
Discussion Questions for
Religion on Our Campuses: A Professor's Guide to Communities, Conflicts,
and Promising Conversations

Overview

Religion on Our Campuses begins in part I, *Cautions*, with two introductory chapters that illustrate the risks posed by religion on campus. The first chapter, "*Cautionary Tales*," asks faculty to reflect on the stories our discipline and our college or university may tell about how religion has inhibited intellectual progress, threatened academic freedom, encouraged discrimination, promoted insoluble divisions, and mystified hegemonic power relationships, among other negative consequences. The chapter employs an approach that will recur throughout the book: it calls on faculty to ponder the stories that make up our identity and that inform how we understand our profession and our college or university. Chapter 2, "*Encounters*," brings the challenge of religion on campus up-to-date and suggests that the accusation that someone is inappropriately proselytizing can cut several ways.

In part II, *Communities*, we explore how faculty are socialized into their disciplines and how in significant ways this socialization has much in common with traditional religious formation. These initial chapters—chapter 3 on religious formation, chapter 4 on disciplinary formation, and chapter 5 on the constraining role of college or university—provide a common vocabulary and advance a series of deliberately provocative parallels that inform subsequent chapters.

In part III, *Individuals*, we move to a first-person consideration of how we ourselves entered into disciplinary and institutional communities. As with "*Cautionary Tales*," the recommended approach is narrative. "*Narrative Identity*," chapter 6, explores how the story can be recounted of how we became disciplinary professionals and college or university teachers. In "*Inclinations*," chapter 7, we tackle how our deep convictions may have inclined our interpretive or explanatory choices as scholars and teachers.

Part IV, *Implications*, begins with "*Community Warrant*," (chapter 8), which picks up where part II left off, and delves into how communities, especially disciplinary and religious communities, influence scholarly judgments and how such judgments are warranted and justified. This "regulative ideal of a critical community of inquirers" provides the backdrop for chapter 9 on "*Academic Freedom*." In the American context, academic freedom applies primarily to faculty but depends heavily on the academic freedom of specific colleges or universities. It is a complex notion that also entails responsibilities and significant limitations. It bears on religious conviction in perhaps unexpected ways.

In "*Reticence*," chapter 10, we return to the issues first raised in "*Inclinations*," which explored how religious or spiritual convictions may incline scholars to favor one explanation or interpretation over another without ever making an explicit appearance in the scholarly account. We tackle the question of why silence about religious or spiritual influences is often the most prudent policy. We also ask the question of when, if ever, silence might appropriately be breached. Part IV concludes with chapter 11, "*In the Classroom*," which considers two strategies that faculty may wish to ponder if they are inclined to reintroduce explicitly religious considerations into the classroom: self-disclosure when dealing with moral judgments and

natural inclusion when dealing with subject matter on which religious conviction has an obvious, and pedagogically useful, bearing.

Chapter 1: Cautionary Tales

In this chapter we explore some key narratives that shape how we understand our discipline, our college or university, and the relation of each to religion or at least to specific religious traditions such as the once-dominant forms of American Protestant Christianity. (Chapter 4, *Disciplinary Formation*, offers additional material that may allow you to address the first two questions in greater depth.)

1. **STORIES OF ORIGIN.** What stories are told about the origins of my field? What do they tell me about myself, my discipline, and my discipline's appraisal of religious motives or perspectives?
2. **FOUNDERS.** What are the stories told about the founders of my field, and what do they have to say explicitly or tacitly about my discipline and its appraisal of religious motives or perspectives?
3. **INSOLUBLE DISAGREEMENT, SUBJECTIVITY, AND VIOLENCE.** Does my field recount stories about insoluble disagreement, misleading subjectivity, and even religiously-inspired violence? If so, what are they and what do they tell me explicitly or tacitly about my discipline and its appraisal of religious motives or perspectives? What do they tell me about (particular?) religious traditions?
4. **MORALS.** What conclusions does my field draw from these stories? What conclusions do I? In what ways has religion inhibited or threatened my field? In what ways does the threat posed by religion (if any) continue to influence the field or its practitioners?
5. **CURRENT CONTEXT.** What, if anything, may have changed about the larger society and the more immediate college or university environment that may make it more or less appropriate to consider religious or spiritual perspectives in research or teaching?
6. **RELIGIOUSLY MOTIVATED INTERFERENCE.** Have I or my institution experienced attempts by outside parties to restrict scholarship or teaching on religious grounds? If so, what happened? How did the outside parties justify their intervention? What reasons were given for opposing their intervention? What role, if any, did the principle of academic freedom play in fending off these attempts?
7. **PEER PRESSURE.** Have I or others in my institution experienced attempts by internal parties (i.e., other faculty either in my department or in other departments) to restrict the mention of religious or spiritual concerns in scholarship or teaching? If so, what happened? How did my colleagues justify their intervention? What reasons were given for opposing their intervention? Did the question of academic freedom arise in the discussion? To what end?
8. **DISCRIMINATION.** Given the religious affiliation of my institution, if any, how many minority faculty do I have? How might I explain discrepancies between the national averages in higher education and the representation on my faculty? Given whatever discrepancies I may have noted, do they have a bearing, positively or negatively, on introducing or reintroducing discussions of religious motivations or concerns into research or teaching? How do I reconcile the two?

Chapter 2: Encounters

1. **RELIGIOUS VARIETY.** Which religious traditions are present on my campus in significant numbers? How do I know? Is there distinctive apparel? other indications?
2. **COLLEAGUES.** Are any of my faculty colleagues personally religious? How do I know? Do any colleagues belong to religious traditions that have been (or still are) stigmatized or discriminated against by the majority traditions? How do they deal with this? How do I?
3. **WITNESSING.** Have students ever “witnessed” in my class by stating a strong religious or spiritual belief? What did they say? How did I respond? Did the witnessing make me uncomfortable? Why or why not?
4. **PROSELYTIZATION.** Have I ever been the target of an attempt at proselytization? When and where did it occur? How did I feel? How did I respond? How do I think the proselytizer justified the approach?
5. **PROSELYTIZER.** Have I ever attempted to proselytize someone else? When and where did it occur? How did I feel? How did the other person respond? Why did I make the approach?
6. **CHOICE.** Does an attempt at proselytization violate an individual’s right to choose for him or herself? Why or why not? What is the proselytizer attempting to do and for what reason?
7. **DIFFERENCE.** Are attempts at proselytizing implicit attacks on the person being proselytized? on the person’s own faith tradition? Do such attempts violate respect for diversity? Why or why not?
8. **CONVERSION.** When is it appropriate, if ever, for one person to try to change another’s worldview or core beliefs? Should young people be off-limits? What about college students? Which tactics in such an attempt may be appropriate and which inappropriate? Does higher education itself aim at changing hearts and minds? If so, in what ways?
9. **ABSOLUTE TRUTHS VERSUS PROVISIONAL CLAIMS.** Some see the proselytizer as a dogmatist insisting on only one truth of matters. What do I think of this charge? How does a proselytizer operating on a college or university campus reconcile claims to certain knowledge with the academy’s insistence that all truth claims are provisional?
10. **WHO IS THE PROSELYTIZER?** Some critics see faculty as the dangerous proselytizers. They argue that we in the academy are committed to achieving diversity in every aspect of life except for religious conviction and political belief. They charge that we’re indoctrinating the young in a “secular, naturalistic, and relativistic” worldview. They complain that we ridicule student beliefs and refuse even to acknowledge “dissenting viewpoints” on what are termed “unsettled questions.” How do I understand such charges? How might I explain them to colleagues? to outsiders who do not know higher education well? What would I reply to the critics themselves?
11. **ADVOCACY VERSUS INDOCTRINATION.** How do I distinguish between the passionate advocacy of the effective teacher and inappropriate indoctrination? How might I explain the distinction to others? What are the policies and procedures in my college or university if a student charges a faculty member with inappropriate advocacy? How well do the procedures work? Can academic freedom be compromised in the process? and if so, whose? the faculty’s academic freedom or the students’?
12. **RELIGION.** Is religion somehow different from other ideologies on campus? If so, in what ways? Do the differences matter? Should we treat religious pronouncements and religious

proselytizing differently? Does the history of religious discrimination in higher education affect how I and others should view this matter? Why or why not?

Chapter 3: Religious Formation

This chapter explores how people are traditionally socialized into a religious community and how this has changed in the modern American context. These questions may not apply to you. But even if you are not personally religious, you may find it worthwhile to ask whether reflecting on these questions can help you better understand how you acquired other deep convictions—perhaps political or social convictions.

1. **UPBRINGING.** If I had an hour to tell an academic colleague about my religious or spiritual upbringing, what would I mention? If I had an hour to tell a coreligionist about my upbringing, what would I mention? How would the two accounts differ and why?
2. **LIKES AND DISLIKES.** What did I most enjoy or found most attractive about my religious or spiritual upbringing and my current religious or spiritual life? What did or do I find most difficult or distasteful? How might I account for these likes and dislikes? Have they changed over the course of my lifetime, and if so, why?
3. **NATURAL OR ACQUIRED.** What came most naturally to me in my religious or spiritual upbringing? What required the greatest learning or change? In what ways did my personality change as a result of this formation, or did it?
4. **GROWTH.** Can I identify, in retrospect, stages in my grasp of what my religious or spiritual beliefs require of me and how it has influenced the way I understand the world? If so, what were the stages and when did they occur? In what ways, if at all, did religious or spiritual leaders or others help me to develop situational discrimination and an associated repertoire of appropriate interpretive and explanatory strategies? In what other ways did I acquire the insight and hone my approach to thinking religiously or spiritually?
5. **MENTORING.** Did I have a particularly influential mentor or mentors during my religious or spiritual upbringing? If so, what was their major positive influence? negative influence? Did I wish to emulate them or did I react against their example? What are the major goals that I seek to achieve when dealing with younger believers and practitioners now?
6. **ROLE MODELS.** Who were my positive major role models for religious or spiritual belief? for religious or spiritual practice? for religious or spiritual life generally? Who were the negative role models for these activities? In each case, why?
7. **DEPENDENCE.** On whom does my religious or spiritual progress currently depend? Am I the “master of my own fate” or do I continue to be dependent on mentors, senior colleagues, religious or spiritual leaders, others?
8. **CONSTRAINTS.** Have I ever felt reluctant to express my religious or spiritual views? if so, when and why? Does it make a difference to me in expressing my opinions whether I am tenured or not? why or why not? What are the implications, if any, for my sense of identity, call, ability to express my views?

Chapter 4: Disciplinary Formation

In addition to the following questions, you may wish in light of the material covered in this chapter to revisit questions 1 and 2 in the chapter 1, *Cautionary Tales*.

1. **SELF-DESCRIPTION.** How do I briefly introduce myself when asked what I do? Do I identify my field? my institution? my teaching? my religious tradition? What do I think of as "my own work"? What conclusions might I draw from how I introduce myself? Is my career description or religious affiliation (if any) the title of my story?
2. **EXPERIENCE OF GRADUATE SCHOOL.** If I had an hour to tell a colleague about my graduate training, what would I mention? If I had an hour to tell my psychological counselor (assuming I had one) about my graduate training, what would I mention? How would the two accounts differ and why?
3. **LIKES AND DISLIKES IN GRADUATE SCHOOL.** What did I most enjoy or found most attractive during my graduate training? What did I find most difficult or distasteful during my graduate training? How might I account for these likes and dislikes? Did they change over the course of my graduate education?
4. **NATURAL OR ACQUIRED.** What came most naturally to me in graduate school? What required the greatest learning or change? In what ways did my personality change during graduate school, or did it?
5. **PROFESSIONAL GROWTH.** Can I identify, in retrospect, stages in my grasp of disciplinary problems and how to tackle them? If so, what were the stages and when did they occur? In what ways, if at all, did my teachers help me to develop situational discrimination and an associated repertoire of appropriate interpretive and explanatory strategies? In what other ways did I acquire the insight and hone my approach to disciplinary problems?
6. **MENTORING.** Did I have a particularly influential mentor or mentors during my graduate education? If so, what was their major positive influence? negative influence? Did I wish to emulate them or did I react against their example? What are the major goals that I seek to achieve with my own advisees?
7. **ROLE MODELS.** Who were my positive major role models for research? for teaching? for academic life generally? Who were the negative role models for these activities? In each case, why?
8. **DEPENDENCE.** On whom does my career progress currently depend? Am I the master of my own profession fate or am I dependent on mentors, senior colleagues, others?
9. **CONSTRAINTS.** Have I ever felt reluctant to express my professional views? if so, when and why? Does it make a difference to me in expressing my opinions whether I am tenured or not? Do I feel mobile within my profession? why or why not? What are the implications, if any, for my sense of identity, call, ability to express my views?

Chapter 5: Institutional Settings

1. **SOCIALIZATION.** How was I socialized into the academic institution which employs me? Was there an orientation? If so, what did it entail? Was there a seminar for new faculty? for new members of a department? If so, what did it entail? Are there other institutional practices—formal or informal—that shape expectations regarding scholarship, teaching, or community service at my college or university?
2. **TENSIONS.** How, if at all, did institutional standards and expectations reinforce my professional identity? my religious or spiritual identity (if applicable)? How, if at all, did institutional standards and expectations challenge my professional identity? my religious or spiritual identity (if applicable)? How might my colleagues in my own department or in other departments answer this question?
3. **CONSTRAINTS.** Have the norms and expectations of my institution ever made me feel reluctant to express my professional views? my religious or spiritual views (if any)? if so, when and why? Does it make a difference to me in expressing my opinions whether I am tenured or not? why or why not? What are the implications, if any, for my sense of identity, my sense of career, my sense of being able to express my views?
4. **EXTERNAL GOODS.** How in my college or university are the “external goods” of money, status, prestige, and power portioned out? Do some disciplines receive a disproportionate share? Why or why not? What role in my academic institution do federal or state governments or outside business groups play in the distribution of external goods?
5. **CHURCH-RELATIONSHIP.** Is my college or university church-related? Is the relationship largely historic or does it inform and shape the ethos and practices today?
6. **MARKS OF CHURCH-RELATEDNESS.** What “marks” of church-relatedness apply to my campus today? Here are some possibilities:
 1. Founding and historic association with a church denomination,
 2. Interrelated structure and governance,
 3. Financial and other support from the church,
 4. The denominational credentials of the college leaders,
 5. The denominational makeup of the student body,
 6. The course of study and curricular requirements,
 7. The morals and parietal regulation of campus life,
 8. The provision of chapel services and opportunities for exercising moral conscience,
 9. A general religious or service “ethos.”
7. **CONTROL.** Who ultimately controls my campus? the administration and faculty? the trustees or regents? the state government? the founding denomination? or some combination? What are implications for my discipline and for me personally as a faculty member?

Chapter 6: Narrative Identity

1. **ABILITIES.** Would my narrative include an account of my intellectual strengths and weaknesses, or of my abilities generally? How do I account for these abilities? What role did they play in the shaping of my career? Do they in any way spring from, or relate to, my core convictions? Do I view my abilities as gifts, either literally or figuratively? In what ways did my intellectual strengths and weaknesses particularly fit me well for some careers, but not others? Would I see my abilities as “evidence” that I may have been in some sense “called” to a career that demands such skills?
2. **INTERESTS.** Would my narrative include an account of my major interests and aversions? When and how did they arise? How did they influence my choices about career, scholarship, and teaching? Am I studying and teaching materials that in some way deeply resonate with my core convictions and beliefs? Am I studying and teaching about matters in part because I have personal as well as professional questions about them?
3. **VALUES.** Would my narrative include an account of how my core convictions influenced my career choices? At key points did they rule out some options and encourage others? Did I choose my field, my specialty, or my research topic because it allowed me to study something that I greatly valued or that was central in my life? Did I choose my profession out of a sense of duty, and if so, duty to what or whom? Did I or do I view my profession as a means of service to others or to some larger cause?
4. **OPPORTUNITIES AND OBSTACLES.** What were the major opportunities that facilitated my career and the obstacles that either hindered it or steered me in a certain direction? Were these opportunities and obstacles largely fortuitous or did they result from the action of others such as mentors, senior faculty, friends and family, rivals and competitors?
5. **CHOICES.** What were the key choices I made that shaped my career? What was the basis for these choices? In what ways were these choices free and in what ways were they constrained? In what ways did my core convictions inform or determine these choices?
6. **CONFIRMATIONS.** How have key choices or turning points in my career been confirmed or validated by events? Are there examples of disconfirmation as well? How have I understood and dealt with confirmation and disconfirmation?
7. **ALIGNMENT.** Do I in any way feel “called” to my profession? If so, did the call (or calls) arise from within or from without? Do I feel particularly “fitted” to my career by my abilities, interests, and opportunities? Am I through my career attempting to serve some larger cause, whether religious, spiritual, philosophical, political, or social?
8. **AMBIGUITIES AND COMPLEXITIES.** Does my narrative do justice to the ambiguities, uncertainties, doubts, and dissatisfactions that I have experienced in my career?
9. **COMMUNITIES.** What role does the various communities of which I’m a member—including my disciplinary community and, if I have one, my religious community—play in my narrative? What is my *primary* community in this regard? Why is it my primary community? How have the various communities reinforced or conflicted with each other?
10. **FOOLING OURSELVES?** Some suggest that retrospective narratives often invest happenstance with unwarranted significance and allow us to invent meaning by tendentious selection and even distortion. How valid or plausible do I find this critique when applied to my own narrative? to that of others?

Chapter 7: Inclinations

1. **EMOTIONAL OR INTUITIVE RESPONSE.** Do I ever respond emotionally or intuitively to an interpretation (or explanation) offered by another scholar or even one crafted by myself (which I am now evaluating as if crafted by someone else)? What is the tone or nature of this response? Do I feel great attraction or aversion, a strong sense of rightness or wrongness? Or is my reaction more muted? What would be an example or two?
2. **BACKGROUND BELIEFS.** Is there perhaps a strong background belief underlying my reaction? If so, what is it?
3. **INTERPRETIVE OR EXPLANATORY STRATEGY OR SPECIFIC APPLICATION.** Whether my reaction is positive or negative, am I reacting to the interpretive or explanatory strategy that informs the specific interpretation or to the specific interpretation itself?
4. **INTERPRETIVE OR EXPLANATORY STRATEGY OR ITS IMPLICATIONS.** If reacting to an interpretive or explanatory strategy, am I reacting to the strategy itself or to its potential implications?
5. **WHICH IMPLICATIONS?** If I am reacting to the implications of the strategy, which implications are fueling my reaction? Its moral implications? Its metaphysical implications? Its underlying assumptions and their implications? Its success or failure in distinguishing appropriate levels of interpretation? In short, why do I like or dislike, feel comfortable or uncomfortable with, think right or wrong the implications of this interpretive or explanatory strategy?
5. **OTHER APPROACHES.** What other reasons might I give for my reaction?
6. **CORE CONVICTIONS.** Is there something in my core (perhaps religious or spiritual) convictions that accounts for my reaction? What is it?
7. **INTERPRETIVE OR EXPLANATORY CHOICE.** Did my reaction influence my interpretive or explanatory choices? Did my core convictions incline me to favor one interpretation over another?
8. **CHANGING CORE CONVICTIONS.** Or, alternatively, did my reaction incline me to reexamine and change the core convictions that produced it?
9. **SUBJECTIVE BIAS.** Am I being unduly subjective or allowing my personal bias to distort my scholarly interpretations or explanations? Why or why not? What would I consider being “unduly subjective”? Why?
10. **COMPENSATION.** What, if anything, did I do to correct for any possibly harmful effects of my interpretive or explanatory inclination?
11. **COMMUNITIES OF PRACTICE.** What is my *primary* community of practice? What are the other communities of practice of which I am a participating member?

Can I list several of the practices of my *primary* community of practice? How might they influence how I see, understand, experience or react emotionally or intuitively? What about other communities of practice of which I am a member?

Can I obtain sufficient distance from the community of practice—perhaps by mentally moving to the perspective of a different community of practice—to gain necessary perspective on this question?

12. **“ORIENTATIONS”.** How have certain practices, often central to the communities of practice of which I am a member, shaped or formed the inclinations explored in the preceding questions?

Chapter 8: Community Warrant

1. **ESTABLISHING, MAINTAINING, AND ENFORCING INTERNAL STANDARDS.** What standards does my disciplinary community employ for evaluating scholarship and for distinguishing better scholarship from poorer?
2. **INSTITUTIONAL EMBODIMENTS OF THE REGULATIVE IDEAL.** What practices and institutions does my discipline employ to establish, maintain, and enforce its standards of excellence?
3. **"THE REGULATIVE IDEAL OF A CRITICAL COMMUNITY OF INQUIRERS."** Where do I come down in the debate over the role of a "critical community of inquirers" in establishing the "truth of matters"? Are there in my opinion standards—perhaps even fundamental standards—that are external to disciplinary communities that can be employed to establish the "truth of matters"? If so, how do I account for the disagreements that we actually experience in my discipline and elsewhere? If not, how do I evade a relativism? or do I?
4. **FALLIBILISM AND CHANGE.** Have central interpretations or explanations within my discipline changed over time? Does my discipline assume that most (all?) truth claims are provisional? Are fallibilism and change broadly accepted or resisted? How do we account for such changes?
5. **JUSTIFICATION AND TRUTH.** Is the "truth of matters" at issue in my discipline? If so, how does my discipline define the "truth of matters" and how does it justify and warrant truth claims? If not, what are the standards that are at issue in my discipline? How does my discipline justify these standards and its judgments regarding these standards?

What other criteria may be employed in my discipline for evaluating scholarship? Some possible candidates: How plausible is the explanation or interpretation? (plausibility); How coherent is the overall picture it offers? (coherence, logical and otherwise); Does the explanation or interpretation suggest further applications or experiments? (fertility); How interesting or emotionally satisfying is the explanation or interpretation? (interest); Can it be generalized or even universalized? (generality and universalizability); How well does it fit with past results and past explanations or interpretations? (consistency); Is it simple, elegant, beautiful, ugly? (aesthetics); Is it in harmony with the overarching commitments of the community? (fidelity).

6. **THE CRITERION OF PUBLICITY.** Are the goods and standards internal to my discipline public and discussable, both for practitioners and for sufficiently diligent "outsiders"? How does my discipline define and treat "private" or "subjective" judgments? Does my discipline make such distinctions?
7. **RELIGIOUS OR SPIRITUAL COMMUNITIES.** How well does my own religious or spiritual community (if I have one) fit these criteria? How does my religious or spiritual community differ from my disciplinary community on standards, institutional forms, the "regulative ideal," fallibilism, provisional claims, change, justification and truth, and the criterion of publicity? How, to the best of my knowledge, do other prominent religious or spiritual communities fare on such issues? How do community warrants in a religious or spiritual community differ from community warrants in a disciplinary community? Is there a difference between normative claims that religious or spiritual communities advance in this regard and their actual practice over time?

Chapter 9: Academic Freedom

1. **DEFINITION.** When colleagues speak about academic freedom, what do they normally mean by the term? Do they distinguish between faculty, student, and institutional freedom? How do I understand academic freedom?
2. **FACULTY ACADEMIC FREEDOM.** What freedoms does faculty academic freedom comprise? Which of the freedoms are most controversial? Why? What are the limitations to faculty academic freedom? in principle? in practice? Do faculty abuse their academic freedom if they bring controversial matters into class? Do faculty abuse their academic freedom if they expose students to only one viewpoint regarding a controversial issue? Who should decide?
3. **NEGATIVE AND POSITIVE FREEDOM.** Negative freedom is freedom *from* outside interference in the pursuit of one's goals. Positive freedom is the freedom *for* self-realization, a freedom that allows "my life and decisions to depend on myself, not on external forces of whatever kind." Can I find examples in my own experience that illustrate the distinction between negative and positive freedom? Is the distinction useful? In what ways do I think that disciplinary communities rightly constrain what is considered acceptable goods, standards, and practices in scholarship and teaching? Can I think of examples that are more problematic?
4. **STUDENT ACADEMIC FREEDOM.** What do I understand by student academic freedom? What are its limitations? Can it conflict with faculty academic freedom? How and why? Is a student's academic freedom violated if the student's views are criticized? held up to ridicule? peremptorily dismissed without opportunity for rebuttal? Do students have the right to be exposed to "dissenting viewpoints" on "controversial matters"? Who decides which viewpoints and what is controversial? Should a student be excused from learning material that offends his or her political or religious convictions?
5. **INSTITUTIONAL ACADEMIC FREEDOM.** What is institutional academic freedom? What is its relationship to faculty academic freedom? to student academic freedom? Should institutions of higher education be free to define academic freedom in a way suited to their distinctive mission and tradition? Should church-related colleges or universities be allowed to discriminate in hiring or in promotion on the basis of religious belief or practice? Should church-related colleges and universities be allowed to limit academic freedom in instances touching on core religious beliefs or practices of the sponsoring denomination? Is there an obligation for colleges and universities to provide "balance" and expose students to the "intellectual pluralism" found in many of the disciplines? What if such balance undermines beliefs deeply held by the sponsoring denomination? How would I reconcile conflicts between institutional and faculty academic freedom?
6. **"POLITICAL CORRECTNESS."** While charges regarding "political correctness" are often ideological in nature, what merit, if any, do I see in the suggestion that the academy itself sometimes inappropriately restricts the discussion of controversial issues? What are the tradeoffs?

Chapter 10: Reticence

1. **EXPLICITLY RELIGIOUS OR SPIRITUAL WARRANTS.** When, if ever, has it seemed appropriate or even necessary explicitly to employ religious or spiritual convictions to justify the explanation or interpretation that I was advancing? When, if ever, might it be appropriate or even necessary to do so going forward?
2. **RETICENCE.** Why and when might it the best policy be **not** to mention religious or spiritual convictions? How do I react when other scholars make mention of their core beliefs? How do others react?
3. **BEING FORTHCOMING.** Why and when might it be appropriate (or even necessary) to mention religious or spiritual convictions? in scholarly writing? in conversations with faculty colleagues? in the class room?
4. **DIFFERENT TRADITIONS.** What does my religious or spiritual tradition (if any) expect adherents to do regarding explicit religious or spiritual claims in scholarship? Does it have any expectations at all in this regard? What about other traditions that I see represented on my campus?
5. **DISCIPLINARY STANDARDS.** What are my discipline's standards regarding the use of religious or spiritual claims in scholarship or teaching? of political claims? What do I think of them? Are they imposed uniformly? dogmatically? What professional and disciplinary goals do they serve? Who decides when the standards have been violated?
6. **MORAL OR ETHICAL JUDGMENTS.** Have I ever advanced in scholarship or teaching a moral or ethical judgment? Was the judgment grounded in my religious faith or spiritual beliefs? If so, did I make the religious or spiritual grounding or warrant explicit? How did students or other scholars react? How do I react when other scholars make moral or ethical judgments within my profession? What are the common topics in which such judgments occur? Are such claims subject to empirical test? How are they justified and warranted?
7. **ANTHROPOLOGY.** Does my discipline operate with specific assumptions about the nature of human beings? How do I react to such claims? Does it matter for my scholarship or teaching? Have I contested the assumptions my discipline deploys by offering an alternative reading based, perhaps, on religious, spiritual, or political convictions? How did students or other scholars react? Are such claims subject to empirical test? How are they justified and warranted?
8. **METAPHYSICS.** Does my discipline or do some of my fellow disciplinary practitioners advocate specific metaphysical (i.e., maximally comprehensive) views of reality? How do I react to such claims? Have I engaged in either my teaching or scholarship any cases where a claim has entered the realm of metaphysics? Have I explicitly offered an alternative based on my religious or spiritual convictions? on my political convictions? How did students or other scholars react? Are such claims subject to empirical test? How are they justified and warranted? What do I think is the appropriate role, if any, of metaphysical claims in disciplinary teaching or scholarship?
9. **OTHER CANDIDATES.** Are there other issues where I think that offering explicitly religious or spiritual grounds or warrants is necessary or useful? How would I justify this to students or colleagues?
10. **FOUNDATIONS AND WARRANTS.** Some argue that all scientific claims should properly be subject to (empirical?) verification. What do I think of this requirement for entry into academic consideration? Is it applicable to my discipline? to other disciplines? What constitutes

verification within my discipline? Do religious or spiritual beliefs fail to meet this test? Which ones and why? Is this test consistently employed with other perspectives and claims advanced in my discipline? Why or why not?

11. **PUBLICITY.** Some argue that all claims should properly be accessible to, and assessable by, all other scholars who are willing to be sufficiently diligent to gain the necessary background and understanding. What do I think of this criterion for entry into academic consideration in my discipline? in other disciplines? Are religious or spiritual beliefs too subjective or private to meet this test? Which ones and why? Is this test consistently employed with other perspectives and claims advanced in my discipline? Why or why not?
12. **CONSISTENCY.** Are the various admissibility standards consistently applied? If not, why not? How might the inconsistencies (if any) be resolved? By questioning the standards? By enforcing the standards consistently? How well do I think the standards apply to moral questions? to questions about human being? to metaphysical questions?
13. **IMPOSING ON OTHERS.** Some argue that religious or spiritual beliefs are held with such passion that adherents feel impelled and justified in imposing them on others. What is my view and experience in this regard? Given the unequal power relationship between faculty and students, or between senior faculty and junior, probationary faculty, how does one avoid at least the appearance of coercion when religious or spiritual beliefs are raised in faculty conversation, advanced in scholarship, or discussed in the classroom?
14. **TESTS.** Does my college or university require faculty or students to subscribe to a confession of faith? Does my department operate (perhaps tacitly) on an ideological test when hiring or promoting colleagues? How are such tests justified by the institution or by individuals within the institution? Do I find these tests appropriate? Do I find their justifications persuasive? If so, how and why?
15. **CHURCH AND STATE.** Some argue that bringing religious or spiritual beliefs into academic discourse violates the constitutional separation of church and state. What do I think of this argument? What are its implications?
16. **CONDESCENSION.** Do I anticipate that some colleagues, either in my department or in the institution at large, will be condescending or disapproving if I or others explicitly mention religious motivations or concerns in teaching or scholarship? Will any take action to discourage such efforts? Why and how should I respond?

Chapter 11: In the Classroom

1. **GENERAL APPROPRIATENESS.** When, if ever, is it appropriate to bring explicitly religious perspectives into the classroom? How might this differ from discipline to discipline? Is it appropriate within my discipline? within my college or university? Why or why not?
2. **FACULTY AND STUDENTS.** What considerations are in play when explicitly religious perspectives are advanced in conversation with faculty colleagues? in published scholarship? in classroom lectures or discussions? In what ways do my authority and responsibility change in each context?
3. **SELF-DISCLOSURE.** Could disclosing some of my deep (perhaps, religious) convictions serve a useful pedagogical function in any of the classes I teach? What might it facilitate? What might it inhibit? What are the pitfalls? How would I deal with them?
4. **GERMANENESS.** What types of self-disclosure, if any, would be germane to the subject matter I teach? Does the subjects I teach have normative or moral dimensions? Do the subjects I teach rest on metaphysical claims? Do the subjects I teach rest on a certain understanding of human nature? In which of these domains, if any, would my self-disclosure be pedagogically useful and appropriate? Are there other areas where religious self-disclosure would be pedagogically useful and appropriate? How would I justify to myself or colleagues the conclusions I reach?
5. **STUDENT SENSITIVITIES.** How might faculty self-disclosure backfire and inhibit pedagogical goals? How might students react to my self-disclosure? How would I respond to student responses that derail the discussion into, say, witnessing or seem disrespectful to others? Will some students in my class find my self-disclosure or the elicited responses of fellow students intimidating? What are my experiences, if any, in this regard?
6. **COLLEGIAL SENSITIVITIES.** How might faculty colleagues—either in my own department or in other departments at my college or university—react if they learn that I am disclosing in my classes some of my religious convictions? How would I explain and justify my practice?
7. **TEACH THE CONTROVERSY.** Some suggest that courses dealing with religiously contested issues have an obligation to acknowledge the existence of religious alternatives and engage them in conversation. What do I think of this argument for what is termed “natural inclusion”? What implications, if any, would natural inclusion have for the subject matter I teach? for the subject matter of colleagues in other disciplines?
8. **CONSIDERATIONS.** Is every topic that is religiously contested worthy of natural inclusion? Are any? What are the tradeoffs? in general? in subjects that I teach? What is the position of my college or university regarding natural inclusion?
9. **SOME POSSIBLE CRITERIA.** If I decide to practice natural inclusion in the courses I teach, what criteria might I employ to determine the appropriate candidates for natural inclusion? Here are some possibilities:
 - Contribution:* Does the topic enrich the disciplinary analysis while simultaneously doing justice to religious concerns?
 - Relationship:* Is there a historic relationship between religion and the disciplinary topic? Will discussing the topic deepen students’ understanding of both the discipline and the religious perspective?
 - Quality:* Is there adequate literature of sufficient cogency and academic respectability that I, the faculty member, can deal with topic responsibility and my students will have the resources they need to deal with the topic appropriately?

Importance: Does the candidate for circumspect natural inclusion rise to the level of significance that it should be treated in this lecture or that course? Given the limits of time, what has to be omitted if this topic is included?

Propriety and Location: What will my departmental colleagues think about this sort of “interdisciplinary” inclusion? Will my colleagues in Religious Studies feel that I am trespassing on their field? Will I be?

Pedagogy: Will some coverage merely confirm student prejudice and make learning the disciplinary material more difficult?

Other? Are there other criteria I should consider?

10. **WHICH TRADITIONS TO INCLUDE?** If I decide to include religious perspective, where do I stop—with Christianity? Christianity and Judaism? with the major world religions? How do I decide? How would I justify inclusions and exclusions?
11. **COMPETENCE.** How can I, the faculty member, do justice to religiously contested issues in my discipline? How do I become sufficiently informed to deal creditably with such issues? How many traditions do I need to know and at what level of competence? How would I acquire the requisite competence?
12. **ALTERNATIVES.** Why should these religious perspectives be privileged for inclusion and not, say, multiculturalism or feminism or some other topic?
13. **POSSIBLE POLITICAL EXPLOITATION.** In what ways might natural inclusion or the call to “teach the controversy” be liable to political exploitation? How does acknowledging religiously contested issues differ from acknowledging, say, politically contested issues? Where do I stand on the tradeoff between risks and benefits? Where do my discipline and academic institution stand? What are the pressures for natural inclusion within my institution? What are the pressures coming from groups outside the institution? How are these different pressures being addressed by my administration, by my colleagues, and by the student body?