

What is “Religious Reasoning”

- Arguing **from** the tenets of religion, not **for** them.
- Depends on what author believes to be **uncontestable** premises.

Religious Discourse

evidence cannot be contested

decisions are made according to religious teachings

Academic Discourse

evidence can be contested

decisions are made according to evidence, logic, and consensus of the majority

Direct Strategies

Offer options and consequences

- Frame expectations of academic writing through that of the **assignment** and/or **the professor**; does their reasoning fit the frame?
- Help students determine who their **audience** is, how they want their writing to be received, and how it may realistically be received.

Teach academic standards through self-reflection

- Have students perform a rhetorical analysis of their own work.
- Encourage students to treat religious texts as they would any other source - put the work into context, refrain from cherry-picking phrases.

How Writing Center Consultants Can Respond to Students’ Religious Reasoning

The Goal

Make others aware of the different philosophies for responding to religious reasoning so writing center tutors can help religious students meet academic expectations while still maintaining agency over their work.

General Philosophies

Casuistic Stretching

- Engaging with or embodying new principles while still believing in old ones.

Identity Crisis (Complete Deference)

- A writer attempting to join principles too dissimilar via casuistic stretching risks undermining their original principles; in the case of religious students, **absolute truth**.

Social-Epistemic Rhetoric Approach

- Academic discourse is not inherently superior to religious discourse.
- A religious student “has the right to [their] own voice, even though we can and should argue for the value of the voice we are trying to teach [them],” (Anderson 13).