

DEPARTMENT OF RELIGIOUS STUDIES
BROWN UNIVERSITY

GRADUATE STUDENT HANDBOOK

2010-2012

The primary purpose of this Handbook is to provide information geared to the needs of graduate students at all levels in Religious Studies. It is intended to answer many basic questions and help graduate students progress as quickly and efficiently as possible towards the completion of the degree. It's not intended as a replacement either for consulting official University documents, especially the departmental and Graduate School Websites (from which considerable portions of this Handbook are distilled), or for consulting with faculty, fellow students, and various officials of the Graduate School, all of which graduate students should do regularly. This Handbook is revised periodically, and we welcome suggestions for its improvement.

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GRADUATE STUDY IN RELIGIOUS STUDIES: AN OVERVIEW

The Graduate Program in Religious Studies at Brown is administered by a faculty sub-committee, the Graduate Committee, which ordinarily consists of no fewer than three faculty members appointed by the department Chair, one of whom is the departmental Director of Graduate Studies (DGS), and who chairs the Committee.

DEGREE PROGRAMS

Graduate study in Religious Studies at Brown is designed primarily to train students for careers in teaching and research in colleges, universities and related institutions. A full description of the graduate areas currently offered is found below. Ordinarily, graduate students are admitted only to do doctoral work. Students already accepted into the Ph.D. program who do not have an M.A. in religion from another institution may obtain the M.A. degree from Brown by petitioning the Graduate School after one year of successful course work.

MASTER OF ARTS

Very occasionally, under unusual circumstances, the department may accept a student for terminal M.A. study. Financial aid is not available for M.A. students. Since this degree provides a more general overview within the field of Religious Studies than the Ph.D., students may propose various programs of study that fit their academic preparation and the resources of the faculty in the Department and related areas. The specific content of the degree will thus depend to a large extent on the student's interests and the faculty available in any given year.

The terminal M.A. in Religious Studies requires the completion of an approved program of eight semester courses and a thesis. The candidate must take RELS 2000, *Theory of Religion*, or an equivalent course, and must pass a language examination in either French or German, as well as demonstrate competence in other languages necessary for the particular program of study.

The M.A. may be completed in one academic year, in one academic year plus the summer, or in two academic years. A Master's thesis is not a dissertation and is normally less than 100 pages long. It may be based on a course paper, or on separate research under the guidance of a faculty member.

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

The Ph.D. program in Religious Studies at Brown offers three areas of study: Asian Religious Traditions (ART), Religion and Critical Thought (RCT) and Religions of the Ancient Mediterranean (RAM). Very occasionally, graduate students are accepted to do comparative work across these areas.

Brown University maintains three general requirements for the Ph.D. discussed in more detail below: residence, advancement to candidacy, and the dissertation. Advancement to candidacy occurs upon the recommendation of the Department after students have completed all required course work, including RELS 2000, and all language examinations, qualifying requirements, and preliminary exams.

GENERAL PH.D. REQUIREMENTS

(SEE ALSO AREA-SPECIFIC REQUIREMENTS BELOW)

Regardless of the specific focus, all Ph.D. work in Religious Studies at Brown has the same general five-part structure: 1. Residence (coursework); 2. Satisfaction of Qualifying Requirements (languages, subject-specific competences, theory and method); 3. Teaching Preparation; 4. Preliminary Examinations; 5. Dissertation (Prospectus and defense, actual dissertation; final public oral examination).

RESIDENCE (COURSEWORK)

All students are required to complete the equivalent of three years (six semesters) of full-time study beyond the baccalaureate degree (i.e., twenty-four tuition units). Up to one full year of graduate work done in residence at other institutions and not used in fulfillment of the requirements for the Ph.D. elsewhere may, on the recommendation of the department faculty (normally the DGS) and with the approval of the registrar, be counted in fulfillment of this requirement. We encourage students to work and develop professional relationships with faculty outside of the Department who focus in cognate areas. Students who have completed their formal coursework often continue to attend doctoral seminars until they have passed their preliminary examinations and begun work on the dissertation.

QUALIFYING REQUIREMENTS

All graduate students should consult with their area advisor (and other faculty as appropriate) to determine the qualifying requirements for their particular program, which differ depending on the specific area of study. These qualifying requirements ordinarily include language training as well as basic knowledge of, and competence in, the history and culture of particular traditions. In addition, all RS grad students must demonstrate competence in theory and method in Religious Studies, ordinarily through successful completion of RELS 2000.

TEACHING TRAINING

All RS graduate students are expected to serve as Teaching Assistants for courses in their areas of specialization. In addition, most students will be asked to serve as TAs in other departmental courses as our staffing needs require, or even in courses outside the department, as the University's needs require. All RS graduate students are heavily encouraged to participate in the teaching training programs run by the Sheridan Center, including their Certification programs.

PRELIMINARY (DOCTORAL) EXAMINATIONS

Ordinarily, all Ph.D. students sit for the Preliminary Examination in at least three areas, a major area, a minor area, and the area of dissertation specialization. Although the precise forms of these examinations are at the discretion of the area faculty, and may vary depending on the specifics of the student's program, each area has designed its exams to help students acquire specialized expertise as well as disciplinary breadth. All students should work out the format and general content of these examinations with their area advisor (and other faculty) early in their graduate program: all areas require students to be involved actively in developing their own reading lists. While some exams in

some areas are normally taken in the first and second year of residence, students are generally expected to complete all their exams by the end of the third year, with occasional exceptions. At the discretion of the area faculty, students may be required to revise portions of their exams or given an opportunity to rewrite or retake an exam. If, in the end, the area faculty determines that the student has not passed the Preliminary Exams, the student will be asked to leave the program and the area faculty will decide whether the student will be awarded a terminal M.A., contingent on the quality of the student's course work and examinations.

DISSERTATION

The dissertation requirement includes the following: the formulation of an acceptable dissertation topic; the preparation of a formal prospectus; a closed oral prospectus defense; the formation of a dissertation committee; the submission and acceptance of the actual dissertation; a final public oral examination.

Dissertations regularly set one's scholarly program for years to come, and contribute substantially to one's professional identity, including one's perceived suitability for various teaching positions. Students should be thinking about possible dissertation topics from the beginning of their program, and should discuss these aspects of prospective thesis topics early on with their advisors. Topics or areas for dissertation research often develop out of work in seminars and courses, so students should choose course papers with an eye to their suitability for further research. Once a student has identified a topic or promising area, the natural choice for first reader or advisor will be the faculty member whose specializations most closely match that topic. The student should work with this person (and the other faculty members in the program) to develop a prospectus and to propose second and third readers for the dissertation.

Students ordinarily devote at least two years to the dissertation, including research and writing, although occasionally less.

DISSERTATION PROSPECTUS

WRITTEN PROSPECTUS

Students who have successfully passed their examinations must then present a dissertation prospectus to the Religious Studies faculty for their discussion and approval. The prospectus should present the proposed dissertation topic, explain its scholarly context and justification, describe the methodologies to be employed, put forth a plan for procedure (e.g., a tentative, annotated table of contents) and a select bibliography. The ideal typical length of the prospectus is ten to twenty pages, including a bibliography.

The student works closely with his or her advisor on the prospectus. Before a prospectus meeting can be scheduled, the student should circulate a draft of the prospectus to all probable members of the dissertation committee, sufficiently far in advance to allow the committee members time to comment on the draft, and to allow the student to make any necessary revisions. The student should also determine, in advance, the availability of committee members to respond to such drafts.

Graduate students should allow at least four weeks for this part of the process, if not longer, depending on the state of the initial draft, and the availability of the committee members.

When the committee members have had an opportunity to comment on the draft, and when the proposed dissertation director is satisfied that the prospectus is ready, the meeting may be scheduled. Once the dissertation director notifies the DGS that the prospectus is ready, it is the responsibility of the dissertation director to consult with the student, the prospective committee members and the DGS to determine a feasible time for the meeting, and to verify the availability of all necessary parties, including the committee members, the DGS and the student, before the meeting is officially scheduled. Dissertation directors are welcome to ask for scheduling assistance from the RS department staff if necessary. The DGS then approves the meeting time, announces the meeting to the department faculty, and any appropriate outside faculty, and circulates the prospectus electronically. The faculty should be given notice of the meeting, and be sent the approved draft of the prospectus, no less than two weeks in advance. To facilitate this, The DGS should receive the approved prospectus no less than 17 days before the proposed meeting date, and ideally 21 days in advance of the proposed meeting.

The student's dissertation committee will be determined upon consultation between the student and faculty, and should be informally arranged prior to the prospectus meeting with the help of the student's advisor and the DGS.

PROSPECTUS PRESENTATION

The prospectus presentation ordinarily takes place 2-4 weeks after submission of the prospectus. Unlike the final oral defense of the dissertation, this is a closed meeting (ordinarily about 90 minutes), where the RS faculty (and invited faculty guests) and the student discuss the proposed dissertation. This is a working session whose purpose is for the faculty to have constructive input early enough to avoid major problems later, and to assist in clarifying the dissertation process.

Ordinarily, the DGS presides. After any appropriate preliminary consultation of the faculty, the student begins with a brief statement (10 minutes), describing the genesis of the project and how it relates to the work the student has done in the department. After appropriate faculty questioning and discussion, the student leaves the room briefly while faculty assess the dissertation, raise any further issues, and clarify agreements about the dissertation committee. The student then returns and is informed of the faculty's decision regarding both the prospectus and the committee, and given any further points of clarification, advice, or procedure. If the faculty approves these, the student is now formally advanced to candidacy.

DISSERTATION ADVISING

Different institutions (and departments) have different procedures for dissertation advising. In Religious Studies, it is often the case that only the advisor reads first drafts, and that second and third (and fourth, if applicable) readers only see and critique the project at a later stage. These practices, however, are flexible, and students are encouraged to devise a process with their advisors that provides the most constructive guidance to the student, and

produces the strongest possible result. Students should keep in mind, though, that reading and critiquing dissertations is highly time-consuming for faculty. Being mindful of faculty schedules and workload makes it more likely that students will receive productive feedback and complete their dissertation in a timely manner. Students should always let faculty members know well in advance when to expect drafts, and should have reasonable expectations about faculty turn-around time.

DISSERTATION DEFENSE/ORAL EXAMINATION

The Department of Religious Studies requires that the dissertation, demonstrating original research and advanced scholarship, be defended in an oral examination before the faculty. When the advisor, having consulted with the whole committee, judges that a dissertation is ready for defense, she or he will, in consultation with the DGS, schedule a date, time and place for the defense. This occasion brings the student together with the readers and other pertinent faculty, and is usually open to the larger university community, including graduate students.

The format of the defense, which is technically an oral examination, is similar to that of the prospectus meeting. Normally, the DGS conducts a brief closed meeting with the faculty (without the candidate or any guests) to discuss the format of the defense, and to consider any last minute issues that may have arisen. The candidate and any others attending then join the faculty. After the candidate provides an overview of the dissertation, faculty ask critical questions, normally for about an hour and a half. The faculty then meet in closed session to evaluate the student's work. When the faculty formally accept the dissertation, including approval of the defense, the student has successfully completed the doctorate degree.

DEPOSIT OF THE DISSERTATION

Detailed instructions for the preparation and submission of the dissertation and abstract, as information on filing fees, microfilm publication and copyright, are available on the Graduate School Website. Students should familiarize themselves with these requirements very early on in the writing process. Students must allow for a few days beyond the defense before formal submission, in order to incorporate any final changes or corrections from the defense before binding; several weeks are preferable.

DISSERTATION DEADLINES

The Graduate School expects that all candidates will successfully submit and defend the dissertation within five years of achieving candidacy. Students who have not done so may petition the Graduate School for a one-year extension, in the form of an explanatory letter, with the consent of the DGS. Such requests are not automatically granted, and students should make every possible effort to meet this deadline.

RECEIVING THE ACTUAL DEGREE

Ph.D. degrees are awarded only at Spring commencement, regardless of when the actual defense takes place. To receive a Ph.D. degree at commencement, students must submit the

dissertation by the first business day in May, although an extension to May 15 is possible when a request is submitted to the Graduate School. Students who anticipate completing the dissertation within one month of the semester following that in which they are presently registered may request a one month extension that allows them to complete their work without registering (and paying) for the following semester.

OVERVIEW OF THE PH.D. PROGRAM SCHEDULE

The following calendar represents the ideal sequence through the program for Ph.D. students in Religious Studies who enter with a relevant prior Master's degree, as do most students. The exact number and timing of semesters when a student will work for the department or the university, as a Teaching Assistant, Teaching Fellow, Research Assistant or Proctor will depend on institutional needs, and on the student's program.

YEAR 1

Fall: 4 courses
 Spring: 4 courses
 Summer: Summer study: language work, archaeological or other field training, travel
 Funding: First-year fellowship
 Notes: All students take RS 2000 if offered: ART and RAM students take field-specific language courses as necessary

YEAR 2

Fall: 3 courses; departmental assignment (TA, TF, RA, proctorship)
 Spring: 3 courses; departmental assignment (TA, TF, RA, proctorship); begin developing preliminary exam proposal
 Summer: Summer study: language work (completed if possible), archaeological or other field training; completion of all qualifying requirements: finish preliminary exam proposal
 Funding: Departmental Assignment
 Notes: All students take RS 2000 if not taken in year 1: ART and RAM students continue field-specific language courses as necessary.

YEAR 3

Fall: 1 course; departmental assignment (TA, TF, RA, proctorship);
 RCT & RAM begin preliminary exams; also begin work on dissertation prospectus
 Spring: 1 course; departmental assignment (TA, TF, RA, proctorship);
 RCT & RAM: complete preliminary exams
 ART: first two preliminary exams by semester's end
 Summer: Complete dissertation prospectus (RCT & RAM)
 Funding: Departmental Assignment

YEAR 4

Fall: RCT & RAM: Dissertation prospectus conference (early fall); then work on dissertation;
 ART: third preliminary exam (research paper); grant applications for fieldwork in Asia
 Spring: RCT & RAM: Work on dissertation
 ART: Prospectus conference and approval by semester's end
 Summer: Work on dissertation
 Funding: Departmental assignment (TA, TF, RA, proctorship) or Dissertation Fellowship.
 Students who receive dissertation funding in the 4th year will normally be funded through department assignment in the fifth year, unless they obtain external funding.

YEAR 5

Fall: RCT & RAM: Work on dissertation; apply for jobs
 ART: Fieldwork in Asia
 Spring: RCT & RAM: Complete and defend dissertation
 ART: Fieldwork in Asia
 Funding: RCT & RAM: Dissertation Fellowship (unless held in Year 4: see above).
 ART: External funding

YEAR 6 (ART ONLY)

| | |
|----------|---|
| Fall: | Dissertation writing |
| Spring: | Dissertation completion, submission and defense |
| Funding: | Final year of University funding (provided 5 th year was external funding) |

ADVISING

Each Ph.D. area has its own core faculty. One faculty member is usually designated as the program coordinator and advisor (designated with an asterisk below). For 2011-12, the core faculty members are:

Asian Religious Traditions (ART): Hal Roth, Janine Sawada*, also James Fitzgerald (Classics)

Religion and Critical Thought (RCT): Stephen Bush, Mark Cladis, Tal Lewis*

Religions of the Ancient Mediterranean (RAM): Susan Harvey*, Nancy Khalek, Ross Kraemer*, Saul Olyan, Michael Satlow, Stan Stowers

The area advisor generally serves as the student's primary advisor through the Preliminary Examination phase, except that in RAM, two faculty members may serve as primary advisors, given the size of the RAM graduate program. Graduate students, however, are expected to take primary responsibility for their schedules. This means that while students must carefully consult with the members of the core faculty in their area, the faculty expect students to develop and be able to justify their own schedule. Typically, students still taking courses should develop a preliminary schedule and discuss it with other core faculty before meeting with the area advisor.

Toward the end of the exam process students will normally begin thinking about their formal dissertation proposal and the best person to advise the dissertation. Again, the area coordinator and advisor is the primary contact person to guide students through this decision.

Ultimately, the authority for appointing the dissertation director and the members of the dissertation committee rests with the faculty of the Department. The dissertation committee is officially constituted after the conference on the dissertation prospectus, although its general membership is usually agreed upon prior to the defense. The dissertation advisor will then serve as the student's primary advisor through completion. Most graduate students continue to consult with other faculty in their area for advice about various aspects of their professional program.

SATISFACTORY PROGRESS AND EVALUATION

The Department of Religious Studies expects that all Ph.D. students will make satisfactory and timely progress through the graduate program, and all funding is contingent on such progress. Students whose work is ultimately deemed insufficient by the faculty may be terminated from the program, although such a determination is unusual and only reached after considerable consultation. In some cases, students terminated from Ph.D. study may be eligible to receive a terminal M.A. Students whose work is otherwise acceptable but whose progress is not sufficiently timely may have their funding withdrawn, or may be terminated from the program.

Graduate students are evaluated annually in writing: first year students are also evaluated at the end of their first semester in residence. Currently, different areas use somewhat different evaluation processes. In 2010-11, the faculty will consider whether to standardize these across the department. In all cases, however, at the end of each academic year, each area's faculty discuss the progress of each student, and the area advisor

then writes a formal evaluation summarizing these discussions. This evaluation indicates whether the student is in Good standing, Satisfactory standing, or on Warning. The parameters for each status are set forth in the Graduate Handbook, available on the Graduate School Website. They are intended to provide a formal feedback mechanism that conveys the expectations of the faculty for the coming year. Should a student fall behind or in another way not fulfill the faculty's expectations, the letter will specify precisely what the student needs to do, and in what time-frame, to maintain a status of "satisfactory progress" in the program. Students are encouraged to discuss any issues raised in these evaluations with the appropriate faculty, and if necessary, with the DGS as well.

The evaluation is normally sent to the student by e-mail and hard copy. Hard copies are kept in the student's departmental file. The letters of evaluation are not routinely shared outside the department, although it may occasionally be necessary to share them with the Graduate School administration. However, the student's standing is reported to the Graduate School each year (and at mid-year for first year students). Please also note that progress standings differ from those which appear on the student's transcript issued by the Registrar. Good Standing with the Registrar means only that the student has successfully completed a minimum number of courses: a student whose progress is Satisfactory, or even Warning may still be in Good Standing with the Registrar.

SPECIFIC AREA PROGRAMS

ASIAN RELIGIOUS TRADITIONS

OVERVIEW

ART offers training in the study of Asian religions in their historical and cultural contexts. Students are expected to choose their tradition or region of specialization from among the fields of expertise of the Brown faculty, currently in the following areas:

EAST ASIAN RELIGIONS (EAR)

Chinese thought and religion of the classical period
Early Daoist contemplative traditions
Japanese popular religions
Religion and thought of early modern Japan
Confucian traditions

SOUTH ASIAN RELIGIONS (SAR)

Ancient South Asian religions
Medieval and early modern South Asian religions

EAST ASIAN RELIGIONS (EAR)

DESCRIPTION

Students of East Asian Religions specialize in the religious traditions of either China or Japan, but attain broad competence in the religious history of the alternate area as well. Students may also choose to concentrate on a specific religious tradition (Daoist, Confucian, or Buddhist) as it developed in the East Asian historical context. Those who specialize in the Daoist tradition study its origins and development in the intellectual context of early China and selected later developments. Students who concentrate on the Confucian tradition study its emergence and development in the intellectual context of early China, as well as the major Neo-Confucian interpretations of Song and Ming China, Yi Korea, and Tokugawa Japan. The study of Buddhism at Brown currently focuses on Japanese Buddhism from the Tokugawa through the Meiji periods. Regardless of their area of concentration, all EAR students are expected to develop an understanding of the key issues involved in the historical interaction of the religious traditions of East Asia.

ADMISSION

Successful applicants to the doctoral program in East Asian Religions ordinarily possess an M.A. or the equivalent in a related field of study. At least two years of either Chinese or Japanese is required; three or more years is highly recommended. Excellent command of English, both spoken and written, is also required.

COURSEWORK

Courses are selected each semester in consultation with the student's primary advisor. In addition to the departmental course requirement in theory and method (RELS 2000), EAR students are expected to complete at least six graduate seminars or the equivalent. At least four of the seminars will be in the main area of concentration; at least two should be in the secondary area. Students also take courses in the Department of East Asian Studies and draw on resources in the Departments of History, History of Art and Architecture, Comparative Literature, and Anthropology, among others. In addition, a course in Chinese or Japanese bibliography (depending on the area of specialization) is required. Students are encouraged to cross-register for this and other specialized courses at Harvard University, as appropriate.

LANGUAGES

EAR students must attain reading competence in at least one modern European language other than English (ordinarily French): in consultation with their advisory committee, they may count one East Asian language for the departmental second modern language requirement. Native speakers of an East Asian language will be asked to demonstrate mastery of a second modern East Asian language and a modern European language other than English.

Students of Chinese religions must demonstrate competence in modern Chinese, proficiency in classical Chinese, and reading competence in modern Japanese. Students of Japanese religions must attain proficiency in modern Japanese and competence in classical Japanese;

depending on their period of specialization, they should also learn to how to read Sino-Japanese (kanbun).

Graduate students are urged to take intensive language courses in the summer whenever possible, so as to complete their requirements in a timely fashion. EAR students are also encouraged to refine their language skills in China and/or Japan during summers or other limited periods during the course of their graduate studies. Enquiries about the possibility of financial assistance for language study should be made well in advance of the projected study program.

PRELIMINARY EXAMINATIONS

The first two doctoral examinations are based on bibliographies negotiated by the student and the advisory committee several months in advance. The first exam covers the history of Chinese and Japanese religions as a whole; the second focuses on the student's special field. Each of these two exams will take place on a separate day within a one-week period, ordinarily before the beginning of the second semester after the completion of coursework. The third and final examination is a research paper written under the guidance of one of the members of the examination committee. The purpose of the paper is to certify that the student is qualified to carry out primary research in her or his special field; the topic should be related to the student's projected thesis area and should demonstrate substantial use of both primary and secondary materials in the student's main research language(s). The paper may take the form of an annotated translation of a primary text in the original research language, accompanied by an extensive analytic introduction. The topic of the paper must be chosen in consultation with the student's main faculty advisor, who will ordinarily become the dissertation supervisor.

DISSERTATION RESEARCH

Students of Japanese or Chinese religions are generally expected to conduct on-site research using original sources, whether primary texts in archives and libraries, works of art in museums, interviews with subjects, or other materials. In many cases, primary texts must be located, read, and understood under the guidance of a Japanese or Chinese specialist in the field. EAR graduate students should therefore plan to conduct research for an extended period, usually one year, in China or Japan after their dissertation prospectus has been approved. Ordinarily they will apply for fellowships to conduct research abroad in the fall of the year preceding the academic year in which they plan to live in China or Japan.

SOUTH ASIAN RELIGIONS (SAR)

DESCRIPTION

Students of South Asian Religions focus on the Hindu religious traditions of India and specialize either in the traditions of ancient Indian religion (Ancient South Asian Religions: ASART) or the traditions of medieval and modern India (Medieval and Early Modern South Asian Religions: MEMSART). Students work closely with their advisors to develop a program that will best suit their interests and prepare them for a career as a teacher and scholar of South Asian religions.

ADMISSION

Applicants should have significant preparation in the academic study of South Asia and South Asian languages, including ordinarily at least two years of either Sanskrit or Hindi-Urdu.

COURSEWORK

Students normally take six semesters of course work and then spend two years in the research and writing of the Ph.D. dissertation. Depending upon the needs of their particular program, students are encouraged to take courses in other Brown departments that bring them into contact with modern and contemporary contexts of South Asian religions and to seek out opportunities for periods of study and research in India in the course of their graduate careers.

LANGUAGES

Required language work is one of the principal distinctions between studying Ancient South Asian Religions and studying Medieval and Early Modern South Asian Religions. The first requires passing the General Sanskrit reading exam; a Special Sanskrit Reading Exam; and reading proficiency in both German and French. Students in this area are encouraged to study Hindi at some point in their careers, if at all possible. The second requires passing the language exam in Hindi; two years of graduate level coursework in Sanskrit, and reading proficiency in either French or German.

PRELIMINARY EXAMINATIONS

The preliminary examination has two parts. The first covers the general history, sources, and themes of the Hindu Religions of South Asia. The second covers the broad area and themes within which the student's dissertation research will take place.

SEGMENT 1

This segment is a Breadth Examination on the general history, sources, and themes of the Hindu Religions of South Asia. It will consist of two three-hour written exams, one on Ancient India (from Vedic times to roughly 500 CE) and one on the medieval period (500 CE to 1500). This exam must be passed no later than the end of the sixth semester of residence. The reading lists for these exams will be set by the professors of ASART and MEMSART respectively.

SEGMENT 2

This segment is a Special Area Examination over the broad area and themes within which the student's dissertation research will take place. The focus, limits, and reading list for this examination will be designed through consultation between the student and his or her advisor. This exam will be a single four hour written exam taken no later than the end of the sixth semester of residence.

RELIGION AND CRITICAL THOUGHT

DESCRIPTION

RCT students focus on issues, problems, and texts concerning three areas:

- 1) philosophy and religion
- 2) religious ethics (that is, the interrelation among religion, ethics, and politics)
- 3) theory of religion.

The program endeavors to integrate these areas, encouraging students to work at the intersection of normative and critical approaches, topics, and disciplines.

Given the program's emphasis on theory and critical thought, students are given broad exposure to classic and contemporary issues, problems, and texts associated with philosophy of religion, ethics, social-scientific theory, theology, and political philosophy. At the same time, students are required to gain competence in at least one religious tradition, in order to lend specificity to critical reflection on various aspects of religion and the study of religion.

AFFILIATED FACULTY

In addition to working with the RCT core faculty, RCT graduate students often work closely with other faculty members both within and outside of the Department. For example, a student may wish to link a RCT project with a Religious Studies faculty doing historical work in Asian, Christian, Jewish, or Islamic traditions. For faculty outside the Department who are closely affiliated with us please see the Department website.

ADMISSION

Candidates are admitted to the program with a Master's Degree and also directly from their undergraduate program. Typically, students will have done previous work in the socio-critical and philosophical study of religion.

COURSEWORK

Students with a masters degree in a relevant field will normally take two years of course work; students entering with a bachelors degree will normally take three years. During this course work stage, students are expected to enroll in 4 courses each semester the first year, and three in subsequent years. Students in their first three years of graduates studies are normally expected to participate in all RCT seminars. After the third year, students should consult with the RCT advisor about whether they are expected to take a particular RCT seminar. Generally speaking, students will draw on resources throughout the humanities and social sciences, for example, in the departments of Philosophy, Political Science, Comparative Literature, Africana Studies, Judaic Studies, Classics, Anthropology, and Sociology. In consultation with the core RCT faculty, students will develop a schedule that will satisfy the requirement for competence in a religious tradition through course work. Additionally, students must demonstrate familiarity with a second religious tradition; this

religious diversity requirement, depending on the judgment of the RCT Faculty, may be satisfied by course work done prior to attendance at Brown or by one or two additional courses at Brown.

ANNUAL MEETING WITH FACULTY

The student will meet annually with the RCT core faculty, normally toward the end of the spring semester. This informal meeting is an opportunity to talk broadly about the student's trajectory in the program, that is, about one's past, present, and future work.

LANGUAGE REQUIREMENTS

All students must pass examinations in French and German before taking their Preliminary Exams; subject to approval, French or German (but not both) may be replaced with an alternate. Depending on their areas of interest, students may need to acquire additional language competence, for which there is no set examination structure.

PRELIMINARY EXAMINATION

The Preliminary Exams should be concluded within a year of completing course work. Normally, the Preliminary Exam is concluded at the end of May of the student's third or fourth year (depending on whether the student entered the program with a bachelors or masters degree). The four Preliminary Exams, all of which may be satisfied by papers of approximately 25-35 double-spaced pages, including notes, are defined as proficient treatment of:

- 1) a comparison of two historically significant figures or texts
- 2) a conceptual issue pertaining to the philosophy and theory of religion, religious ethics, political theory, or some combination of these
- 3) a substantive review essay of a noteworthy book published within the last 10 years or so
- 4) a topic that is pertinent to the student's dissertation.

Up to two of the exams may be satisfied by take-home examinations.

The topic and format of the four exams are proposed by the student to the RCT Faculty and are subject to their approval. This exam proposal (which covers all four exams) is normally submitted no later than the first week of classes in the fall semester of the year dedicated to the Exams. Two exams must be completed by mid-January; students missing this deadline may not be considered for a dissertation fellowship for the following year. Shortly after the conclusion of these exams, students will meet with the Advisory Faculty for a full discussion. This meeting is an opportunity for intellectual exchange as well as an opportunity for the student to demonstrate competence in the field of the exam (although the passing of the exam is determined primarily by the quality of the student's written work).

RELIGIONS OF THE ANCIENT MEDITERRANEAN

Beginning with 2010-2011, all graduate study of any of the religions of the ancient Mediterranean, including ancient West Asia, is done through this program, and its particular requirements and structures. Students who were originally accepted into either the ancient Judaism (AJ) or the early Christianity (EC) programs may elect to fulfill the requirements of those programs. Students who have not yet begun their doctoral examinations may request a transfer

into RAM, and should do so at the earliest possible date. The RAM faculty will decide whether to approve the transfer.

DESCRIPTION

RAM students focus on the interdisciplinary study of religion throughout the ancient Mediterranean and Near-East. Choosing both a major and a related minor area, students examine ancient religions synchronically, understanding how they formed and functioned in their social, intellectual, and political contexts. Students may choose as either a major or a minor field work in:

Israelite religion

Judean religion (Judaism) from the fifth century BCE to first century CE

Judean religion (Judaism) from the first century CE to the seventh century CE (including rabbinics and/or the Greco-Roman Diaspora)

Greek religion

Roman religion

Early Christianity (first - fourth centuries CE)

Christianity in Late Antiquity (fourth - seventh centuries CE)

Early Islam

In addition to these, students may choose as a minor field only:

Ancient West Asian religions (i.e., Ugaritic, Phoenician, Aramean);

Egyptian religion

Mesopotamian religion

ADMISSIONS

Most successful applicants to RAM come with an MA in a related field, although exceptionally promising BA students with significant undergraduate study in appropriate areas are also considered for admission. Students are expected to have had some training in the academic study of religion. Students intending to specialize in some aspect of Ancient Judaism must have a minimum of two years of college level biblical Hebrew or its equivalent; a working knowledge of modern and rabbinic Hebrew and introductory ancient Greek are also highly desirable. Students intending to specialize in some aspect of early Christianity, or Greek, or Roman religion, should have college level training in Greek or Latin, and ideally both. Preference will be given to RAM applicants who have appropriate prior study of Greek (and other appropriate languages) and a reading knowledge of French or German, as well as prior work in the history, literature and religions of the ancient Mediterranean.

COURSEWORK

During the first year, students, in consultation with the RAM advisor and other appropriate faculty, design a curriculum that allows for exploration while remaining appropriately focused. RELS 2000 should be taken as soon as possible. At the end of the first year, students choose both a major and minor field. Upon choosing these fields, each student is assigned a preliminary advisory committee

consisting of at least one faculty member from the major and one from the minor field. This advisory committee may or may not be identical to the student's eventual dissertation committee.

Students are expected to complete at least three seminars (or independent studies) in the major field and two in the minor field. All coursework must be completed prior to being allowed to sit for the Preliminary Examination.

QUALIFYING REQUIREMENTS

These depend upon the student's specific areas of interest, but always include language training, REELS 2000, and appropriate preparation in the sources and methods of the areas of focus. Students should discuss the expectations for their particular areas with the RAM advisor and other appropriate faculty as soon as possible.

LANGUAGES

ANCIENT LANGUAGES

Required ancient languages are determined according to the student's field, in consultation with the student's advisory committee. All major fields require knowledge of Greek: some require proficiency. Israelite religion and all periods of Judaism also require proficiency in ancient Hebrew, and knowledge of Aramaic; early Islam requires proficiency in Arabic. Students studying Christianity are ordinarily expected to learn Latin and/or Coptic or Syriac. Diagnostic examinations are ordinarily given to entering students in Greek, Latin, and other languages as appropriate, typically consisting of a three-hour translation test in which lexical aids may be used. Students may be asked to retake one or more of these examinations annually until they have achieved an adequate level of competence, as determined by the faculty. In some cases, advanced (graduate level) coursework, with a grade of B or better, may satisfy this requirement, at the discretion of the faculty. All language requirements should be completed by the end of the student's second year (third if the student entered without an M.A.), and must be fulfilled prior to sitting for the Preliminary Examination.

MODERN SCHOLARLY LANGUAGES

In addition to demonstrating competence in two modern languages, ordinarily French and German, those students who major or minor in some fields, particularly Israelite religion and Judaism in any time period, must also demonstrate competency in modern scholarly Hebrew. Depending on the student's area of interest, additional modern languages may be desirable, such as Italian, Spanish, and others. Competency in these languages can be demonstrated in one of three ways:

- a grade of B or higher in an appropriate course, as determined by the advisory committee in consultation with the Graduate Advisor
- a translation test, typically lasting three hours during which the student is asked to translate, with the aid (if desired) of lexical aids, a passage of scholarly prose; or
- a working exercise, administered by the faculty, in which typically a student reads a substantial scholarly article or book and submits a report on it.

PRELIMINARY EXAMINATION

The RAM Preliminary Examination is taken in four parts: Major field; Minor field; Ancillary area; Dissertation area. Ordinarily, students who entered with an MA in a relevant field will spend their third year of study preparing for and taking the Preliminary Examination. Students who entered without an MA in a related field are expected to complete the Preliminary Examination during their fourth year of study. Preparation for these examinations, including reading lists for the major and minor fields will be made in consultation with the student's advisory committee. The various parts of the examination may be taken in any order, although the dissertation part is normally the last.

The major field examination is administered by the major field advisor, in consultation with the advisory committee; the minor field examination is administered by the minor field advisor, also in consultation with the advisory committee. The ancillary exam is determined in consultation with the advisory committee and may, as appropriate, involve the participation of additional faculty. The dissertation area examination is also administered by a faculty member chosen by the student in consultation with the student's committee, and who usually becomes the dissertation director. The format of the exam will be determined by consultation between the student and the advisory committee.

TEACHING

GUIDELINES FOR TEACHING ASSISTANTSHIPS

The Department of Religious Studies utilizes doctoral students as Teaching Assistants (TAs) for two reasons: 1) pedagogical, to train students for the task of classroom instruction with the anticipation of their future placement as college and university faculty; 2) administrative, to provide staffing for larger departmental courses. Although graduate student support is no longer tied directly to teaching assistantships, employing students as TAs is part of how the Graduate School supports graduate students financially. Our commitment to the pedagogical concern is underscored by the fact that service as a Teaching Assistant for at least two semesters is a requirement of our doctoral programs, even for students who may have an outside Fellowship that prohibits them from teaching (such students are funded by Brown, if necessary, during their teaching service).

TAs have a serious professional responsibility to both their students and faculty supervisor. TAs are expected to be familiar with their responsibilities, professional obligations, and rights.

The guidelines, and resources for teaching, are available at

http://www.brown.edu/Administration/Sheridan_Center/teaching_at_brown/index.html.

The Sheridan Center for Teaching and learning offers an array of services to orient new TAs to the processes and issues involved in teaching, as well as to assist others in the strengthening of their teaching skills. The SCTL is an excellent resource center, and we urge all TAs to utilize this facility to the full. In particular, we advise all new TAs to attend the New Teaching Assistant Orientation offered by SCTL at the beginning of each school year as well as to participate in the Teaching Seminar, a series of lectures and workshops, that SCTL offers on a yearly basis to introduce TAs to pedagogical issues and to help them develop reflective teaching skills. Many students avail themselves of special teaching certification programs at the Center.

THE APPRENTICESHIP MODEL

In this Department, we understand the training of future teachers to be best undertaken through an apprenticeship model. TAs thus work closely with the professor on an assigned course.

THE PROFESSOR'S RESPONSIBILITIES

The professor has primary responsibility for the syllabus, for establishing course requirements and grading standards, for monitoring the quality of grading to ensure consistency of standards, for lectures, and for supervision of the TA. The professor may seek input from the TA on these matters, and may also invite the TA to participate in the design of the course.

THE TA'S RESPONSIBILITIES

According to the Graduate School's website, TA's assist instructors "on all work related to the instruction of a particular course." The precise duties of a TA depend upon the structure of the particular course. In Religious Studies, TAs are ordinarily responsible for running one or two discussion sections of a course and for grading the written assignments and examinations of the students in those sections. To enable effective handling of these responsibilities, TAs normally attend all class lectures, hold regular office hours for their students, and meet regularly with the professor concerning the content and progress of the course as well as the content of section meetings. In accordance with University policy, a TAship will normally require 15-18 hours per week (with a limit of an average of 20 hours per week). It is understood that the time requirements will vary throughout the semester: the heaviest periods will be when grading. A preliminary meeting between professors and TAs prior to the start of their courses, to go over the syllabus and check on assignment dates, should allow TAs sufficient notice for adjustments in their own academic schedules to accommodate the fluctuations in workload.

In addition, TAs may be asked to hold review sessions prior to examinations. In cases where more than one TA is assigned to a course, TAs often find it useful to prepare together for section meetings. In many courses, TAs are strongly encouraged to present a lecture or two in order to gain experience before the class.

Faculty may ask TAs for some administrative assistance on matters directly related to the assigned course: e.g., preparing handouts, checking on reserve readings, posting notices regarding class meetings, maintaining course websites, monitoring attendance, etc.

TAs are not expected to assist faculty in work unrelated to the assigned course. TAs who feel that they have been asked to perform tasks unrelated to the course, or that are in some other way inappropriate, should discuss this first with the faculty member, if at all possible. Students may also seek the advice of the DGS in resolving such situations, (or the Department Chair, if the DGS is the course faculty member).

COURSE ASSIGNMENTS

IN THE STUDENT'S AREAS OF TRAINING

At present, TA assignments are made either because the enrollment of a course justifies TA support (normally for courses with 50 or more students), or because training to teach the course is required as part of the student's program. Whenever possible, TAs are assigned to courses that bear directly on their area of study. Graduate students will not only be most familiar with the material in these courses but should also find them useful for their own needs, for example in mastering material for their own examinations. Moreover, these courses will often be the sort of courses graduate students will find themselves teaching in their future employment. Close attention to matters of course design, perspective, pedagogical methods and goals will help TAs learn how to prepare a syllabus of their own as well as different classroom strategies.

Occasionally, students may be assigned to serve as TAs in related courses offered in other departments.

OUTSIDE A STUDENT'S AREA

Graduate students may sometimes be asked to serve as TAs in courses outside their stated expertise, either because of department staffing needs, or because no appropriate placement is available within the department. Such assignments often afford students broader teaching experience that enhances their qualifications for future teaching positions, particularly in departments seeking faculty able to teach in a variety of areas.

The Department makes such assignments for courses in Religious Studies outside the student's field. When no placements are available within Religious Studies or closely related departments, assignments may be made by the Graduate School in consultation with the Department. In all cases, the Department and the Graduate School try to find the best possible match, and consider previous student coursework, research or other relevant experience and training. Final decisions for TA assignment rest with the Director of Graduate Studies, the Department Chair and ultimately the Graduate School, which currently authorizes all departmental assignments for graduate students.

ADVANCE PLANNING

TA assignments are tentatively planned for the following year by the Director of Graduate Studies and Department Chair in the late spring, and submitted to the Graduate School for authorization. Such plans are made taking into account the Department's announced course offerings, the number of graduate students eligible to serve as teaching assistants, spring pre-enrollment figures, and projection of course enrollments based on previous patterns. However, enrollments can fluctuate unexpectedly and so can staffing arrangements. Students for whom no appropriate assignment is foreseeable in the spring may be placed in the Graduate School's open pool, for later assignment. Assignments can only be finalized at the beginning of each semester. Graduate students, like faculty, must allow for a certain flexibility in this regard.

FINANCIAL MATTERS (FUNDING & FEES)

UNIVERSITY FUNDING SOURCES

FELLOWSHIPS

Currently, all admitted Ph.D. students are promised five years of funding, provided they make satisfactory progress and otherwise remain in good standing. Ordinarily, students are not expected to serve as Teaching Assistants, Research Assistants or Proctors in the first year, although there are occasionally exceptions. Ordinarily, students should expect to work for the University in one of these capacities in years two, three and four, and to have the fifth year free to work on the dissertation. Limited sixth-year funding has been available in the last few years: in 2010-2011, the Graduate School instituted a competitive process for such support, which was available almost entirely in the form of TA appointments. Students are **strongly** advised not to plan on such additional support, and to be prepared to support themselves after the fifth year.

Students who have exhausted their five years of funding, but who have not yet completed the degree, and who have advanced to candidacy within the last five years are eligible for Advanced Status. Such students are responsible for an enrollment fee and the student activity fee, and must have health insurance from Brown or provide proof of comparable coverage under another plan. The University offers a limited number of scholarships for such expenses: for further information, see the Graduate School website (Academics: Rules and Regulations: Student Status Issues: Advanced Student Status; see also Support: Tuition, Fees and Billing for current costs). In 2010-2011, such support was available through the 6th year funding competition.

SUMMER SUPPORT

Students entering in the fall of 2011 ordinarily receive four years of summer support, as specified in the offer of admission from the Graduate School. Students who entered before 2011 are entitled to whatever summer support their offer of admission guaranteed. Summer funding allocations are ordinarily made in the early spring. For details, consult the Graduate School website.

LOANS

Loans, both short and long term, are offered through Brown Office of Financial Aid. To apply for a loan, students must fill out a Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) form on-line, at www.fafsa.ed.gov, in order to determine financial need. Consult the Graduate School website (Support: Student Loans) for further details and the Brown code, as well as the OFA website. Try not to do this at the last minute, since it takes a while for this data to be processed. Loan requests can be submitted throughout the year, although earlier is better: later in the year, there may or may not be funds remaining. All questions about loans and other such aid should be directed to the Office of Financial Aid and/or the Graduate School.

TAXES

Your tax liability depends upon the kind of support you receive in any given semester. You are responsible for knowing your tax liability. Questions about these matters should be addressed to the appropriate associate or assistant Dean at the Graduate School. The Graduate School can also provide a list of acceptable “educational” expenses.

FELLOWSHIP AWARDS

The University does not withhold taxes from Fellowship Awards. The portion of the fellowship that is used to cover tuition, fees, and required books and supplies is not taxable. However, funds used to cover room, board, travel, and research are considered a form of taxable income. Students who receive fellowships are responsible for reporting their income accordingly, and for paying any taxes incurred.

TEACHING ASSISTANTSHIPS, RESEARCH ASSISTANTSHIPS, PROCTORSHIPS

Taxes are withheld from the bi-monthly checks (disbursed on the 15th and last day of every month) for students with TAs, Research Assistantships, Teaching Fellow appointments, and Proctorships.

TRAVEL FUNDS

CONFERENCE TRAVEL

In order to help defray the costs associated with travel to professional conferences, the Graduate School makes available grants of up to \$500.00 for students who are presenting a paper at recognized professional conferences. Students in years 2 through 5 are eligible, for one paper per year. Sixth-year students may be eligible if sufficient funds are available. There is no application form, but students will need to submit an accounting of their expenses, including original receipts, and documentation of the conference participation. For details, please see the Graduate Student Website (Support: Internal Funding: Conference Travel).

In addition, students presenting conference papers must consult with a faculty member in their area about the suitability of the proposed paper, and with the DGS, since the department must certify that there are no further departmental funds available for these purposes. The Department currently does provide small amounts of travel funding for graduate students: apply to the DGS.

RESEARCH TRAVEL

In certain cases, the University also subsidizes graduate student research travel up to \$1800, for students who already have other travel grants and require supplemental funding. For details, deadlines and forms, see the Graduate Student website (Support: Internal Funding: Research Travel).

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT FUNDS

In the past, the Graduate School awarded limited funding to help with professional development, such as funds to help with unexpected publication costs for a student’s article to appear in a

professional journal. Such funding may no longer be available. In recent years, the Department has also made available very modest funds for such expenses. If you have such a need, consult the DGS.

EXTERNAL FUNDING

Some graduate students receive funding for one or more years from foundations and organizations external to Brown. Such funds allow students to defer their University funding and also entitle students to various incentives from the Graduate School. Consult the Graduate School website for details (Support: External Funding: Incentives Policy). In Religious Studies, outside fellowships are often for the dissertation year, but in recent years, students in the Department have been awarded fellowships for course work and exam years as well. **Students are strongly encouraged to seek outside funding at all levels.** Consult the Graduate School website (Support: External Funding) for information. Students who plan to apply for outside funding should be in contact with Deans Tylor and Walton, at the Graduate School, as well as the DGS. The DGS also circulates information that the department receives on grants and fellowships relevant to Religious Studies, such as the Newcombe, Jacob Javits, and Ford.

EMPLOYMENT

Brown's guaranteed summer funding has decreased the need for students to work in unrelated areas over the summer, but some students may need to supplement their summer stipends with part-time summer positions. The Student Employment Office is a good place to begin a summer job search, but remember to start early since postings for summer jobs go up as early as spring break for some jobs. It is also possible for advanced graduate students to teach a course for the Brown Summer and Continuing Studies programs, and some graduate students have served as Resident Advisors as well. Keep in mind, though, that Religious Studies summer courses have often been cancelled at the last minute due to insufficient minimum enrollments. Other graduate students are often a helpful source of information about local (and other) summer employment.

UNIVERSITY FEES

Under the new funding arrangements graduate students are generally responsible for various small fees. For details, consult both the Graduate School website (Support: Tuition, Fees and Billing) and the Brown University Student Billing Guide, available on the Bursar's website.

STUDENT ACTIVITY & HEALTH INSURANCE FEES

Students are required to pay a small "Student Activities Fee" each semester (presently \$20).

All graduate students on fellowship support receive health insurance through the university. Students should not receive any bills regarding health insurance. However, there is a separate fee for University Health Services. Students on full support generally receive this fee as part of their support. All students, however, are responsible for the summer coverage fee if they plan to use University Health Services over the summer.

REGISTRATION FEES

The Registrar's Office charges a variety of fees for late registration and the like. Forewarned is forearmed: consult their website in advance!

DISSERTATION FEES

FILING

Students who are inactive and returning from an approved leave of absence solely for the purpose of defending and filing the dissertation, and who meet the conditions established by the Graduate School are charged a filing fee of \$150 for the semester in which the dissertation is submitted.

HANDLING

There is a small fee for processing the dissertation, currently \$50.00.

READMISSION FEE

There is also a readmission fee for students returning from most leaves: consult the Graduate School website (Support: Tuition and Fees) for the formula. Students on medical leave and leaves for having just had or adopted a child are exempt.

STUDENT STATUS

STUDY ELSEWHERE

CROSS-REGISTRATION WITH HARVARD

Students may register for courses at Harvard without paying additional tuition. It is important to note, however, that students may not enroll in courses at Harvard Divinity School unless such courses are also cross-listed in the catalogue of the Graduate School of Arts and Sciences, or unless the instructor is a member of the faculty of the Graduate School of Arts and Sciences. Occasionally, special arrangements can be made to take a Divinity School course not taught by such an instructor: check with the DGS in advance.

EXCHANGE SCHOLAR PROGRAM

The graduate schools at Berkeley, Brown, Chicago, Columbia, Cornell, Harvard, MIT, Princeton, Stanford, and Yale have an Exchange Scholar Program which allows students at each of these universities to spend time studying at another school without paying additional tuition. Students in this program remain active students at their home institutions. See the Graduate School website for details (Academics: Partnerships and Exchanges: Exchange Scholar Program).

LEAVES OF ABSENCE

Leaves of Absence are granted for a variety of professional, educational, medical, psychological, and personal reasons (including parental leave and family care leave).

OBTAINING A LEAVE

Students considering such leave should consult as early as possible with their advisors, the DGS, and the Graduate School, as appropriate. Leaves of absence must be approved first by the department, and then by the Graduate School. They are granted for one semester or one year and may be extended to two years, if necessary.

When the Department approves a leave, it ordinarily includes a willingness to re-admit the student, although such readmission may depend on the student satisfying various conditions, laid out in writing at the time the leave is granted. The form required for a Leave of Absence is available on the Graduate School website, as are the details and conditions for various leaves (Academics: Rules and Regulations: Student Status Issues: Leaves of Absence).

RE-ADMISSION FROM LEAVE OF ABSENCE

Students returning from Leave of Absence do not ordinarily need to apply formally for re-admission, unless the Department requests such an application. However, students whose return was conditional must satisfy those conditions before being returned to active status. Students

seeking re-admission after medical or psychological leave must have their physician write to the appropriate person in Health Services or Psychological Services and confirm their ability to resume their studies. Financial Aid issues, and remaining degree requirements are best discussed with the DGS. Students wishing to return from leave must ordinarily indicate their intention to return by May 1 for the following fall, or November 1 for the following spring.

PART-TIME STUDY

Graduate students are ordinarily expected to be enrolled full-time, and students are not admitted for part-time study. However, it is sometimes possible to study on a part-time status, with the approval of the DGS. Simply enrolling in fewer than four courses, however, does not automatically confer part-time status. The DGS must officially inform the Dean of the Graduate School of the student's intentions. Without such notice students will continue to be billed for four courses, even if they are formally enrolled in less than four. Students should also be aware of the financial consequences of adopting this status. They may lose some or all financial assistance and become liable for at least partial repayment of existing student loans. Students should check the fine print on any student loan agreements. Requests for changes in status must be submitted in writing to the Graduate School, but there is no official form.

SECOND MASTER'S DEGREE

Doctoral students may earn a second Master's degree from Brown, in a related field, without an additional charge for tuition. No courses or theses, however, will count toward more than one degree. The form for obtaining a second Master's degree is available on the Graduate School home page, under Forms (Second Master's).

INTEGRATIVE STUDIES OPTION

Students who determine, after one year of full-time study, that their work cannot be accommodated within existing Departmental programs may petition the Graduate Council for approval and permission to enroll as a doctoral student in Integrative Studies. At least three members of the University Faculty must agree to sponsor the program, one in a supervisory capacity. For further information, consult the Graduate School website, and contact the DGS.

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

PROFESSIONAL ORGANIZATIONS

As students progress in their studies it is a good idea to become a member of the American Academy of Religion (AAR) and/or the Society of Biblical Literature (SBL), depending on one's interests. Both organizations publish newsletters and other publications of interest to scholars of religion. For many years, they jointly sponsored an annual meeting in November at which scholars from all fields in Religious Studies gathered to share information and present papers. Presently, these meetings are at separate times and locations, but for 2011, and apparently thereafter, they will meet again concurrently. Each has a website with various useful resources, including student membership information. Also, the Department has a student liaison to the AAR who is responsible for providing students with information about joining the Academy and attending the annual meeting. Some students may also wish to join one or more of the more specialized academic societies or societies in related fields. Faculty should be able to suggest various appropriate possibilities.

Overall, Annual Meetings are a good place to see what life as a scholar of religious studies is about. These meetings are a good place to meet people, both established scholars and graduate student peers at other institutions. Many preliminary job interviews also take place at the Annual Meetings. Students are generally encouraged to attend the meetings by the time they begin work on their dissertations, if not before.

Many graduate students also give their first professional papers at such meetings. For the AAR and the SBL, a Call for Papers is sent out early each year (in January, usually). Students who wish to submit a proposal should first consult with a faculty advisor about the feasibility of the paper proposal. Once a faculty member thinks this is advisable, students can then follow the instructions for the appropriate Section in either organization.

JOB SEARCHES

WHEN TO START A SEARCH

Students who hope to be competitive for positions should, ideally, have substantially completed the dissertation when they begin applying for full-time teaching positions. Prospective employers of Ph.D. candidates now often expect applicants to have the degree in hand at the time of appointment, if not before, and/or to read a dissertation near enough to completion to convince them that it will be finished before the job begins. Not only is it difficult to complete a dissertation while teaching full time, there may be serious consequences to taking a full-time tenure-track position before the dissertation is completed. People whose dissertations remain unfinished after they have accepted a job offer may find that they will be appointed at a lesser rank, and at a lesser salary. In rare instances, students who have not completed the dissertation by the time of appointment may even find the appointment itself in jeopardy. Students who obtain a tenure-track appointment before finishing may also find their tenure process affected if it takes more than a year to complete the dissertation. Nevertheless, it will occasionally be desirable (or necessary) to apply for

teaching positions before the dissertation is complete, in which case it is essential to have a significant portion of the dissertation in polished form, to offer as a writing sample.

The bottom line: make every effort to have the dissertation completed by the time you begin applying for tenure-track positions, or even full-time non-tenure track positions.

HOW TO START A SEARCH

Starting a job search has two components: identifying appropriate available positions and preparing one's application materials.

JOB LISTINGS

The publication entitled “*Openings*” (available online through both the AAR and SBL websites) is perhaps the best place to start looking for jobs in Religious Studies, although other professional societies may offer more specific position advertisements, for instance in Asian studies, or Jewish studies. Often schools will indicate whether they will be interviewing at an Annual Meeting.

Students may also find it helpful to consult such useful but less comprehensive publications as *The Chronicle of Higher Education*, and the *Affirmative Action Register*, which occasionally advertise positions before they appear on *Openings* (and may also advertise positions in other related areas that will not show up on *Openings*). Throughout the year, faculty in the Department also receive announcements of job openings which they forward to the DGS, again sometimes before these are posted elsewhere. The Department circulates these electronically, or posts notices of such positions on the bulletin board.

DOSSIERS

It is a good idea to begin building a dossier early in the year one plans to apply for positions. The Career Development Center Office, 167 Angell Street, assists students in organizing dossiers, through a web-based service called Interfolio. The CDC offers many useful workshops, especially in the early fall, on dossier preparation, writing cover letters, interview skills, and others. Further information is available on the CDC website, which has a special section for Graduate Students. In addition, the Department periodically offers workshops focusing on the specifics of applying for positions in Religious Studies.

In general, the dossier should contain a resumé (curriculum vitae), letters of recommendation from professors, and other pertinent information such as sample syllabi and possibly letters from former students or from other people who can evaluate one's teaching or administrative abilities. Always remember to keep the dossier up to date, and make sure that outdated information or double recommendations from the same person have been removed as necessary. Verify that the dossier is complete before copies are sent out.

LETTERS OF RECOMMENDATION

Well before you actually apply for particular positions, solicit letters of recommendation from your dissertation committees and other referees, as appropriate. Make sure that you give your recommenders ample time to write these letters: no less than a month, and ideally,

several months. Provide them with updated copies of your resumé (see below), a draft of any job application letters you plan to send, and make sure they have the most recent drafts of your dissertation. Discuss with them well in advance what other materials they may wish to see (such as position advertisements, earlier seminar papers, teaching materials), as well as whether they are willing to write you letters for specific positions (as opposed to a single letter on file with Interfolio).

RESUMÉ (CURRICULUM VITAE)

The Resumé (Curriculum Vitae) included in the dossier will generally provide details on one's educational background including preliminary examinations, any grants or fellowships received, employment history, teaching experience and administrative work, as well as on papers presented or published. It will usually include a brief abstract of the dissertation, and any other information relevant to one's academic and professional life such as memberships in academic societies. Because one may meet potential employers even outside of formal interviews, it is a good idea to keep the C.V. updated and to take copies to professional meetings and events of various sorts.

RESEARCH DOSSIER

If you choose to present a research dossier in addition to the Career Service dossier, it will generally include an overall statement of your career plans for the coming five to ten years, as well as specific ideas for books, journal articles, and other research projects and publications. You might also wish to include writing samples in this dossier in order to demonstrate the ability to research and write in a scholarly fashion. Whether or not you have a formal research dossier in hand during an interview, you should nevertheless be prepared to offer this kind of information to potential employers. Often candidates will be asked during an interview what exactly they plan to accomplish on junior sabbatical leave and what books they intend to publish.

TEACHING DOSSIER

A teaching dossier will often be composed of sample syllabi, letters from colleagues and former students, course evaluations, statements of pedagogical approach, and possibly student essays. Because of the size of such dossiers, candidates often compile a teaching dossier themselves, and send it out as appropriate, or have a set in hand during an interview. The purpose of a teaching dossier is not only to demonstrate your proven ability to teach, but also to emphasize your commitment to teaching. Since certain institutions may value this aspect of an overall portfolio more than others, you may choose to include these materials only with some applications.

GRIEVANCE PROCEDURE

(TAKEN FROM THE GRADUATE SCHOOL REGULATIONS)

Our expectation is that you will have the best possible relationship with colleagues and faculty during the course of your graduate work at Brown. It is possible, however, that difficulties will arise. Should you have a grievance, it is important to know how it can best be handled. It is University policy that each and every graduate student is entitled to a fair and prompt hearing of grievances. It is also policy that all other avenues of resolution are to be exhausted before a formal grievance procedure can begin. According to Section 10 of the official Faculty Rules and Regulations, the student must attempt to resolve the issue directly with the person or persons involved.

In the event that the attempt is unsuccessful, the next step is to take the issue either to the departmental Director of Graduate Study (DGS), or to the Chair. It is the responsibility of the Chair or DGS to have an informal discussion with all involved parties, to the end of achieving resolution via mediation. It is also the Chair or DGS's obligation to prepare a memorandum outlining the problem, steps taken, and the proposed solution; copies of this memorandum are given to all concerned parties.

If this step does not result in a mutually satisfactory outcome, the next step is to ask the DGS or Chair to determine whether or not the question at issue is departmental in nature. If it is, a written request for a review with the Chair of the department should be filed. If it is not determined to be a departmental issue, no further action can be taken at the departmental level. Instead, the issue must be taken to the Dean of the Graduate School, where the aggrieved can seek advice and direction in the matter. If there is disagreement with the determination of whether the issues are departmental in nature, an appeal concerning that decision may be made to the Dean of the Graduate School, whose decision is final.

If the issue at hand is indeed departmental in nature, a written appeal must be filed with the Chair of the department. This appeal must ask for a review of the question and must specify the injury alleged, the reasons for the student's belief that he or she is aggrieved, and the remedy sought. The Chair may either refer the appeal to a committee of review or to the departmental Faculty. For more on the difference between these two bodies and the procedures regarding disputes please refer to the Faculty Rules.

As expeditiously as possible the committee of review will hear the student, consider the evidence, confer with other persons concerned, and prepare a comprehensive report of findings and a response to the appeal. Committee decisions are made by a simple majority vote of the members. It is the Chair's duty to carry out the directions of the committee. Once a decision has been made, a memorandum of what was done is prepared and a copy is given to the student.

