racial or ethnic identification

*Select based on parents

- | | |
|------------------|-----------------|
| African American | Native American |
| Asian | Mixed Race |
| Caucasian | Other: |
| Hispanic | |

[3]Age

- | | |
|-------|-------|
| 18-24 | 45-59 |
| 25-34 | 60+ |
| 35-44 | |

[4]Faith Community (heritage)

*Religion of Parents or Grandparents, childhood religious faith community (check all that apply)?

- | | |
|---------------------------|------------------|
| Roman Catholic | Muslim |
| Baptist | Hindu |
| Methodist / Wesleyan | Buddhist |
| Lutheran | Atheist / none |
| Presbyterian | Agnostic / none |
| Pentecostal / Charismatic | Spiritual / none |
| Episcopal / Anglican | Other: |
| Jewish | |

[5] Faith Community (current practice)

*Faith community with which you now identify and participate (check as many as apply)

Roman Catholic	Muslim
Baptist	Hindu
Methodist / Wesleyan	Buddhist
Lutheran	Atheist / none
Presbyterian	Agnostic / none
Pentecostal / Charismatic	Spiritual / none
Episcopal / Anglican	Other:
Jewish	

[6] Frequency of attendance

*How often do you participate in your current faith community?

Weekly	Once or twice annually
Monthly	Never
Seasonally (holydays or holidays)	Other:

[7] Academic Major

English Education
History Education
Other:

[8] High School Religion Courses

*Did you take any religion courses in High School?

No	New Testament
World Religions	Other:
Old Testament / Hebrew Scriptures	

[9] College Religion Courses

*Have you taken any college religion or philosophy courses?

No	New Testament
World Religions	Other:
Old Testament / Hebrew Scriptures	

[10] Current Course

*What Education, English, or History course[s] are you currently taking?

ENG3300	HIS3628	CI3549
ENG3900	HIS3728	CI4900
ENG4560	HIS3828	Other:
ENG4591	CI3100	
HIS3626	CI3536	

[11]Educational Critique

*My education has equipped me to intelligently discuss religious questions that may arise in the general course of teaching students within my discipline.

Strongly Disagree – Disagree – Agree – Strongly Agree

[12]Praxis Critique

* As a general rule, I have been taught by word and example to seek to understand all religion and religious persons rather than to respond with criticism based on generalities.

Strongly Disagree – Disagree – Agree – Strongly Agree

Basic Religious Knowledge

INSTRUCTIONS: The following questions attempt to assess current knowledge and understanding. Do not Google, use Wikipedia, or perform any other research for answers. This is an assessment of education, traditions, and practices, not an assessment of any student's intelligence. Therefore marking "don't know" is a perfectly honest and valid choice, and may be the "correct" answer for any number of questions.

[1]Sabbath

*When does the Jewish Sabbath begin?

Friday
Saturday

Sunday
Don't know

[2]Ramadan

*Which religion celebrates Ramadan?

Judaism
Christianity
Islam

Hinduism
Buddhism
Don't know

(3)Muslim scripture

*What is the holy book of Islam? (Don't know is a valid answer)

[4]Nirvana

*Which of the following religions aims at Nirvana, the state of being free from suffering?

Judaism
Christianity
Islam

Hinduism
Buddhism
Don't know

[5]Vishnu and Shiva

*In which religion are Vishnu and Shiva central figures?

- | | |
|--------------|------------|
| Judaism | Hinduism |
| Christianity | Buddhism |
| Islam | Don't know |

[6]1st Book in the Bible

*What is the first book of the Hebrew Bible or Old Testament? (Don't know is a valid answer)

[7]4 Gospels

*What are the names of the four Gospels, the first four books of the New Testament? (Don't know is a valid answer)

[8]Jesus' place of birth

*Where, according to the New Testament, was Jesus born?

- | | |
|-----------|------------|
| Jerusalem | Jericho |
| Nazareth | Don't know |
| Bethlehem | |

[9]Eucharist

*Which of the following best describes Roman Catholic teaching about the bread and wine used for communion (Eucharist).

- The bread and wine becomes the body and blood of Jesus
- The bread and wine are symbols of Jesus death
- Jesus is present in the sacrament in mystical way
- Don't know

[10]Sola fide

*Which of these religious groups traditionally teaches that salvation comes through faith alone?

- | | |
|------------|------------------------------|
| Catholic | Both Catholic and Protestant |
| Protestant | Don't know |

[11]10 Commandments

*Which of the following are NOT one of the Ten Commandments?

- | | |
|---|----------------------|
| Do not murder | Honor your parents |
| Do not steal | Sanctify the Sabbath |
| Do not commit adultery | Do not covet |
| Do unto others as you would have them do unto you | Don't know |

[12]Exodus

*Which Bible figure is most closely associated with the Exodus?

Abraham
Elijah
Job

Moses
Don't know

[13]U. S. Constitution and Religion

*Which of the following statements best describes what the U. S. Constitution says about religion?

Christianity should be given special emphasis by the government
The government shall neither establish a religion nor interfere with the practice of religion
The Constitution does not say anything one way or the other about religion
Don't know

[14]U. S. Supreme Court and Religion

*According to rulings by the U. S. Supreme Court, is a public school teacher permitted to read the Bible as an example of Literature in class?

No
Yes
Don't know

[15]1st Great Awakening

*Which one of these preachers participated in the period of religious activity known as the First Great Awakening?

Jonathan Edwards
Charles Finney
Billy Graham

Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.
Don't know

Thoughts on Religion

INSTRUCTIONS: Express your views on the following concepts.

[1]Modernization and Religion

*Modernization leads to a decline of religion, both in society and in the minds of individuals.

Strongly Disagree – Disagree – Agree – Strongly Agree

[2]Fundamentalism

*Fundamentalism may be defined as any sort of passionate religious movement.

Strongly Disagree – Disagree – Agree – Strongly Agree

[3]Fundamentalism and caution

*It is socially acceptable to regard fundamentalist religions with a degree of caution and suspicion.

Strongly Disagree – Disagree – Agree – Strongly Agree

[4]University Policy

*It is outside the interest and mission of a public university to foster and nurture a learning environment conducive to the promoting of awareness, knowledge and understanding of religion, spiritual values, and creed.

Strongly Disagree – Disagree – Agree – Strongly Agree

[5]Secularized World

*Americans live in an increasingly secularized world.

Strongly Disagree – Disagree – Agree – Strongly Agree

[6]Religion free zones

*American public schools should be religion free zones - students should check their faith traditions at the door upon entering the classroom.

Strongly Disagree – Disagree – Agree – Strongly Agree

[7]Pluralism

*Pluralism (commitment to religious diversity) is non-exclusive and takes the truth claims of all religions equally valid.

Strongly Disagree – Disagree – Agree – Strongly Agree

[8]Non-religion

*Non-religion (atheism, agnosticism, secularism) is by nature more objective, fair, and honest than any religion.

Strongly Disagree – Disagree – Agree – Strongly Agree

[TRF]Thoughts: Feedback

*Comment on or explain any of the choices which you made in the sections entitled "Thoughts on Religion."

Teachers and Texts

INSTRUCTIONS: History Education Majors should respond to the History Ed. Scenario and the Multi-Disciplinary textual analysis. English Education Majors should respond to the English Ed. Scenario and the Multi-Disciplinary textual analysis. Both History Ed. and English Ed. majors should give the reasons for their choices in the associated text boxes.

History Education: The Crusades

SCENARIO: While reviewing the 2008 edition of a standard NC World History textbook, the instructor encounters a section entitled: "The Crusades: Disaster and Treachery." In the overview "Before you Read," the textbook poses the question: "Why did Europeans launch the Crusades?" The text offers a short passage from the eye-witness, Raymond d'Aguilers (11th Century), and incorporates the following information: 1) European Christians launched a series of four religious wars called Crusades to regain Jerusalem from Muslim control, 2) The Egyptian Fatimads controlled the Holy Land and the Turks boarded the north (possibly persecuting Christian pilgrims), 3) The Byzantine Emperor turned to Pope Urban II (Council Clermont) for help. The following testimony was gleaned from d'Aguilers on the conquest of Jerusalem: "It was necessary to pick one's way over the bodies of men and horses.... In the Temple and porch of Solomon, men rode in blood up to their knees and bridle reins.... The city was filled with corpses and blood" (d'Aguilers).

*What is your professional opinion of this short overview of the Crusades?

[H1]It appears from the scenario that the textbook has covered all major aspects and viewpoints of the Crusades.

Strongly Disagree – Disagree – Agree – Strongly Agree

[H2]The reliable eyewitness testimony by d'Aguilers provides additional credibility to the textbook's emphasis of European responsibility.

Strongly Disagree – Disagree – Agree – Strongly Agree

[H3]I would accept the textbook question as it stands: "Why did the Europeans launch the Crusades?"

Strongly Disagree – Disagree – Agree – Strongly Agree

History Education: Feedback [HF]

*Explain you previous choices in 50 words or less.

English Education: Origins, Traditions, and Sacred Texts

SCENARIO: While reviewing the table of contents of the 2007 edition of a standard NC textbook, World Masterpieces, under the heading of “Sacred Texts” and “Origins and Traditions” readings from the following primary texts appear: Hebrew Bible (Genesis, Ruth, Psalms), Qur’an, Rig Veda, Upanishads, Bhagavad Gita, Tao Te Ching, and Analects of Confucius.

*What is your professional assessment of this selection?

[E1]The list appears to be complete, containing readings from all major world religions.

Strongly Disagree – Disagree – Agree – Strongly Agree

[E2]The selection is a fair and balanced representation of all major faith traditions.

Strongly Disagree – Disagree – Agree – Strongly Agree

[E3]I would accept the textbook and its selection of sacred texts.

Strongly Disagree – Disagree – Agree – Strongly Agree

English Education: Feedback [EF]

*Explain your two previous responses in 50 words or less.

Multidisciplinary: Pop Culture in Song

*Analyze the text of this 1967 protest song by Steppenwolf. Locate three religious references and reflect upon the context, chronology, and validity of the statements contained therein:

Once the religious, the hunted and weary;
Chasing the promise of freedom and hope,
Came to this country to build a new vision,
Far from the reaches of kingdom and pope.
Like good Christians, some would burn the witches;
Later some got slaves to gather riches.

[MD1]My education has equipped me to address religious images and statements such as the ones given in the above example.

Strongly Disagree Disagree Agree Strongly Agree

[MD2]The sequence of events and their descriptions referenced in this protest song are historically valid and accurate as relates to the American experience.

Strongly Disagree Disagree Agree Strongly Agree

Multidisciplinary: Feedback [MDF]

*Explain your choices: Address references to the religious, the pope, and burning witches. Use 50 words or less.

APPENDIX E: Graduate Gender Studies across the Curriculum

Women's Studies Program²³
University College

Course Requirements for the Graduate Certificate in Women's Studies (Code: 130A)
Semester Hours Required (minimum): 12

Courses	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • WS 5600: Feminist Perspectives on Pedagogy and Academe (3) • WS 5650: Feminist Theories (3) • Choose two courses out of the following list*: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ AS 5530-5549: Selected Topics (when the topic is gender) (1-4) ○ ENG 5200: Issues in Teaching English (when taught by WS faculty) (3) ○ ENG 5650: Gender Studies (3) ○ FRE 5003: French Women Writers (3) ○ GHY 5130: Seminar in Human Geography (when the topic is gender) (3) ○ HIS 5107: Research Seminar in European History (when the topic is gender) (3) ○ HIS 5207: Research Seminar in American History (when the topic is gender) (3) ○ HIS 5307: Research Seminar in Latin American History (when the topic is gender) (3) ○ HIS 5530-5549: Selected Topics (when the topic is gender) (1-4) ○ HPC 5130: Women's Issues in Counseling (3) ○ IDS 5530-5549: Selected Topics (when the topic is gender) (1-4) ○ SOC 5650: Women in the Justice System (3) ○ SOC 5800: Sociology of the Family (3) ○ WS 5500: Independent Study (1-4) ○ WS 5530-5549: Selected Topics (1-4) ○ WS 5900: Internship (3)
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²³ <http://graduate.appstate.edu/gradstudies/bulletin11/programs/womensstudies.html>

APPENDIX F: Undergraduate Gender Studies across the Curriculum²⁴

2011-2012 Bachelor of Arts (BA) Check sheet for Degree Code 602A WOMEN'S STUDIES

I. GENERAL EDUCATION.....44
II. FOREIGN LANGUAGE (Completion of 6 s.h. at the *intermediate level, or higher)..... 6
_____ 1040 and _____ 1050 _____ or 1060 (6 s.h.); or higher level courses

**NOTE: Foreign language 1010 and 1020 (or 1030) are prerequisites for the intermediate level course(s).*

(Gen Ed: CHN/FRE/GER/JPN/RSN/SNH 1050 in LtoG: Regions in Global Context theme and LtoG: Performance of Culture theme)

III. MAJOR REQUIREMENTS36

2. 0 major GPA is required for graduation. Major GPA calculation will include all courses taken in fulfillment of the major requirements. Minimum of 18 semester hours of courses taken to fulfill major requirements must be courses offered by Appalachian. No more than 46 semester hours of W S courses may be counted toward the BA degree. Nine(9) semester hours of General Education courses with a W S prefix can count toward the W S major.

A. Required Introductory - Choose one of the following: (3 semester hours)

W S 2400 _____ (3) Distinguished Lectures on Women, Sex, and Gender (**Gen Ed: H&S: Individual and Society theme**)

W S 2421 _____ (3) Sex, Gender, & Power: Introduction to WS (**Gen Ed: H&S: Cultural Diversity theme**)

ANT 2420 _____ (3) Gender, Race, & Class (**Gen Ed: H&S: Individual and Society theme**)

SOC 2850 _____ (3) Constructions of Gender

B. Required Women's History - Choose one of the following: (3 semester hours)

HIS 3422 _____ (3) Women in History (American or European) HIS 353x _____ (3) Selected Topics in Women's History

C. Required Women's Studies Theory (3 semester hours):

W S 4650* _____ (3) Feminist Theories (**WID**) (Pre: ANT 2420 or SOC 2850 or W S 2400 or W S 2421 or By Permission of Instructor)

D. Required Senior Seminar (3 semester hours)

W S 4550 _____ (3) Senior Seminar (**CAP**) (Pre: Senior standing)

E. Electives in Women's Studies (24 s.h. required): *Note: In addition to the electives listed below, new pre-approved electives are listed on a semester-by-semester basis on the WS website: www.ws.appstate.edu.*

Women's Studies Humanities Electives - Choose at least 6 semester hours

ART 2011 _____ (3) Art Introduction (with Women's Studies focus) (**Gen Ed: LtoG: Identity, Culture, & Media theme**)

ART 3400 _____ (3) Women Artists

ENG 3710 _____ (3) Studies in Women & Literature

²⁴ <http://checksheets.appstate.edu/sites/default/files/WS%20BA%20602A%2011-12.pdf>

ENG 4710 ____ (3) Advanced Studies in Women & Literature
 PHL 3030 ____ (3) Feminist Philosophy (**Gen Ed: H&S: Revolutions and Social Change theme**)
 REL 3030* ____ (3) Women in the Biblical Tradition (Pre: REL 2010 or 2020 or instructor permission)
 W S 2421 ____ (3) Sex, Gender, & Power: Introduction to W S (**Gen Ed: H&S: Cultural Diversity theme**)
 W S 2600 ____ (3) Introduction to LGBT Studies
 W S 3100 ____ (3) Girls Coming of Age
 W S 3600 ____ (3) LGBT Studies Seminar
 W S 3900 ____ (1-6) Internship in Women’s Studies (linked with a community organization)
 W S 4600 ____ (3) Queer Theory
 Additional selected topics courses with a WS focus may be counted (see www.ws.appstate.edu for listings). _____

Women’s Studies Social Sciences Electives - Choose at least 6 semester hours

ANT 2420 ____ (3) Gender, Race, & Class (**Gen Ed: H&S: Individual and Society theme**)
 ANT 3420 ____ (3) Women & Gender in Anthropology
 FDN 3530 - 3549 ____ (3) Selected Topics: Identity and Relationship
 HIS 3422 ____ (3) Women in History
 HIS 4100* ____ (3) Senior Seminar (with Women's History focus) (Pre: History major and 3 sh of 3000-level HIS or instructor permission)
 IDS 3000 ____ (3) Histories of Knowledges
 PSY 2305* ____ (3) Psychology of Gender (Pre: PSY 1200)
 SOC 1110 ____ (3) Sociology of Intimate Relationships
 SOC 2850 ____ (3) Constructions of Gender
 SOC 4650 ____ (3) Women in the Justice System
 W S 2400 ____ (3) Distinguished Lectures on Women, Sex, and Gender (**Gen Ed: H&S: Individual & Society theme**)
 W S 2421 ____ (3) Sex, Gender, and Power: Introduction to W S (**Gen Ed: H&S: Cultural Diversity theme**)
 W S 3200 ____ (3) Global Women’s Issues
 W S 3300 ____ (3) Gender and Technology
 W S 3400 ____ (3) Women, Food, and Nature
 W S 3900 ____ (1-6) Internship in Women’s Studies (linked with a community organization)
 Additional selected topics courses with a WS focus from may be counted (see www.ws.appstate.edu for listings).

*** THESE COURSES HAVE PREREQUISITES.**

IV. MINOR REQUIRED.....12-20

Minimum of 9 semester hours of courses taken to fulfill minor requirements must be courses taken at Appalachian.

V. ELECTIVES (taken to total 122 hours for the degree).....16-24

2 semester hours of free electives must be outside the major discipline. 122

BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION

David Euell Smith was born in Caldwell County, North Carolina. He attended public school at Whitnel and Hudson Elementary Schools, and graduated from Hudson High School in 1972. He attended East Carolina University, Caldwell Community College, Bob Jones University, the University of North Carolina at Greensboro, and Appalachian State University. Dave holds a B. A. in Humanities/Religion (1977) and M. A. (1978) in Religious Studies. He was married in 1978 and continued for two years in a Ph. D. program studying early Christian Greek texts. In 1980 he accepted a position as Dean of Theology at Allegheny Wesleyan College in Salem, OH. After two years, he took the position of instructor of Religion and Greek at Hobe Sound Bible College in southern Florida. In 1986, after a major personal tragedy, he moved back to North Carolina to work in technology for the next 20 years, the last five of which he was an IT manager. In 2003 he re-entered the field of education, and has subsequently taught religion at six North Carolina community colleges. He received an Education Specialist Degree in teaching with a concentration in religion (2007), a graduate certificate in New Media and Global Education (2008), and the Doctor of Education (2011) from Appalachian State University. He also holds a graduate certificate in Global Studies (2010) from UNC-Greensboro. He currently teaches online for Western Piedmont and Isothermal Community Colleges.

Dave lives in Hudson, NC with his wife Rhonda, (Ed. S., 2008, ASU), where his young grandson Joseph often comes to visit. He has four children, three of which are ASU graduates – the fourth holds a B. S. in Engineering from UNC-Charlotte. Three out of four is not that bad!