

# Mixed program offers religious studies minor

An interdisciplinary program of courses from a variety of humanities and social sciences have been combined into a minor in religious studies this year.

The aim of the program is to give the student a knowledge of religion as a phenomenon of human life, said John Turner, Cotner professor of religion and an associate professor of history.

"You can't ignore the fact that Nebraska is in the Bible Belt," said Turner, "and that a lot of students are interested in some kind of religion course. However, some students become uncomfortable with a critical study of religion. This is not a Sunday school, we hope to make the students' faith richer through a broad understanding of religions."

The religious studies program is financed through a \$350,000 endowment by the Nebraska College of Religion (Cotner College) to the NU Foundation.

### Courses ended

The Cotner College discontinued its courses in religion at the end of the 1975-76 academic year. The money has been designated for a religious studies professorship and a biblical studies course to be taught every two years.

Transferring religion courses to UNL will overcome many technical obstacles, Turner said. Crediting and scheduling will become more flexible than was possible at Cotner College.

To offer a major in the program, two or three more professors are needed, Turner said. Three professors, Turner, History Prof. Nels Forde, and John Yost, chairman of the religious studies committee, now teach the courses.

Some new courses, including Biblical Studies, World Religions, Hellenistic Religion, Mysticism, The Occult, Religious Theory and courses in the Eastern and Western tradition will be added eventually, Turner said.

### Interests cited

One of the major interests of the program is reading and understanding religious literature, Turner said.

"For example, the Bible is very difficult to read because everybody knows what it means already," Turner said. "They inject their own ideas. We must be aware of our assumptions and how we view the world," he said.

Students from many different fields have shown interest in the program, Turner said.

"Many people have become interested in popular religions basically because man feels alienated by technology. A religion gives them an identity, makes them elite and special," he added.

Turner does not anticipate a major in the program because of the limited job market.

"We hope the religious programs will allow students to grasp a better understanding of themselves and their traditions," he said.

# Park vandalism reduced with increased patrolling

Vandalism in Lincoln's parks has been reduced because of a Lincoln Police Dept. (LPD) system of park patrolling, according to a police official.

Lt. John Hewitt, special operations officer, said the Lincoln Parks and Recreation Dept. employees patrolled the parks until July.

The Parks Dept. force was consolidated with LPD by Mayor Helen Boosalis to reduce expenses and increase crime prevention, he said.

Three policemen now are assigned to certain areas of the city, Hewitt said, and

it is their responsibility to patrol the parks. With this system, he added, the parks are patrolled more often.

He said Holmes Park employees see policemen at least 10 times a day, but before the changeover they only saw a patrol once or twice a day.

Vandalism is the most common crime committed in parks, he added, but small crimes, such as teenage drinking, also are evident.

Parks still are common sights for molestations and indecent exposure, Hewitt said.

# UNL researchers putting fruit fly sounds on tape

UNL researchers say fruit flies have a communication system that differs between species and is used during mating.

Zoology Prof. Dwight Miller and graduate student Ho-Chi Chang record the mating sounds of *Drosophila* as the flies stand on a microphone membrane.

Miller said the sounds range in tone from a musical quality resembling horn blasts to a noise like croaking frogs. He added that five years ago the tiny flies were noiseless to human ears.

The recordings are used to make sonograms, or line pictures, of the sound and are fed through an oscilloscope, which shows how the noises differ between species.

Miller said fruit flies distinguish between the sounds made during the mating dance.

Each species makes a distinct noise and mating is more frequent between two species more similar in sound than it is between species making different sounds, said Miller.

Miller said the sounds are genetically determined and

appear to be inborn rather than learned during the organism's life.

He said that although the research results are not of immediate importance, the findings may suggest what to look for in other research such as control of agricultural pests.

"What is learned regarding these harmless flies may be capable of guiding research in other areas," Miller said.

Miller said recognizing the complexity of an organism is important in knowing how to deal with the organism. He said that by recognizing different species the researcher might realize why control treatment that works for one species does not work for another.

Research using *Drosophila* has been going on in the basement of Bessey Hall for more than 30 years, according to Miller, who said the flies are used by both graduate and undergraduate students. He added that only graduate students study the sound traits of the flies.

"Others have influenced us and our work will influence others," Miller said of the sound research conducted elsewhere in the United States and also overseas.

Miller said sound research began in Nebraska about six years ago with the work of psychology graduate student Rosemarie Patty, now of North Carolina, and was continued by another former graduate student, Reiman Goldman, now of Omaha. Ho-Chi Chang is now studying it.

Change, a graduate student, said the genetic characteristics of the fruit fly are more complex than she had thought. She said she wants to discover which genes control other genes and is also interested in studying sperm development.

Miller gave a demonstration and played the sounds of the flies at the annual meeting of the Genetics Society of America at the University of Utah in August.

Miller, Goldstein and Patty published an article in the 1975 issue of *Evolution*.

Miller said the research is receiving no funds outside the Life Science Dept.'s budget. He said the fly research is comparatively inexpensive.

Miller said the sound research is done using one open reel tape recorder.

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