

Diane L. Moore, Harvard University and Phillips Academy



Diane L. Moore is the Director of the Program in Religion and Secondary Education at Harvard Divinity School. She is also on the faculty at Phillips Academy in Andover, Massachusetts, where she teaches in the Philosophy and Religious Studies Department. Her current research interests are in religion and public policy in education.

The program in Religion and Secondary Education (PRSE) at Harvard Divinity School is designed for people who wish to pursue a secondary school teaching career in conjunction with their theological studies. The PRSE is offered within the context of either the Master of Theological Studies or the Master of Divinity degree program, in partnership with cooperating secondary schools. In addition to earning their master's degree, PRSE students earn middle or secondary school teacher licensure in English, history, or political science/political philosophy from the Massachusetts Department of Education. The certification obtained is valid in nearly forty states, and represents the closest equivalent available today to a national teaching certificate.

In addition to their education toward licensure, students in the PRSE are specifically prepared to teach the study of religion and to develop curriculum resources that incorporate religion and religious worldviews within their field(s) of expertise. Students may also study constitutional issues, including what is and is not legal to teach in public school settings. In this regard, the PRSE is a specialized training program. It provides the explicit opportunity for teachers to explore the ways in which the study of religion can contribute to and enhance policy and content discourses across the educational spectrum.

Foundations

At the core of the PRSE is the notion of education as vocation: the conviction that one teaches because partnership in the shaping of young lives is work that matters. From this perspective,

the qualities emphasized in the preparation for teaching available through PRSE are passion for a subject, a genuine concern for youth, competence, and personal commitment.

Through courses at the Divinity School and the Harvard Graduate School of Education, students study adolescent development and explore a wide variety of educational theories, methodologies, and pedagogies. They formulate their own understanding of education as vocation and the frameworks that best represent that articulation. They also have the opportunity to strengthen their subject area expertise in English, history or political science/political philosophy.

Standards and Curriculum Development to Integrate the Study of Religion

Religion and religious worldviews are woven into the fabric of world civilizations in both their historic and contemporary manifestations. Though it is impossible to understand the human endeavor without considering its religious dimensions, misrepresentations of the First Amendment have led to the virtual absence of religion in public education. This tacit acceptance of religious illiteracy promotes an inaccurate, partial view of civilizations, and fuels the false assumption that religion is a private endeavor and therefore irrelevant to the public domain. Consequently, citizens of the United States are not only ignorant of the world's religious traditions (all of which are practiced here in the U.S. in growing numbers), but they are also left without adequate tools to understand the profound role that religion plays in contemporary cultures and conflicts.

Through the PRSE program, students study the religious liberty clauses of the First Amendment and develop curricula and programs that incorporate the study of religion and religious worldviews in secondary schools within First Amendment guidelines. The program also sponsors professional development opportunities for educators in the field who wish to enhance their knowledge in this arena.

Religion, Education, and Public Policy

Debates regarding public education have been at the forefront of the national agenda for decades. Educational reform efforts have been advanced to address a wide range of concerns, including inadequate and disproportionate funding, poor literacy rates, violence, and the lack of uniform standards to measure the competency of both students and teachers. Though there are differing assumptions about what the nature, scope, and purpose of public education should entail, a prescribed understanding of secularism defines the parameters of discourse. Contrary to popular understanding, the uniform imposition of secularism can itself be defined as a

violation of First Amendment rights. Conversely, there is ample Constitutional latitude for values and perspectives that emerge out of religious frames of reference to be engaged and incorporated in public policy decisions.

The Religion, Education, and Public Policy aspect of the program promotes opportunities for students to explore the public policy dimension of the relationship between religion, values, and public education through course offerings, public lectures, and field education opportunities.

Program Requirements

Students in the PRSE integrate their training in theological studies with their training to become effective educators. The program is flexible enough to attend to particular interests, yet focused to ensure adequate preparation to meet the challenges of teaching in the contemporary high school. In addition to a course on adolescent development and two electives in education, students are required to take the following two courses offered at the Divinity School: 2915 Colloquium in Religion and Secondary Education and 4650 Supervised Teaching Practicum. Candidates for secondary school certification must also take two teacher licensure exams administered through the Massachusetts Department of Education. One exam is in literacy, and one in their chosen subject area: English, history, or political science/political philosophy.

Admission to the Program

Students apply to the PRSE after they have been accepted into the Master of Divinity or Master of Theological Studies degree program at the Divinity School. Criteria for selection include a strong undergraduate record culminating in a bachelor's degree in liberal arts, a passionate commitment to youth, and an understanding of education as vocation. For more information, contact Diane L. Moore, Director, Program in Religion and Secondary Education, Harvard Divinity School, 45 Francis Avenue, Cambridge, MA 02138. (617) 384-8047. This e-mail address is being protected from spambots. You need JavaScript enabled to view it .