Graduate Student Handbook



DEPARTMENT OF
RELIGIOUS STUDIES
UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA SANTA BARBARA

Note: These guidelines are subject to upgrade, correction and revision as clarified and emended by University of California and Department policies.

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The Graduate Student Handbook is updated each year. Students should refer to the year they began the program for policies and procedures. Please notify the Graduate Program Advisor if any information is unclear or missing. It is each student's responsibility to confirm the deadlines, requirements, and paperwork that apply to his/her/their degree program at each step in the graduate school process.

ANTI-DISCRIMINATION, SEXUAL VIOLENCE & SEXUAL HARASSMENT POLICIES

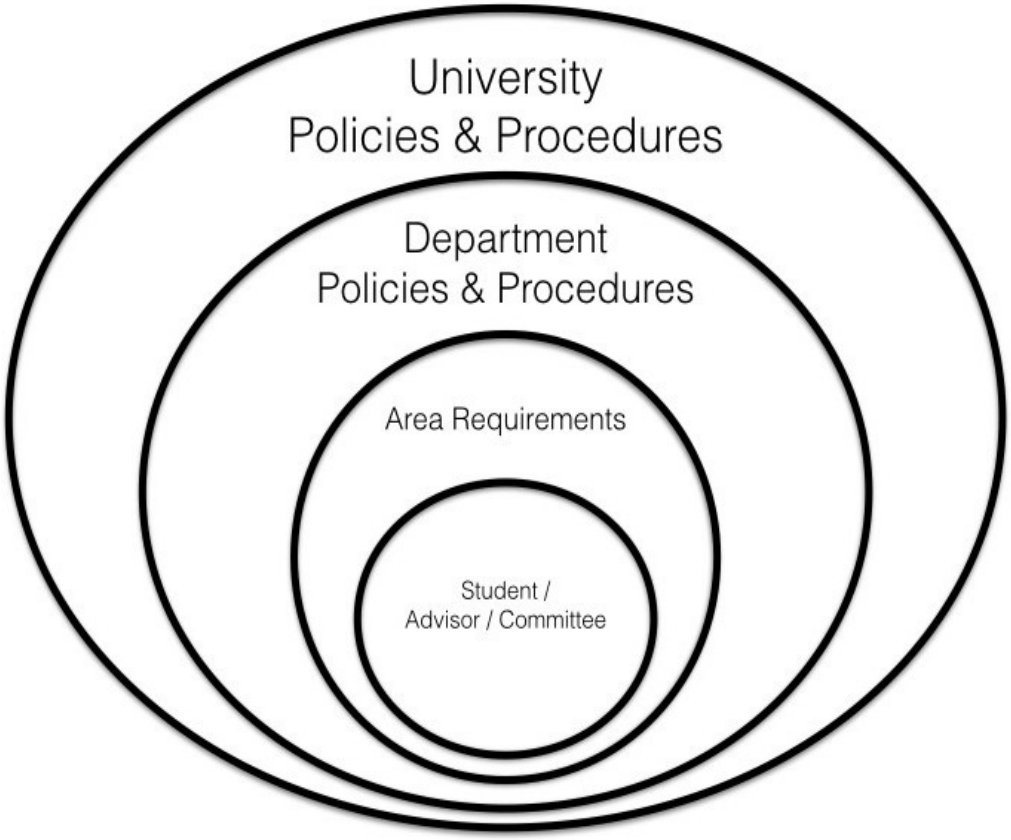
The UCSB Department of Religious Studies vigorously affirms the University of California policies regarding anti-discrimination, sexual violence and sexual harassment:

University of California Title IX Policy: The University of California, in accordance with applicable federal and state laws and University policy, prohibits discrimination against or harassment of any person at the University on the basis of race, color, national origin, religion, sex, gender identity, pregnancy, physical or mental disability, medical condition (cancer-related or genetic characteristics), ancestry, marital status, sexual orientation, citizenship, or age. These policies cover admission, employment, access, and treatment in University programs and activities. (https://www.ucop.edu/title-ix/index.html)

University of California Policy on Sexual Violence and Sexual Harassment: The University of California ("University") is committed to maintaining a community dedicated to the advancement, application and transmission of knowledge and creative endeavors through academic excellence, where all people who participate in University programs and activities can work and learn together in an atmosphere free of harassment, exploitation, or intimidation. Sexual violence, sexual harassment, retaliation, and other behavior prohibited by this Policy interfere with those goals. The University will respond promptly and effectively to reports of such conduct. This includes action to stop, prevent, correct, and when necessary, discipline, behavior that violates this Policy. This Policy addresses the University's responsibilities and procedures related to sexual violence, sexual harassment, retaliation, and other prohibited behavior as those terms are defined in this Policy (together, "Prohibited Conduct") in order to ensure an equitable and inclusive education and employment environment. The Policy defines Prohibited Conduct and explains the administrative procedures the University uses to resolve reports of Prohibited Conduct. (http://policy.ucop.edu/doc/4000385/SVSH) **Note:** UCSB's Office of Equal Opportunity and Sexual Harassment / Title IX Compliance website lists resources available to all university students, faculty, and staff: https://titleix-dhp.ucsb.edu/ .

WELCOME to the graduate program in Religious Studies!

This Handbook explains the structure of the Religious Studies graduate program and information about the department, its personnel, and procedures compiled from Religious Studies Department and University policies and procedures. Note that there are requirements and guidelines specific to each department area of study. Regulations and procedures often appear mysterious to students and so it is helpful to be aware of the layers of oversight governing graduate education, beginning with University rules and regulations (e.g., Time-to-Degree standards, registration status, etc.), the Department's regulations (e.g., courses, language requirements, etc.), down to the expectations and requirements of individual advisors and committees (qualifying exam fields, dissertation prospectus content, etc.):



The following guidelines apply to all Religious Studies graduate students, with specific area of study requirements posted on the department website. Successful students will maintain good communication with their advisor and committees, as well as with Andrea Johnson, our Staff Graduate Program Coordinator (ajjohnson@ucsb.edu) and Prof. Rudy Busto, Graduate Advisor/Director of Graduate Studies (rude@ucsb.edu). The Graduate Student/Faculty Liaison, elected by students, is an essential advocate for student concerns and issues.

Students are encouraged to become adept at navigating UCSB's Graduate Division website: https://www.graddiv.ucsb.edu/ . Students are also encouraged to check the student-run GradPost website for events, advice, professional development and resources for all UCSB graduate students: https://www.graddiv.ucsb.edu/prodev

PROGRAM OVERVIEW

The Department of Religious Studies is nationally and internationally recognized as one of the world's leading centers for the analytic study of religion. It is renowned for its cross-cultural and multidisciplinary approach to the study of religions. The department offers training in the religious dimensions of the human experience in diverse cultures and traditions around the world and through the course of history. We embrace both humanistic and scientific approaches to the study of religions and emphasize the importance of advanced study of relevant languages. Our faculty members employ a diverse array of methods in their research and draw from a broad range of theoretical perspectives. Indeed, a rigorous multidisciplinary and analytic approach to the study of religions, often involving comparative perspectives across traditions, has been one of the enduring hallmarks of UCSB's Department of Religious Studies since its founding sixty years ago.

Our graduate program provides students with an understanding of classical and contemporary theories of religion, with the linguistic and methodological skills to conduct cutting- edge research, and with in-depth specialist training in particular cultural areas and religious traditions. We are at the forefront of the study and understanding of a wide range of cultural practices, intellectual discourses, and popular constructs, exploring ways in which human beings make sense of the self, reality, and their place in the world.

Reflecting our commitment to a global perspective—and to the study of the world's religions both comparatively and in depth—the department offers multiple languages foundational to our graduate program. Our language curriculum provides critical training for students pursuing textual or ethnographic research in particular cultural areas and religious traditions. At the same time, we provide training in strategic languages for those interested in enriching professional careers in such fields as international business, NGO and policy work, or government service.

Areas of Study: Graduate study in the Department of Religious Studies is structured in terms of general departmental requirements, including core courses required of all students, and additional requirements specific to each of the areas of study. We have strengths in five cultural areas: South Asia (India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Nepal, and Sri Lanka), Central Asia (Tibet and Mongolia), East Asia (China and Japan), the Americas (North America and the Caribbean), and the Mediterranean and West Asia. We offer training in a range of religious traditions within and across these cultural areas—including Hindu, Jain, Buddhist, Daoist, Shinto, Jewish, Christian, Islamic, Native American/Indigenous, and Black Atlantic traditions—along with traditions and communities that complicate this type of classification. The department also has strengths in philosophy of religion, with an emphasis on continental philosophy and Western thought. Area-specific requirements spell out faculty expectations beyond the departmental minimum for coursework, language proficiency, and doctoral exams.

Master's Program (MA Plan II): This Master's degree program, formally designated as MA Plan II, can be completed in one year and provides students with rigorous training in the academic study of religion and in the histories, languages, literatures, institutions, and practices of a variety of religious traditions. It is intended to prepare students who wish to pursue a doctoral degree in religious studies or related discipline as well as those who wish to enrich their professional careers in other fields, such as journalism, education, law, medicine, international business, NGO work, public policy, ministry, or the arts.

This Master's degree is designed as a flexible program that can also be completed in two years for those preparing to pursue a PhD, or in one year, for those who are interested in enriching their professional careers. No thesis is required for this Master's degree. Students who complete this Master's program are eligible to apply for the PhD program in Religious Studies at UCSB.

PhD Program: The PhD program is intended for students who have completed a Master's degree in Religious Studies or adjacent disciplines. The program provides students with rigorous doctoral training in the academic study of religion in preparation for a career as a college or university professor or other careers for which a doctoral degree is desirable.

MA/PhD Program (MA Plan I): The MA/PhD program is intended for students with a Bachelor's degree who show exceptional promise for doctoral study and have competitive qualifications with respect to their chosen area of study. Students admitted to this degree program complete the Master's degree on the way to earning the PhD here at UCSB. Students in this Master's degree program, formally designated as MA Plan I, complete a two- to three-year course of study that includes a core proseminar series, language study, and the writing of a Master's thesis. The MA-PhD program has two tracks, depending on the degree and intensity of language study required in the different areas. "Track 1" students are expected to complete the Ph.D. in seven years; "Track 2" students in 8 years.



FIRST THINGS

The Graduate Division is located on the third floor of Cheadle Hall, although email communication is best due to their hybrid office model. The staff at "GradDiv" oversee all aspects of your progress and success at UCSB. Every milestone is reviewed and approved by GradDiv. The Graduate Division is ultimately the "degree-giver." Although the department graduate program coordinator also monitors progress, Graduate Division decides whether students have met the requirements for graduation. Another function it performs is alerting departments to various extramural funding opportunities. These will be forwarded via email.
You should become adept at navigating GradDiv's website: http://www.graddiv.ucsb.edu/

The Humanities Administrative Support Center (HASC). The Department of Religious Studies is one of four departments that share administrative staff in the Humanities Administrative Support Center (HASC) housed on the fourth floor of HSSB. The HASC Main Office is located in HSSB 4001.

Some of the shared administrative staff will be especially important to graduate student life, including the Student Services Manager who serves as liaison between the Graduate Program Advisors, the HASC cluster and the University; the Department Financial Analyst who process reimbursements, conference travel awards, and other financial transactions involving graduate students; the Technical Support Specialist. Specific to Religious Studies are the Undergraduate Program Advisor and the Graduate Program Coordinator. Contact information for all support staff is available at hasc.hfa.ucsb.edu/people.

The Graduate Program Coordinator (GPC, sometimes GPA) maintains student files and assists students with university policies and procedures. The Graduate Program Coordinator is a crucial liaison to the Graduate Division and manages administrative records on behalf of the department. Documentation accompanies every step leading to a graduate degree. In order to ensure that your progress is recorded by the university in a timely and accurate manner students must consult with the GPC for the appropriate forms or petitions needed when approaching "degree milestones" such as the MA, oral comprehensive exam or thesis, nomination of committee members, qualifying examinations to advance to doctoral candidacy, and/or dissertation defense. The GPC works with the Graduate Committee in formulating graduate program policy and managing the yearly admissions process. They work closely with the Graduate Advisor/Director of Graduate Studies (DGS) in the coordination of the graduate program. You should inform the GPC of any changes to student status (e.g., petitioning to add degree objective, and/or emphasis, taking leave of absence, registering in absentia, etc.). Andrea Johnson, Graduate Program Coordinator, can be reached at ajjohnson@ucsb.edu.

Student Mailfolders and Day Storage. Student mailfolders are created for new incoming students before fall quarter begins. They are located in the alcoves immediately across the door in the Religious Studies mailroom (HSSB 3022). Be sure to check your mailfolder for important notices and/or mail. Cabinet space above the lecturer mailboxes at the far end of the mailroom is available to graduate students for temporary storage. Please do not abuse this common space by leaving personal items longer than is reasonable.

Graduate Student Profile and Photographs on the Department website. Graduate students should add their photograph and profile information on the "Graduate Students – Current" webpage (http://www.religion.ucsb.edu/people/graduate-students/). To submit or update your photograph and profile information, please complete the following Google form: https://forms.gle/YPPzFbT68srdhybbA

Email Address. We will use your UCSB "*name*@umail.ucsb.edu" account as our primary way of contacting you and sending out important announcements and official department and university information. *You must use this umail account for all university business*; the university considers notices and other documents sent to you on umail to be "official." Please check your umail account **regularly**. Many students have their umail forwarded to other mail clients (e.g., gmail).

Internet on Campus. There are several wifi options on campus; the College of Letters & Science IT (CIT) group recommends connecting to the free **eduroam** (i.e., **edu**cation **roam**ing) option, a "secure, worldwide roaming access service developed for the international research and education community" that allows for wifi access at other participating universities and institutions. Signing up requires your UCSBnetID and password. See: https://www.it.ucsb.edu/wifi/eduroam

Address and Contact Information. Keep your contact information (phone and physical address) up to date in both GOLD (student records) and UCPath (employment records).

Religious Studies Email List. As a religious studies graduate student you will be added to the relst-grads email list. Email sent to relst-grads routes via a list moderator to all the graduate students in the department.

Department Social Media. An unofficial Facebook page where the department, alumni, and friends of the department can post notices, etc., is found at www.facebook.com/ucsbreligion. The department "X" / twitter account can be found here: https://x.com/ucsantabarbara?lang=en. A graduate student Media Wizard, chosen each year, posts and updates department social media.

Religious Studies Graduate Student Lounge (HSSB 3018). The student lounge is set aside for the exclusive use of religious studies graduate students. There are computers available for use, as well as a printer and a refrigerator. This community space requires that users be mindful and respectful of other users.

Religious Studies Common Room ["Library"] (HSSB 3024). The department Common Room is a gathering space for everyone in the department. It has video capability, moveable tables/chairs, a filtered water dispenser, coffee maker, refrigerator and sink. Reservations for the room can be made by contacting the Undergraduate Program Advisor (contact information at https://www.hasc.hfa.ucsb.edu)

Key Policy. Keys are issued by the Graduate Program Coordinator in HSSB 4032. You will receive keys to the Graduate Lounge (HSSB 3018) and the department mailroom, if needed. If you are employed as a Teaching Assistant (TA) or Associate Instructor, you will also be issued a key to your assigned office. Office keys must be returned to the GPC at the end of your appointment (either at the end of the quarter or on the last day of the academic year in

June, depending on the duration of your appointment). Department-issued keys remain the property of UC Santa Barbara and must be returned when you separate from the university.

Copies and Printing. Copy machines are available to everyone in the mailroom. There is an Apple computer terminal attached to the printer in the mailroom (access passcode is 15000). Instructors and TAs may make copies for the course they are teaching, but we encourage the use of GauchoPrint to conserve resources. Enrolled students are allotted 200 black and white prints per quarter any of the three GauchoPrint locations (the closest one is here in HSSB 1203, Open Access Lab) (https://it.ucsb.edu/student-services/printing). We also have a printer in the Grad Lounge that can be used for research related work, although there is a limit to the number of toners allocated to this printer per year.

Departmental Roles Related to Graduate Students

Department Chair: Prof. Vesna Wallace is empowered to act on behalf of the Director of Graduate Studies (DGS) in his absence. In consultation with faculty and the Graduate Committee, the department chair assigns all teaching associates and approves assignment of teaching assistants. The Chair is assisted by an executive committee composed of the Vice Chair (Prof. Janet Afary), DGS (Prof. Rudy Busto), Undergraduate Faculty Advisor (Prof. Anil Mundra), Diversity Officer (Prof. Joe Blankholm), Personnel Committee Chair (Prof. Dominic Steavu) and Curriculum Committee Chair (Prof. Joe Blankholm).

Graduate Advisor/Director of Graduate Studies (DGS): Prof. Rudy Busto administrates the graduate program and with the assistance of the graduate committee and the Graduate Program Coordinator organizes the admissions process, the allocation of fee support, and the assignment of TAships. He handles academic concerns, Central Fellowship nomination decisions, as well as approvals such as general petitions for exceptions to policy.

Graduate Committee: Chaired by the DGS the Graduate Studies Committee is made up of faculty representing broad areas of the graduate program, plus a diversity officer. It makes recommendations to the department regarding changes to the requirements of the graduate program or procedures in administering the program. It may also meet to discuss individual graduate students whose progress is flagged as stalled or otherwise below university standards. The Committee reads graduate applications and comments submitted by the faculty and makes nominations to the Graduate Division for admission and fellowships. In addition, the committee awards fellowships to applicants from the department's block grant and Rowny Endowment for graduate education.

Undergraduate Advisor: in addition to advising undergraduates, the Undergraduate Program Advisor performs administrative functions related to teaching and faculty support, e.g., course creation, grading support, coordination of the quarterly schedule of classes and classroom assignments, and textbook orders.

Lead TA: The Lead TA is a continuing graduate student who conducts departmental TA training and pedagogy workshops throughout the academic year. They are available for advice to all TAs; will sit in on sections to observe upon request. At the end of each academic year the Lead TA position for the following year is chosen by the Director of Graduate Studies and Department Chair after nominations are solicited by the Graduate Student/Faculty Liaison.

Graduate Student/Faculty Liaison: The Liaison is a student who organizes workshops with faculty and invited speakers to discuss issues related to professional development, including publishing, job searches, writing grant proposals, and other topics important to graduate students. They query graduate students about problems and/or concerns that need to be brought to the attention of the faculty. Along with the Lead TA, the Liaison may appear at faculty meetings during the academic year (2-3 per quarter) to report such concerns; reports response and/or plans for resolution to grad students via email communication. They assist with matching new admits to grad student mentors and may assist with various events throughout the year and with recruiting. The Graduate/Faculty Liaison is chosen by student/self-nomination and voted in by the graduate students at the end of each academic year.

Graduate-Undergraduate Liaison (GUL): The Graduate-Undergraduate Liaison is a continuing graduate student who helps develop undergraduate majors and minors in Religious Studies. The GUL works with the Undergraduate Director and Undergraduate Advisor and is tasked with duties such as promoting RS courses to undergraduates (via emails, posters, etc.), and helping to plan and hold events for undergraduates taking and/or curious about the major and minor. It is expected that at least once a year the GUL will update the faculty on their work and the concerns of undergraduates. At the end of the academic year the GUL will solicit nomination for the following academic year and selection will be determined by the Undergraduate Director in consultation with the executive committee.

Social Media Specialist (SMS) or "Media Wizard" A continuing student serves as the Department's Social Media Specialist/Media Wizard. They are responsible for the management of the department Facebook page, Graduate Students private Facebook group, @UCSBReligion "X"/ Twitter account, and @UCSBReligion Instagram account. The SMS manages interactions (direct messages, posts, replies, etc.), creating content, soliciting content (book or article publications, awards, grants, accommodation, etc.) from faculty and students, and growing the viewership and interactions on each platform (Facebook, "X"/Twitter, and Instagram). The SMS also coordinates with the website manager on department announcements and updates. In addition to these daily or weekly activities, they should also be included on plans to live stream talks or presentations, award ceremonies, and other events that the department deems sharable with our network of students, faculty, alumni, and other scholars. The SMS/Media Wizard is chosen through nomination and selected by the DGS and the Department Chair at the end of each academic year.

Useful Administrative Procedures

Registering for classes. Students should consult their mentor, the graduate advisor, or the Graduate Program Coordinator. Students must enroll and pay fees by the deadlines noted on "Calendars" section of the Registrar's webpage: https://registrar.sa.ucsb.edu/home . Maintaining graduate status involves paying fees and officially registering in classes each quarter. Part-time student status is rare and granted by the Graduate Dean for only specific extenuating circumstances. Information is available at https://www.graddiv.ucsb.edu/forms/part-time-tuition-status. Students who are physically elsewhere are considered "in residence" at UCSB if they pay fees and register for classes. You should review your study list with your advisor EVERY quarter. See below on "Student Status."

Adding and/or dropping a class. Graduate students have until the last day of instruction to drop or add classes via GOLD. After these initial deadlines, allowable registration actions require submission of a petition. All petitions can be found on both Graduate Division's and the Registrar's websites.
Check the university registrar's calendar for 2026-27 for specific add and drop dates and penalties: https://registrar.sa.ucsb.edu/calendars/academic-calendars

Incomplete and Failing Grades F, NP (No Pass), U (Unsatisfactory). Students are required to petition for an "I" (Incomplete) grade by the last day of the quarter. The form is completed by both student and instructor. The student should contact the instructor to discuss whether an Incomplete is appropriate for their situation. If the instructor agrees, the student may then complete the required DocuSign Power Form. **Please note that submission of the form by the deadline is mandatory.** If the work for the course is not completed **within the next academic quarter** the Incomplete becomes a failing grade (F, NP, U). See: https://my.sa.ucsb.edu/catalog/Current/AcademicPoliciesProcedures/IncompleteGrades.aspx

Useful graduate students web portals:

University Registrar: https://registrar.sa.ucsb.edu/
The Graduate Division: http://www.graddiv.ucsb.edu/
GradPost: https://www.graddiv.ucsb.edu/prodev
Graduate Division Facebook Page: https://www.facebook.com/UCSBGradDiv
Instagram: @ucsb_graduate_division
Office of International Students & Scholars: http://oiss.sa.ucsb.edu/



DEGREE REQUIREMENTS

University Degree Requirements

All graduate students at UCSB must observe the following:

- Continuous registration of some type. To achieve official registration status during the academic year (Fall, Winter, and Spring Quarters), students must be registered, with fees paid, in a minimum of 8 units (although 12 units per academic quarter is expected, and some international students may need to be enrolled in 12 units as per their country or sponsor's requirements.) Details: https://www.graddiv.ucsb.edu/registration-expectations#official-registration-status

- Remain in good academic standing (minimum 3.0 GPA, fewer than 12 units of unfinished coursework). Details: http://www.graddiv.ucsb.edu/academic/academic-performance#academic-good-standing

- Meet minimum UCSB residency requirements (registered with units) as appropriate to degree program (3 quarters for MA students; 6 for PhD students). Details: https://catalog.ucsb.edu/pages/qmROuY1oB6oah1vB7CX2

- Be mindful of Time-to-Degree and milestone schedules, policies, options and consequences. Details: www.graddiv.ucsb.edu/academic/time-to-degree

Additional details and requirements specific to different student types can be found on the UCSB Graduate Division's Academic Services page: http://www.graddiv.ucsb.edu/academic

Department Degree Requirements

MA Program (MA Plan II). Students admitted to this Master's degree program, formally and administratively designated as MA Plan II, enter with a variety of Bachelors and post-baccalaureate degrees. This program is intended to prepare students who wish to pursue a doctoral degree in religious studies or related discipline as well as those who wish to enrich their professional careers in other fields, such as journalism, education, law, medicine, international business, NGO work, public policy, ministry, or the arts. This Master's degree is designed as a flexible program that could be completed in two years for those interested in completing a rigorous Master's program in preparation for pursuing a PhD; or in one year for those who are interested in enriching their professional careers.

Students taking the **MA Plan II Degree** are required to fulfill the following:

- A minimum of **36** units (with no fewer than **24 graduate units**), all taken **for a letter grade** with a grade of B or better unless otherwise noted.

- RGST 201 plus one "200-Course" (RGST 200AA–ZZ).

- **Four graduate-level courses or seminars** (16 units total, numbered 200 and above) in the major subject or in closely related subjects as approved by the graduate advisor. A maximum of 8 units of RGST 596, Directed Reading and Research, may be counted toward the graduate-level coursework.

- **Three additional courses** (12 units total) at the upper-division undergraduate level (numbered 100-199) or graduate level; only RGST 596, Directed Reading and Research, may be counted from the independent study options.

- Completion of the degree within 12 quarters/4 years.

No foreign language or thesis is required for the MA Plan II. Ordinarily all degree requirements can be met in one year. Students considering extending their degree past one year (3 quarters) should consult with the DGS. Students who complete this Master's program are eligible to apply for the PhD program in Religious Studies at UCSB.

PhD Program. Students entering directly into the PhD program hold the MA degree in Religious Studies or a closely related area. All PhD students must meet the following Department requirements:

- All courses that fulfill degree requirements must be taken **for a letter grade** with a grade of B or better unless otherwise noted.

- **RGST 201 plus two "200-Courses" (RGST AA - ZZ).** The 200 Courses must be taken **with different instructors.**

- Proficiency in a language relevant to student's research, in consultation with the student's advisor and approved by the DGS.

- A **four-unit course on research methodology** (to be approved by a student's advisor and the DGS in consultation with the Graduate Program Coordinator).

- **Field examinations** as determined jointly by the student and advisors.

- Submission of a **PhD prospectus** (see details below).

- An **oral examination of the written exams and defense of the prospectus** for advancement to PhD candidacy.

- A **dissertation** written under the guidance of the PhD committee and submitted according to university format guidelines: : https://ext-prod.graddiv.ucsb.edu/filing-your-thesis-dissertation-or-dma-supporting-document

- The **public defense** of the dissertation (may be waived).

Time-to-Degree: The Graduate Division requires students to advance to PhD candidacy within 4 years/12 quarters (5 years/15 quarters for "Track 2" students – see below). Normative time to degree for Religious Studies: Completion of the PhD in 7 years for "Track 1" students and 8 years for "Track 2" students.

It is important to calculate completion of the PhD in terms of years/quarters after advancing to candidacy: *optimally, all students should complete their PhD by the end of the third year (9 quarters) beyond the quarter they advanced to candidacy*. Note: International students will be assessed the substantial Non- Resident Supplemental Tuition (NRST) 9 registered quarters following advancement to candidacy. It is crucial for students to pay close attention to the Graduate Division's "Time to Degree" standards, as penalties as well as opportunities for funding and campus employment are largely based upon verifiable student progress. See the sections below on Time to Degree and "P Status," as well as the chart on the next page, as well as Appendix A ("PhD Milestones: Department Recommendations").

MA/PhD Program. The Department admits students into the MA/PhD program if they are coming from B.A. or B.S. programs, or if they hold a Master's degree in a discipline outside the humanities considered by the admission committee to be inadequate preparation for entry directly into the PhD program. We do not admit students into the MA portion of this program (administratively referred to as the MA Plan I), expecting that students *earn the MA on their way* to the PhD degree. Students may, however, decide not to continue on to the PhD and can leave with a standalone MA degree (MA Plan II degree) if they have satisfied the requirements for that degree. All MA students in the MA/PhD program must satisfy the following Department requirements:

- Completion of **36** units (with no fewer than **28 graduate units**), all taken **for a letter grade** with a grade of B or better unless otherwise noted, and including the following:

- Completion of three "200-Courses"

- **Three graduate seminars** (12 units total, numbered 200 and above) covering content specific to the region/tradition of primary focus, or in closely related subjects as approved by the graduate advisor. Courses focused on methods or theories are not generally acceptable unless explicitly focused within a tradition/area.

- **Two additional courses** (8 units) at the upper-division undergraduate level (numbered 100- 199) or graduate level; only RGST 596, Directed Reading and Research, may be counted from the independent study options

- A **thesis** written under the direction of one faculty member, with final approval by two additional faculty members. Thesis format guidelines can be found at the Graduate Division website: https://ext-prod.graddiv.ucsb.edu/filing-your-thesis-dissertation-or-dma-supporting-document. The Department encourages article-length MA theses, modeled after journal articles in the appropriate subfields of religious studies of relevant interest to the student.

Time-to-Degree: The Graduate Division requires students to complete the MA degree within 4 years/12 quarters. However, the Graduate Division also requires students to advance to PhD candidacy within 4 years/12 quarters (5 years/15 quarters for "Track 2" students – see below). The Department expects that MA/PhD students finish their degree requirements (especially the thesis) within 3 years/9 quarters to allow sufficient time to prepare for advancing to PhD candidacy (exams and prospectus).

What comes next? After students complete the MA they constitute a qualifying exam committee (consulting with their advisor and/or the Director of Graduate Studies) and begin reading for the written and oral qualifying exams that lead to PhD candidacy (see details below). Students also begin conversations about their dissertation prospectus with their advisor and committee members. After completion of the MA, **PhD degree** requirements include:

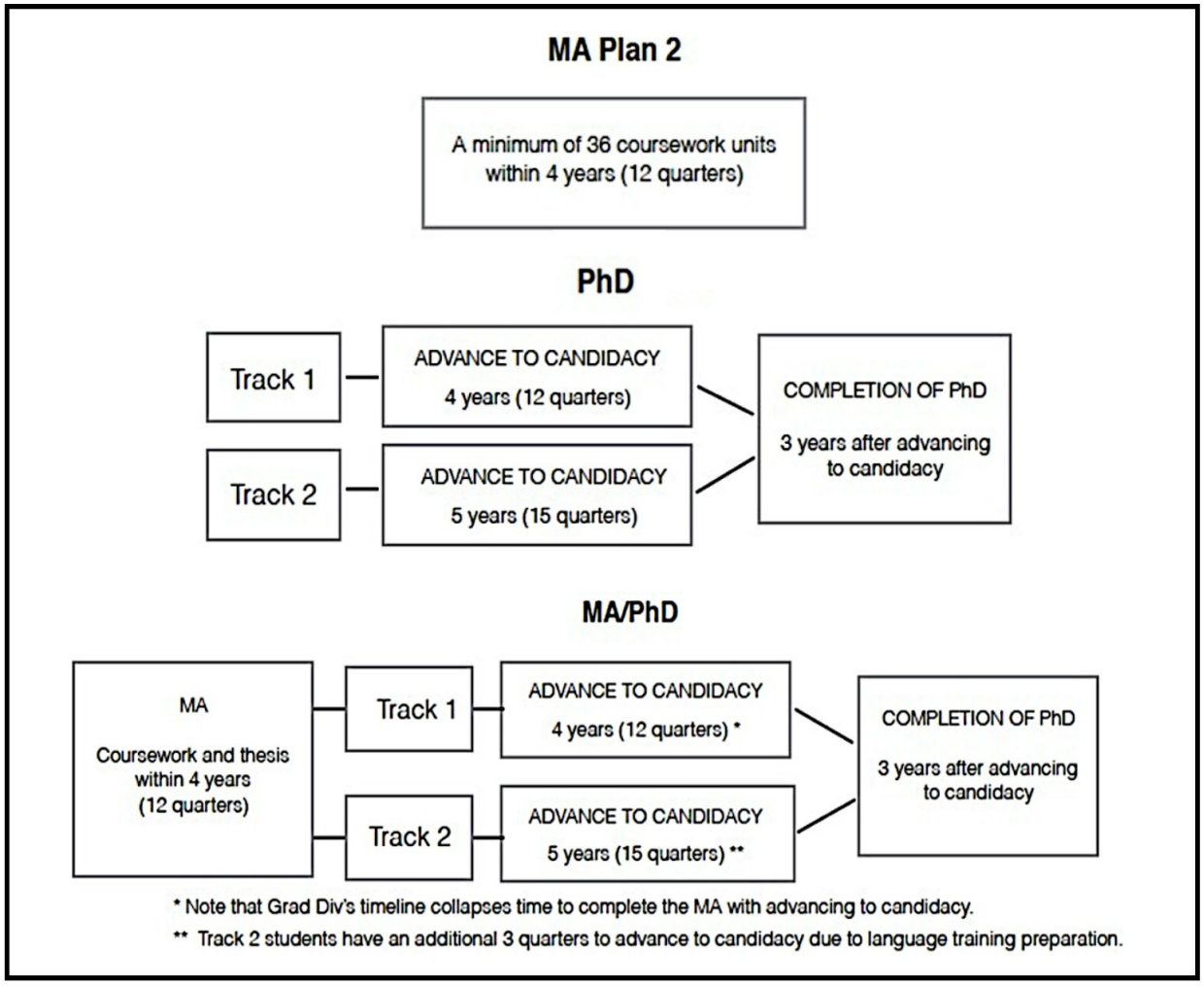
- Such **additional courses** as a student's advisor and Area of Study may specify.
- A **four-unit course on research methodology** (to be approved by a student's advisor and the DGS in consultation with the Staff Graduate Program Advisor).
- Proficiency in a **research language** (see pp. 18-20).
- **Written field examinations** as determined jointly by the student and advisors/committee.
- Submission of a **PhD prospectus**.
- An **oral examination of the written field exams and defense of the prospectus** for advancement to PhD candidacy.
- A **dissertation** written under the guidance of the PhD committee and submitted according to university format guidelines: https://ext-prod.graddiv.ucsb.edu/filing-your-thesis-dissertation-or-dma-supporting-document.
- A **public defense** of the dissertation (may be waived).



Graduate Division Timeline for Completion of the Degree

Students must pay close attention to the timelines for completing their degree objectives. The university is vigilant about student progress and what is referred to as "time to degree." While the department operates on internal deadlines and specific requirements, all milestones and terms of the program conform to University of California guidelines.

Below are the Graduate Division ("official") timelines towards degree completion.



Timely completion of the MA and candidacy takes into account TAships and other forms of departmental support. Graduate Division may deny requests for TAships if a student is beyond 4 years for the MA; beyond 4 years (5 years for Track 2) in advancing to candidacy. Approved student leaves of absence, or faculty sabbaticals bearing upon a student's progress, may lead to extended time to degree if petitioned to the Graduate Division.

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DEPARTMENT REQUIREMENT DETAILS

RGST 201, Core Concepts in Religious Studies. RGST 201 is *required of all incoming* graduate students. Designed to be taken in the first year of study, fall quarter, RGST 201 focuses on 'religion' as an object of study and as the object that constitutes the discipline of religious studies. Students in RGST 201 learn to inhabit a common disciplinary language, while building support and familiarity with other entering students.

The 200-Courses. In addition to RGST 201, all graduate students in Religious Studies will take a number of **"200-Courses" (RGST AA - ZZ)** corresponding to their degree program: MA students take one 200-Course; PhD students take two 200-Courses; and MA/PhD students take three 200-Courses. Of course, students may take more than the minimum required 200-Courses. 200-Courses address a theme or concept of broad interest to the field of Religious Studies (e.g., Ritual, Indigeneity, Body, Race, Modernity, Law). Engaging with the theme or concept's genealogy in the field as well as particular subfields of Religious Studies, these courses consider both the foundational and most recent influential research on the theme or concept.

The purpose of the 200-Courses is to prepare students to a) be rigorous scholars of religion who participate in a wide range of disciplinary conversations, b) be qualified to teach a broad swath of courses in the general field of religious studies, and c) be successful candidates in today's competitive academic job market. We take it to be crucial -- to each of these ends -- that students engage deeply the questions of canon and canon-making in religious studies, e.g., by considering the following questions: Who has articulated canon(s) in religious studies, and to what end? Which genealogies have the field and its subsets owned and acknowledged, and which have we bypassed or sublimated? What is the hermeneutical basis for a comparative approach, and how do we articulate the complex interfaces between sameness and difference? The 200-Courses begin to address these questions, with the expectation that students will carry them outward into their more subfield-specific studies.

Language Requirements. Religious studies PhD, and MA/PhD students are required to show proficiency in one non-English languages relevant to their research and in consultation with their advisor.

"Track 1" and "Track 2" Categories

All PhD and MA/PhD students are categorized as either Track 1 or Track 2. The tracks are determined by the centrality of, demands for, and/or obstacles presented by the acquisition of the student's research language(s). Students for whom the research language is a modern western language (e.g., French, German, Spanish, Italian, etc.), and/or for whom non-English language analysis may be secondary to their research, are listed as Track 1. Track 2 students are those for whom language training, typically in a non-western language, is central to their research and requires sustained substantive training (e.g., Sanskrit, Arabi, Tibetan, Chinese, Classical Hebrew). Students who pursue languages requiring extraordinary or unusual avenues for acquisition and proficiency are also designated as Track 2 (e.g., Choctaw, Nahuatl, Tagalog, Yoruba). The department values the importance of language training in the study of religion and the university allows Track 2 students an additional 3 quarters to advance to PhD candidacy.

Timing for Completing Language Requirement. In both the MA/PhD and PhD programs **the language requirement must be satisfied in order to advance to candidacy**. Note: Depending on a student's area of study additional language training/coursework may be required.

Satisfying the Language Requirement. There are five options satisfying the language requirements:

OPTION 1: **Native speaker**. Students with native fluency in a foreign language relevant to research may satisfy the requirement after consulting with the DGS, or by approval of their advisor. The advisor submits a memo to the Graduate Program Coordinator approving Option 1 as fulfilling the language requirement.

OPTION 2: **Entering the program with requisite language preparation**. Students with proof of at least two years of college language courses (or completion at the intermediate level, equivalent to two years) with a final letter grade of B+ or better, or with transcript evidence of a completed graduate-level language course may, upon consultation with the student's advisor and approval by the DGS, satisfy the language requirement. Note, however, that additional language training may be required by areas of specialization.

OPTION 3: **Taking a departmental foreign language exam** in French, German, Spanish. Language testing is given individually, in arrangement with the examiner and within the timeframe of normal progress to the degree. The timing of a language exam must be convenient to the examiner and not in conflict with end-of-quarter grading duties. The nature of the exam is described below. Please contact the DGS, who will determine the appropriate faculty member who can administer the exam.

Language exams in the department consist of two translations:

- **Part I**: (a) The student and language advisor will agree upon a 35- to 40-page article or chapter, which the student will translate in advance with the aid of a dictionary; (b) for the exam, one to one and a half pages of the article/chapter will be selected and the student will translate the text into English without the aid of a dictionary. This work will be graded according to the degree of mastery over vocabulary, grammar, and style, as reflected in the translation.
- **Part II**: The advisor and the student will agree upon an area within the student's field, and a 5-page text will be taken from a source within this area that will remain unseen by the student prior to the exam. The student will summarize the text in English with the aid of a dictionary. Part II will be graded according to the ability to comprehend the substance and significant details contained in the 5-page text, as reflected in the summary.

Grading will be done by the exam advisor, and in order to pass, the student must achieve a grade of Low Pass or better on both parts (possible scores include: Fail, Low Pass, Pass, High Pass). If the student fails a part (or both) of the translations they may retake it with new material by special arrangement with the language advisor.

OPTION 4: **Reading courses for graduate students**. Students may opt to satisfy the language requirement by completing the campus French or German two-quarter sequences (French 11A and 11B, German 1G and 2G) and **earning a B+ or better in the "B" course**. You are not required to take the first, "A" course, but we strongly recommend that you do. Going directly into the "B" course must be approved by the instructor. These courses are offered by the Department of French and Italian, and the Department of Germanic and Slavic Studies, respectively, and their yearly availability is contingent on funding. Track 1 students (for whom non-English language analysis may be secondary to their research) are encouraged to take advantage of the French or German options as both are considered important to the genealogy of the academic study of religion.

OPTION 5: **Alternative methods** of satisfying language requirements include taking UCSB courses either during the academic year or during summer intensive language study; taking courses at SBCC; taking courses offered through other institutions including other UC campuses via the InterCampus Exchange Program; or studying with a private tutor. In all cases the language must complete the second year or intermediate level with a final letter grade of B+ or better, or prepare the student for a departmental foreign language exam. Evidence of the final grade for the last course taken must be presented on an official transcript.

Language Requirement Substitution.
A common substitute for the language requirement is completion of a statistics sequence (e.g., Sociology series 205A and B; Psychology's 221A,B,C series)**.**

Research Methods Course. The research methods course is intended to provide in-depth training in methods that inform the student's dissertation research. The 200-Courses and the *Routledge Handbook of Research Methods in the Study of Religion*, edited by Michael Strausberg and Steven Engler (Routledge 2012) are recommended starting points for thinking about methods. Specific courses should be decided in consultation with the student's advisor in light of the student's overall research goals. The faculty has approved a variety of courses that meet this requirement. Other courses may be substituted by petition with the approval of the student's advisor and the DGS.



Symposium exploring the scholarship
of Prof. Barbara Holdrege, June 2026

"590" Courses. Beyond the required coursework, graduate students should take strategic advantage of "590" courses designed to help focus and build expertise and exposure to research and teaching experience. **All of these courses must be arranged with and approved by the relevant faculty person (Instructor, Advisor, Committee member) prior to enrollment**. For example, after advancing to candidacy, students typically register for "RG ST 599: PhD Dissertation Preparation" (8 – 12 units) with their advisor for the duration of their research and writing of the dissertation. Note that only "RGST 596: Directed Reading and Research" can count toward the MA/PhD requirement of two additional/elective courses (8 units) at the upper-division or graduate level. To satisfy this requirement, RGST 596 must be taken for a letter grade and an appropriate passing grade of B or better must be earned.

RG ST 591. T.A. and Associate Training Program.
Enrollment Comments: *May be repeated. No unit credit allowed toward advanced degree.*
Required orientation and on-the-job instructors of teaching assistants and associates through consultations with instructors, evaluation of their teaching through videotapes or other means of observation, follow-up consultations, teaching evaluation.

RG ST 592. Directed Reading
Enrollment Comments: *Course content variable. May be repeated.*
Special readings selected under guidance of individual instructor to help the student make up particular gaps in his/her intellectual background that are pertinent to his/her graduate program.

RG ST 596. Directed Reading and Research
Research and preparation of dissertation.

RG ST 597. Individual Study for Master's or Ph.D. Examination for Advancement to Candidacy.
Enrollment Comments: *No unit credit allowed toward advanced degree.*
Individual study for Master's or Ph.D. examinations for advancement to candidacy.

RG ST 598AAZZ. Master's Project Research and Preparation
For research underlying the project; writing the project.

RG ST 599AAZZ. Ph.D. Dissertation Preparation
Terminal preparation of the dissertation.

MA/PhD Program - MA Plan I Mentor, Advisor, Committee and Thesis

The MA Thesis Committee: Entering students in the MA/PhD program will be assigned **an MA faculty mentor** by the graduate advisor, according to the interests of the student. At an appropriate time in the program, but before the end of the first year, the individual student will choose **an MA thesis advisor**, who may be--but does not have to be--the faculty person originally assigned as mentor. Once the student has an MA thesis advisor, the student should, in consultation with the advisor, select two additional faculty members for the MA committee. All three will normally be members of the UCSB Academic Senate (i.e., ladder faculty), of which two must be from the Department of Religious Studies and the third may be from another department. There are faculty in other UCSB departments who are official "affiliates" of our department, and they may serve on MA committees as department faculty (See the affiliate list on our website)

MA Thesis: The MA thesis is a scholarly research project addressing a specific issue/problem in the study of religion in consultation with the advisor. Typically, the student and thesis advisor prepare through directed reading courses (RGST 596 and/or RGST 598). The thesis should

follow the general format of a conference paper and/or journal article, and the expectation is that it would be suitable for both conference presentation and publication. The thesis must be approved by the three MA committee members, then filed online (See the Graduate Division website for thesis/dissertation filing guidelines.)

PhD Faculty Mentor, Advisor, Committees. Upon admission to the program, entering doctoral students are assigned a PhD faculty mentor based on their interests. By the end of the first year the student is expected choose a doctoral advisor, who may be--but does not have to be--the faculty person originally assigned as the student's mentor. Students having completed the MA degree may or may not continue to work with their MA advisor and committee, but typically there is continuity.

Committee(s). It is common and even expected that the qualifying examination committee continues as a student's dissertation committee. The following guidelines assume the continuity of faculty for both advancing and writing the dissertation and will be referred to as the "dissertation committee." It is, however, possible for students to replace committee members to more accurately reflect shifts in dissertation foci, methods, and theoretical interests. Such changes, however, must be done in consultation with the student's advisor, or when appropriate in consultation with the DGS. Changes in PhD committee membership after qualifying exams require a petition and must, ultimately, be approved by the Graduate Division.

Selecting Committee Members. A dissertation committee consists of at least three University of California system tenure track ("ladder-rank faculty") members.

- **Two members of the committee must be ladder-rank faculty members from the religious studies department,** one of whom will be appointed as chair or co-chair.

- **The third committee member may be any University of California system ladder-rank faculty member**. Official faculty affiliates of our department may serve as chairs, members, or co-chairs of committees.

- Additional committee members (beyond three) can be faculty at UCSB, the UC system, or elsewhere.

- **All dissertation committee configurations, regardless of how many members are on it, must have at least two ladder-rank faculty from UCSB's religious studies department (including affiliate faculty) with one of them serving as chair or co-chair.**

Recommendation of the appointment of additional members to the doctoral committee is at the discretion of the department. It is important to caution that a PhD committee beyond the required three members, especially non-UCSB faculty, adds logistical complexity for consultation, and dissertation defense. Faculty may be open to reading drafts and consulting without formal membership on a PhD committee (and may actually prefer to support students without committee membership for a number of reasons). Students must get *explicit approval* from their advisor if the PhD committee grows beyond three members. Students will complete the necessary paperwork for committee composition as directed by the Graduate Program Coordinator.

Reconfiguring a Dissertation Committee. Reconfiguring a dissertation committee after writing exams or advancing to candidacy is a serious matter, as it involves significant changes in the focus of the dissertation research and the exams needed in preparation. A student wishing to do so must do the following:

- Inform all members of the present committee in writing stating his/her desire to reconfigure the committee and providing a rationale for said changes, and naming the new member(s) of the committee. Depending on the rationale for the changes, the student may be required to submit a revised dissertation prospectus reflective of the new focus of the dissertation to their proposed committee. Obtain the approval of the proposed members of the reconfigured committee.
- Consult with the Graduate Program Coordinator for effecting committee changes on GradPoint.

PhD Committee

Committee Chair:
Regular RGST ladder faculty, affiliates.

Committee Co-Chairs:
Regular RGST ladder faculty, affiliates, lecturers PSOE/SOE.

Committee Members:
Any UC system academic senate member, but in all committees 2 must be tenure-track *AND* in all committees at least 2 must be regular RGST ladder faculty or affiliates.

Additional ("4th member") Committee Member:
Approval by advisor/department

Advancing to Candidacy: Qualifying Exams and Dissertation Prospectus

Advancing to PhD Candidacy is an important degree milestone. Achieving candidacy represents the culmination of foundational work and preparation for dissertation research. Candidacy represents the end of formal coursework, fulfillment of department language requirements, and evidence of good academic standing. The procedures for advancing to PhD candidacy require close communication with the student's advisor and exam committee—as well as with the Graduate Program Advisor, with whom, after guaranteeing eligibility, you will navigate the logistics of taking your written examinations, scheduling the oral portion of the exams, and scheduling the discussion of your prospectus.

Qualifying Exams and the Dissertation Prospectus. Faculty in the individual areas of study set general requirements for doctoral examinations and the student's advisor and examiners approve the specifics. Most areas expect students to write an exam on a methodological approach or theme

relevant to their proposed dissertation. A number of faculty in the department as well as affiliated faculty are prepared to write exams on various methods and themes that traverse areas of study. Some faculty may have already prepared exams on particular approaches and/or topics; others are open to working with students to develop more personally tailored exams.

Qualifying exams consist of a minimum of three written exams of (typically) 4-6 hours each, followed by an oral exam of (typically) 3 hours with all examiners. Each exam will have for its "study guide" a bibliography, prepared by the student in consultation with each member of the PhD committee. Expectations for qualifying exams are determined by the examining committee in accordance with the requirements of the department and the student's area of study. Normally at least two of the exams are taken in the student's area of study. The third is usually either on a religious tradition relevant to the student's area of study or is a thematic or methodological exam that cuts across areas or disciplines.

Qualifying exams are designed to serve several purposes:

- First, to test a student's mastery of important scholarly literature and ability to teach courses in broad fields related to the student's chosen area of study (see box below);
- Second, to assess a student's methodological skills in addressing problems in the study of religion in their chosen area;
- Third, to provide the student with an opportunity to craft original and insightful arguments about issues in the study of religion as they relate to their area of study;
- Fourth, to serve as a diagnostic assessment of the student's preparation for the dissertation process.

A field is a sub-area of the student's concentration. One way to conceive of a field is to answer the question, "What courses are you prepared to teach in a religious studies department?" To answer "Christianity," "Islam," "Sociology of Religion," or "Church History" would be inappropriate because these are more like concentrations and are too broad to be courses (and thus fields). On the other hand, it is unlikely that entire courses would be taught on "13th-Century Witchcraft," "Regional Differences in Church Participation," or "Kentucky Revivals in the 19th Century," even though the student may eventually write a dissertation on such a topic. That is, these topics are too narrow to be courses (and thus fields). One could, however, imagine teaching courses in "Medieval Christianity," "Islamic Sectarianism," or "Religious Organizations." These are fields. Fields reflect the coursework students have taken over and beyond the 200 Courses, courses that have introduced them to the several bodies of literature that serve to make up their concentration. The exams test students' command of those bodies of literature.

Scheduling Exams. It is the student's responsibility to work with the Graduate Program Coordinator when scheduling exams after consulting with the dissertation committee members for availability. The written field exams are usually scheduled within a one- to two-week period, usually in an exam-day alternating with a non-exam day pattern. Exams are typically allotted four hours for each exam, although the actual minimum is three hours. There is a maximum of six hours allotted for any exam.

The student must initiate scheduling the exams with the Graduate Program Coordinator as soon as possible – but certainly **at least three weeks prior** to the first exam. It is helpful to first choose a date for the oral exam/defense and then work backwards to schedule the written exam dates. Students should check Graduate Division's information on university requirements for taking the qualifying exams and advancing to candidacy: https://ext-prod.graddiv.ucsb.edu/degree-requirements/doctoral-degree#Qualifying-Examinations .

Field exams may not be given as "open book" exams, and no books, notes, bibliographies, or written assistance of any kind are permitted. Exam accommodations for temporarily and permanently disabled students are possible but only in consultation with and authorization by the Disabled Students Program (DSP). Information on DSP assistance can be found on their website (https://dsp.sa.ucsb.edu/students/how-apply) or by visiting their offices (2120 Student Resources Building)

Each examiner grades his/her exam with a grade of "High Pass," "Pass," "Low Pass," or "Fail." Each exam is also circulated throughout the committee for comment. Resolution of any disagreement involving possible failure is left to the examiners, although they are free to gather additional opinions. If two or more exams are failed, the entire exam series must be repeated; if one exam is failed, it alone must be repeated. Note: the language requirement and all required coursework, including the research methodology course requirement, must be completed prior to scheduling exams.

After completing the written exams the PhD committee takes, typically, two weeks to read and share comments in preparation for the oral examination. The student with help of the Graduate Program Coordinator will have arranged a date, venue, and time for the (typically) three-hour oral exam. The oral exam may or may not include defense and discussion of the dissertation prospectus (see below). The oral examination allows the PhD committee to ask the student to clarify and elaborate on the written exams, explore related materials, and otherwise test the readiness of the student for dissertation research.

If the meeting includes discussion of the prospectus it is usual for the committee to spend at least half of the time on the prospectus and its viability. At the conclusion of the meeting, the committee may require revision of parts or the entire prospectus even if the student is approved for candidacy.

The dissertation prospectus. The dissertation prospectus (or proposal) is normally 20 to 30 pages in length (excluding bibliography), and is oriented toward the practical completion of dissertation research and writing. The prospectus is critical scholarship and should:

1. Identify and contextualize the topic of research
2. Include a concise statement of the problematic out of which the thesis arises (animating questions);
3. Present a thesis/proposition or argument;
4. Contain a review of relevant literature;
5. Identify appropriate methods for the research and writing of the dissertation;
6. Include a plan of textual/archival/field research and contacts, including a timeline;
7. Propose a chapter outline that suggests sub-arguments, case studies/data, and reveals the architecture/rationale of the entire project;
8. Include a working bibliography.

Advancement to Candidacy. Upon satisfactory defense of the exams and prospectus the student is advanced to doctoral candidacy. There are two alternative timetables for completing and defending the field exams and dissertation prospectus. These alternatives are:

- One meeting: The student submits the dissertation prospectus before taking the field exams, and a single oral examination is held within two weeks of completing the fields and covers both the field exams and the defense/discussion of the prospectus.
- Two meetings: The student takes the field exams, and then has one quarter (plus the summer if the timing is applicable) to carry out the necessary archival/field research to draft the dissertation prospectus. Under this option, two oral examinations of a total of (typically) three hours duration will be held, the first within two weeks of completion of the field exams and consisting of a review of the performance during the exams and the second within two weeks of the submission of the dissertation prospectus and consisting of a defense/discussion of the prospectus.

It is up to the dissertation committee and the student to determine which alternative is the most satisfactory. There are different rationales to justify both alternatives, but in either case the normative standards of progress must be respected. It is crucial that the student work closely with the committee to determine how far in advance of the oral defense the prospectus should be submitted for timely review. In all cases two weeks should be considered a reasonable minimum amount of lead time to allow the committee thoroughly to review the prospectus; but committees have the prerogative to request earlier submission of the prospectus. It is helpful to keep in mind when scheduling exams that the end of quarters, and especially the end of the academic year are busy times for faculty.

Again, it is the student's responsibility to schedule his/her/their committee for an agreed-upon date and time for the oral exam(s). The entire committee must attend, preferably in person but if one member is away they may participate via Zoom, or other live video conferencing method. Special arrangements need to be made in advance in such a case. The Graduate Program Coordinator needs to know once these arrangements have been made, as they will assist in preparation of the form for this occasion. The examiners will be the PhD committee, but the oral exam will also be open to all members of the religious studies faculty.

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With the successful passing of the exams and prospectus, and all departmental requirements having been met, the student is advanced to doctoral status. Colloquially, post-advancement students are referred to as "ABD" ("All But Dissertation"). Note that for international students, advancing to candidacy has the added advantage of enabling them to waive their non-resident tuition for a total of three years (nine quarters). Advancement to candidacy makes students eligible for many types of fellowships, both inside and outside the University, and confers borrowing privileges at the University library with Academic status.

Andrea Johnson receiving the department's **Graduate Advisor's Exceptional Service Award** for extraordinary efforts on behalf of the Religious Studies Graduate Program, June 2024



The Dissertation and PhD Degree Completion

The Dissertation. The dissertation represents the culmination of a student's intellectual and scholarly training. The dissertation is an original piece of research that makes a significant contribution to knowledge within the field of religious studies. A successful dissertation demonstrates the ability to frame meaningful questions for inquiry as well as the methodological skill required to provide appropriate answers to the research questions posed. The faculty advisor's role is to provide extensive guidance and feedback throughout the project, in concert with other members of the student's dissertation committee.

The dissertation is written according to a timeline set by the student and the dissertation committee, keeping in mind the standards set by the university for normative time to degree completion. If requested by the committee, each chapter may be approved as it is written. The student will submit the final draft of the dissertation to the committee ***at least one month before the anticipated filing date***, but certainly in accord with the wishes of committee members. Unless specifically directed otherwise by faculty, drafts, whether individual chapters or the final complete draft (and all versions between), should, ideally, be submitted to all committee members as hard copy – you should check with committee members for their preference (hard copy vs. email attachment). Note: Many faculty do not read student work during the summer. Be sure to consult with each of your committee members if you plan to file over the summer.

The Doctoral Defense. The public defense of the dissertation is an important ritual occasion for the student to demonstrate mastery in their area and present the arguments, data, and innovation of their dissertation. The department encourages students to consider the defense as the culmination of the time, energy, commitment and work undertaken in the research and writing the dissertation. By tradition and regulation the defense of the dissertation is open to the public, peers, friends, and family members, as well as other faculty members and university personnel. If the student decides to defend the dissertation the availability of dissertation committee members and appropriate space must be arranged through the graduate program advisor. The doctoral defense may be waived at the discretion of the dissertation committee through petition handled by the GPA. Once the committee approves the dissertation and all required paperwork has been filed, the degree is reviewed and awarded by the Graduate Division on behalf of the university.
Filing the Dissertation. Dissertations are no longer submitted in hard copy. However, there are specific requirements for formatting and filing the dissertation online: https://ext-prod.graddiv.ucsb.edu/filing-your-thesis-dissertation-or-dma-supporting-document. Be sure to consult with the Graduate Program Coordinator as you near completion of the dissertation, especially if you want assistance understanding which forms and/or petitions to file. If the defense is to be waived, it is the student's responsibility to ensure that the form for waiving the final defense is signed along with the signature page of the dissertation; it can be downloaded at the Graduate Division website at https://www.graddiv.ucsb.edu/academic-services/forms-petitions (Doctoral Degree Form III).

The "paperwork" for filing the dissertation and completing the PhD degree has moved almost entirely online, typically through DocuSign. While the Graduate Program Coordinator can provide informational assistance, she cannot be asked, or be held responsible for turning in paperwork or tracking down signatures. Students who complete their doctoral degrees at the end of the

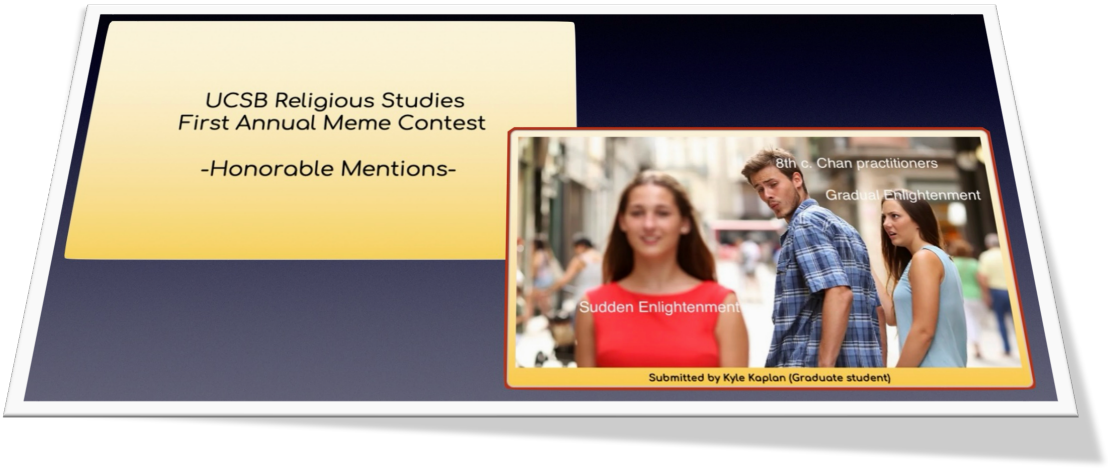
academic year, or over the summer months are responsible for making sure their committee members are available for reading final drafts, signatures, and defenses.

Dissertation Embargo. Students may choose to delay the release (embargo) of their dissertations due to a pending patent, publication, or other reason. In the humanities it is not uncommon to embargo the dissertation to keep readers from citing or "borrowing" ideas before publication of a book version. Details are here: https://ext-prod.graddiv.ucsb.edu/our-services/academic-services/forms-petitions/delayed-releaseembargo-your-electronic-thesis-or

Dissertation Filing Fees. Students must be registered the quarter in which they turn in their dissertation. If a student is filing during the quarter they are registered, no extra fees are required. If they file the following quarter, and do not register, they can obtain an official filing leave of absence from the Graduate Division. The filing fee can be paid in lieu of registration. The amount is half the current student service fee. This approved leave will permit formal relationship with the University for those in UCSB housing, students in need of continued e-mail service, and international students concerned with legal visa status. If there is a lapse in registration, a reinstatement petition is required to obtain approval to re-enroll in UCSB. Students must enroll and pay full registration fees. If a lapse in registration has occurred, Summer Session is a good time to enroll and file due to decreased fees.

Dismissal from the Graduate Program / Academic Disqualification

The university requires students to remain in good standing, demonstrating timely progress through milestones and department timelines. Policy for academic standards and expectations are detailed on Grad Div's website: https://ext-prod.graddiv.ucsb.edu/policy-procedure/academic-performance-and-progress. Students who fall below policy measurements for progress will be notified by the department on behalf of the Graduate Division and will be required to submit a quarterly Academic Progress Plan in consultation with their advisors. Students are then placed on "Monitoring" status until they meet the expectations outlined in the Academic Progress Plan. Students who do not make satisfactory progress on "Monitoring" status are placed on "Warning" status, and submit quarterly Academic Progressd Plans. After three quarters on "Warning" status, and in consultation with the dissertation advisor, department chair, and the Graduate Division, the department may move forward with a request to the Graduate Division for academic disqualification.



GRADUATE STUDENT TEACHING

The Department regards graduate student teaching an essential and important aspect of training for professional academic life. With few exceptions, all students in the PhD and MA/PhD programs serve as Teaching Assistants (TA) for multiple courses during their time in the program, and indeed, university and department funding packages are structured around alternating years of Teaching Assistant experience. (See the University policy and requirements set for Teaching Assistants at: https://www.graddiv.ucsb.edu/academic-appointments. Teaching assistants are assigned in lower-division courses (numbered 1-99) with enrollments of 60 or more. The number of TAs varies from quarter to quarter and depends on the overall curriculum design that balances lower-division courses with upper-division and graduate courses over the course of the academic year. Students are encouraged to serve as a Teaching Associate (i.e., the instructor of record) when the opportunities for doing so are made available (the Department's summer session courses are staffed mainly by graduate students). Depending on circumstances the department makes every effort to provide students with Teaching Associate (that is, as Instructor of Record) opportunities at least once during their time in the program, usually in summer sessions through courses regularly offered in the curriculum, or alternatively, when faculty go on sabbatical leave.

Pedagogical Training. New students and first time Teaching Assistants (TA) are required to attend department orientation as well as the university-wide TA orientation. ***All*** students who plan to TA are strongly encouraged to attend TA training events sponsored by the department's Lead TA.

Teaching Assistants and Teaching Associates may sign up for RGST 591 (T.A. and Associate Training) for 1-4 units during the quarters they teach with the approval of the faculty member with whom they teach. The student and professor arrange for specific pedagogical training and opportunities on an individual, course-specific basis. (Note that these units do not count towards degree requirements.) Graduate students who teach in summer sessions are encouraged to avail themselves of the university-wide Summer Teaching Institute for Associates Program, which provides pedagogical training to summer session teaching associates, and the Summer Mentor Program.

TA assignments are considered in the spring/summer for the following year. Students are asked to provide their preferences for courses/TAs and the DGS and GPA work to match requests as best as is possible, taking into account specific commitments to Fellowship holders, previous employment histories, eligibility limits defined by the Graduate Division rules, academic standing, and approval by advisors. Many of our students find TA positions in other departments, especially in departments without graduate programs (e.g., Asian American Studies), where students must apply; some departments require letters of recommendation. Religious Studies graduate students have also been successful TAing in the Writing Program.

Teaching Evaluations. As a TA, or Instructor of Record, undergraduates will evaluate your performance through an online system. You, and your students will receive email instructions from the Office of Teaching and Learning (OTL) and Instructional Development (ID) before the end of the quarter. You will eventually be given access to the results, and should retain them because you will need them reviews, and applying for grants and jobs in the future. Instructors and TAs will not be able to look at the completed evaluations until after grades have been submitted. See: https://citral.ucsb.edu/teaching-evaluation/course-evaluations/instructors.

ASE Union Representation. Teaching assistants, associates ("Instructors of Record"), and readers, as Academic Student Employees (ASE), are covered by a bargaining agreement between the ASE union and the university. Visit the following website for more information: https://ucnet.universityofcalifornia.edu/resources/employment-policies-contracts/bargaining-units/. Teaching Assistants and Instructors supervising TAs are required to complete and sign the ASE Duty Sheet outlining workload expectations for each course. These forms are submitted to the GPA.

Employment and Degree Programs

Graduate students employed as Teaching Assistant are considered first and foremost students with academic responsibilities who need to make timely progress toward degree completion. Graduate Students are normally limited to a maximum of 50% time employment during the academic year (*Note: "50% time" is the administrative term for a "full-time" TA position*). In exceptional cases students may apply for employment beyond the 50% limit (Note: except for international students who may not exceed beyond 50% total combined employment). An exception to policy request must be approved prior to employment by the student's advisor, the Department Chair and the Director of Graduate Studies. Contact the Graduate Program Coordinat for help requesting an exception to the employment policy.

The Certificate in College and University Teaching (CCUT). Students may want to work towards The Certificate in College and University Teaching (CCUT) to "demonstrate superior competence and experience in preparation for teaching at the university or college level." Information on earning the CCUT is available on the Graduate Division website: https://www.graddiv.ucsb.edu/policy-procedure/certificate-in-teaching.



RGST 71 TA's Momoka Asano, Amber Albert, and Zerkxis Bhandara enjoying dinner after class, Spring 2026

ANNUAL STUDENT REVIEW (ASR)

At the end of the academic year all PhD and MA/PhD students who will be registering in the upcoming Fall Quarter submit an Annual Student Review (ASR) on their efforts and accomplishments during the current academic year to their faculty mentor/advisor. The review provides students with timely feedback regarding their progress in the program and allows faculty to identify problems and counsel students about areas that may require more attention and/or the sharpening of specific skills.

Students who have served as TAs or Associates may be asked to submit teaching evaluation data. Students may also be asked to submit an updated curriculum vita. Faculty mentors/advisors complete their portion of the form, which they share with the student, indicating those areas in which the student is meeting or exceeding expectations and flagging areas in which they are falling behind departmental expectations with respect to performance or progress. The faculty then submits the review – signed by the student and advisor – and accompanying documents to the DGS or the GPC. The DGS assesses each ASR and, if warranted, brings concerns to the attention of the Graduate Committee. The Graduate Committee may solicit further input from faculty, call a meeting with the student and their advisor, and provide feedback to the student regarding department expectations for the coming year in terms of progress milestones as well as professional development.

DEGREE CONTENT OPTIONS

Areas of Study. In consultation with their mentor or advisor, students choose an Area of Study, each of which has area specific requirements (see the department webpage for Graduate Areas of Study). Students should make a plan for meeting the requirements in consultation with their advisor. The current Areas of Study are: Buddhist Studies, Christian Traditions, East Asian Religions, Islamic Studies, Jewish Studies, Mediterranean Religions, Native American and Indigenous Religions, Philosophy and Religion, Religion and Culture, Religions of North America, and South Asian Religions.

Interdisciplinary PhD Emphases. Graduate students may take advantage of several interdisciplinary emphases to enhance training and marketability by acquiring supplemental skills. UCSB is committed to interdisciplinary work and, happily, the academic study of religion is open to the methods, theories, and insights from other disciplines. Both the interdisciplinary emphasis program leader and the DGS or student's advisor must approve the petition used to add (or drop) an interdisciplinary emphasis or certificate. Students who successfully complete the Ph.D. in Religious Studies and have completed an Emphasis will have that designation on their transcripts. We participate in the following PhD Emphases:

Emphasis in Ancient Mediterranean Studies
Emphasis in Asian American Studies
Emphasis in Cognitive Science
Emphasis in European Medieval Studies
Emphasis in Feminist Studies
Emphasis in Global Studies
Emphasis in Translation Studies
Emphasis in Writing Studies
Emphasis in Black Studies (**in process**)

Information and petition for adding a Ph.D. Emphasis:
https://catalog.ucsb.edu/pages/d7eAClNKIBYKbL77hxKk

IHC Research Focus Groups. UCSB's Interdisciplinary Humanities Center supports a variety of Research Focus Groups (RFG) that bring together faculty and graduate students with shared research interests from different fields and departments/programs to foster the development of interdisciplinary research agendas. Convened by individuals from at least two departments/programs, the RFGs meet regularly (at least three times a quarter) during the academic year to present work in progress, read and discuss texts and current scholarship, and/or plan and implement common research projects. For more information, see: http://www.ihc.ucsb.edu/ihcresearch/rfgs/ .

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Students are urged to present their research at regional, national (e.g., American Academy of Religion), and international conferences (e.g., International Association for the History of Religions), and the Graduate Division and department offer some funding to eligible students to help attend conferences whenever possible (see below). Students are also encouraged to help organize and to participate in research focus groups with faculty and graduate students. Further, the Graduate Liaison organizes workshops with both departmental faculty as well as invited speakers to discuss issues related to professional development, including publishing, job searches, writing grant proposals, and other topics of importance to the students. Advanced students in the department can serve as chairs for regional AAR program units, serve on national AAR program unit steering committees, work with colleagues at other institutions on various projects/conferences, and serve on various UCSB graduate student boards and committees.

Finally, students have ample opportunity to participate in departmental service, whether by election, invitation, or volunteering. Specifically, they play key roles in helping to organize conferences, the Graduate Student Recruitment event, and other department activities.

FUNDING AND FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE

Entering PhD and MA/PhD Student Multi-Year Funding Packages. Multi-year packages for MA/PhD and PhD entering students are awarded either through the Graduate Division (referred to as "Central Fellowships") or the Department in conjunction with the admissions process. Specific details are included in each individual award letter. Departmental packages (e.g., Rowny, Cordano, and Glazer Fellowships) normally include a mix of stipends and Teaching Assistantships. Financial packages typically commit **support for the first five academic years** as stipulated in award letters. TA positions taken in other departments, and/or awards/employment (e.g., taking paid research positions as part of a faculty grant) during this time period fulfill the university/department's support commitments. Therefore, the department cannot "push out" commitments; exceptions may be granted if circumstances and resources allow. Beyond guaranteed funding years the DGS and GPC may assign TA positions, quarterly fee assistance, and other augments, taking into account rules and limiting factors as mandated by the Graduate Division (i.e. "P" status, academic standing, allowable quarters and percentages for employment), as well as individual student funding histories, particular circumstances, and progress information from Annual Student Reviews.

MA - Plan II Support. MA-Plan II students are not eligible for university Central Fellowships and are not offered departmental funding. MA-Plan II students may seek TA employment in Religious Studies and other academic departments to help cover tuition and fees.

Year-by-Year Support. Both the Graduate Division and the department may provide support on a year-by-year basis to PhD and MA/PhD students in good standing whose funding has expired. The Graduate Division does so through an annual competition in winter quarter for a variety of Continuing Central Fellowships; the Department does so through awarding TAships, occasional summer stipend support, or in rare cases, additional fellowship quarters on a case-by-case basis.

- **Graduate Division** annually awards fellowships to continuing students ranging in length from one quarter to one year based on a university-wide competition. The Graduate Program Coordinator and DGS receive notification requesting department nominations for Continuing Central Fellowships (which have a variety of eligibility requirements) in January or February, and they forward that notification to faculty and graduate students. Based on faculty input and student applications the Religious Studies Graduate Committee selects the departmental nominees and submits their application packets to the Graduate Division. The Graduate Division also hosts a number of yearly fellowship opportunities on their website: http://www.graddiv.ucsb.edu/financial.

- **The Department** cannot guarantee funding via stipend or TA positions for students whose funding package has expired. However, TA positions are occasionally available for eligible students, and all students in search of funding should be sure to respond to the department's annual call for TA applications. Similarly, students are encouraged to apply for TA positions in other academic departments (some popular departments are Asian American Studies, Black Studies, Sociology, and Engineering). Available opportunities are often forwarded via the grad student email list, or available on the Grad Teach Forum: https://gradpost.ucsb.edu/blog/top-stories/2021/10/25/join-the-new-grad-teach-forum-to-learn-about-ta-and-gsr-opportunities

• There are several **Campus Funding Resources** students may apply for, and these opportunities will be made available to students via email as the DGS and GPC become aware of them. Religious Studies students should check the Interdisciplinary Humanities Center (6th Floor, HSSB) and its website (http://www.ihc.ucsb.edu/research-support/funding-graduate-students/) for events and funding resources. Similarly, appropriate projects can find support from the Chicano Studies Institute (https://www.csi.ucsb.edu/resources/funding), Black Studies Dissertation Fellowships (https://www.blackstudies.ucsb.edu/graduate/black-studies-dissertation-fellowship)

Summer Research Funding. When department funds allow, a call for summer research funding is made in Spring quarter requesting proposals. Depending on the number of proposals and available funds awards are given by the DGS in consultation with the graduate committee, GPC, and department chair.

Emergency Loans, Grant Sources, and Basic Needs

There are a number of campus sources that help students with cash flows and money emergencies: https://basicneeds.ucsb.edu/resources/financial/financial-crisis-team
The university's Basic Needs resource website (https://basicneeds.ucsb.edu) can assist with a number of urgent issues (food, housing, etc.)

Other Campus and Off-Campus Adjunct Teaching Employment

Other Academic Student Appointments
In additions to Teaching Assistant positions graduate students may also be employed as readers, tutors, associate instructors, or student assistants. As these positions become available the GPC will alert students through the relst-grads email list. Instructors with large courses at the upper-division levels (i.e. without TAs) sometimes rely upon graduate student "Readers" to grade and mark papers.

Part-Time University Staff Positions
In addition to academic positions many part-time University staff positions are available. Jobs are listed through the campus Human Resources Office (https://www.jobs.ucsb.edu/). Students are allowed to work up to 20 hours per week (50% time) while enrolled in a graduate program (check with the Graduate Program Advisor for specific limits with respect to your status).

Additional Employment Opportunities
Some opportunities exist for part-time work on campus. Many of these jobs relate to students' academic interests. For example, the Disable Students Program (DSP) hires course notetakers for many courses (https://dsp.sa.ucsb.edu/student-workers/student-workers). The Campus Learning Assistance Services (CLAS) Program recruits graduate students as tutors, especially for introductory, methods, and statistics courses: https://clas.sa.ucsb.edu/employment.
Graduate students with an MA and/or advanced to candidacy occasionally find employment teaching classes at nearby community colleges such as Ventura College, Oxnard College, Santa Barbara City College, and Hancock College. Further afield, there are adjunct lecture pools at CSU- Northridge and other Los Angeles area institutions.

Conference and Travel Funding Options.

Graduate students in Religious Studies are encouraged to participate in regional, national and international conferences as part of their professionalization. To this end, the department has set aside resources to aid in funding graduate student travel to conferences.

Graduate students must first seek funding from other sources before applying for travel funding from the Department: graduate students who have advanced to candidacy should first apply for funding from:

- The UCSB Academic Senate: https://senate.ucsb.edu/grants/doctoral-student-travel/
- The UCSB Graduate Student Association. Students should apply for this stipend at the beginning of the month in which the conference is being held: https://gsa.ucsb.edu/funding/travel-grant

Funding from the Department

Graduate student requests for conference travel funding from the department will be considered according to the following guidelines.

1. The applicant must be in good academic standing.
2. The applicant shall apply for funding within a reasonable time prior to the conference; at least three weeks prior. The application may take the form of an email sent to the Department Chair, and cc'ed to the DGS and the student's PhD advisor**. Note: Do not email directly or cc the GPC with department funding requests.**
3. The student shall submit proof that they are presenting a paper at the conference for which they're requesting funding. Requests for funding should be accompanied by a copy of the paper abstract; endorsement from the student's adviser explaining the importance of the conference; and some evidence of participation (e-mail confirmation or notation in the final conference schedule).
4. The student shall indicate all other sources of travel funding for which they have applied.
5. The student shall disclose previous awards from the department over the past two years.
6. Funding will be awarded on a quarterly basis within the limits of the departmental budget. Highest **priority** will be given to students:

    a) who have not received department travel funding in the previous academic year;
    b) presenting papers at regional or national meetings directly relevant to the student's research (e.g., American Academy of Religion/Society for Biblical Literature);
    c) who are not the beneficiaries of multi-year funding (Central Fellowships, Rowny, Cordano, Glazer Fellowships). (Note: Cordano and Glazer Fellowship students have priority to funds from those respective endowments. Students should first contact the respective Chair holders/committees to request conference and travel funding.)

Travel funding works on a reimbursement basis. Following their return from the conference, students shall complete a travel reimbursement worksheet (see link below), and submit it, along with original receipts and award email, directly to the Religious Studies Financial Analyst (hasc.hfa.ucsb.edu/people). NOTE: The GPA does not handle reimbursement issues.

Domestic Travel Reimbursement Worksheet AND Foreign Travel Reimbursement Worksheet available at: https://hasc.hfa.ucsb.edu/forms/

Students must report all conference and travel funding awards (regardless of source) on their Annual Student Review.

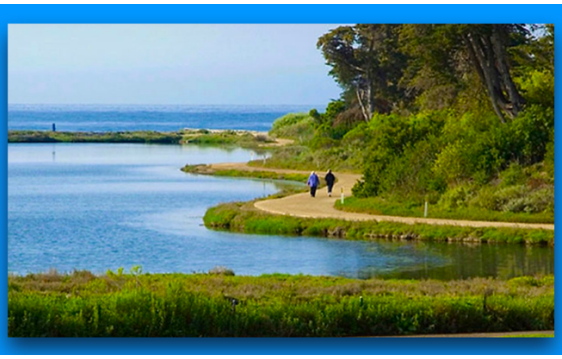
STUDENT STATUS

"P" Status

- *P1 Status*. All entering graduate students at UCSB are classified as "P1" pre-doctoral students. You are P1 until you advance to PhD candidacy.

- *P2 Status*. Graduate students are considered P2 when they have advanced to candidacy. P2 status can be maintained for up to 9 registered quarters. Ideally, you will remain in P2 status until you complete your degree. For international students the Non-Resident Supplemental Tuition (NRST) is waived for the 9 quarters they are in P2 status.

- *P3 Status*. After 9 registered quarters as P2 status, students enter P3 status. International students in P3 status will be charged non-resident supplemental tuition (NRST) quarterly. A student in P3 status ***and*** beyond the department's time-to-degree standard is no longer eligible to receive university financial support (such as Central Fellowships and Block Grant funds). P3 status also lowers a student's standing when the Department is considering in-house funding and TA assignments. P3 students may still be eligible, however, to hold Teaching Assistant positions within certain limits. Consult the GPC for TA eligibility if you are in P3 status.



Campus lagoon

Leave of Absence Status

The university requires that students be continuously registered (except for summers) to maintain student status. There are, however, forms of student status available when circumstances require that you be away from UCSB and not registered as a full-time student in residence. (See chart next page for a Comparison Chart on *In Absentia*/Leaves of Absence/Lapsing.)

A leave of absence may be considered for personal reasons or for thesis/dissertation filing. Students should consult with their faculty advisor, the GPC, and Graduate Division before beginning the process to petition for a leave of absence. A leave of absence guarantees you a position in the program upon return. Students on approved leave retain some student privileges (some have a fee attached). While on leave you are not eligible for campus employment or other student appointment titles. A leave of absence is approved for a set period of time only.

Personal Leave:
A personal leave of absence may be considered for any reason that limits a student's capacity to enroll and make progress towards their degree. Students are eligible for 3 quarters of personal leave but may request up to 3 more quarters with the Graduate Dean's approval. No additional documentation is needed in support of the leave request, unless the student is requesting beyond the first 3 quarters of leave. See Grad Division's Leave of Absence petition here: https://www.graddiv.ucsb.edu/forms/leave-absence

Filing Leave of Absence:
The Filing Leave of Absence enables students who have fulfilled all degree requirements except the final examination and filing of the master's thesis, or doctoral dissertation, to take a Filing Leave of Absence *in lieu of registering*. All research and a substantial portion of the thesis/dissertation/DMA supporting document must be drafted prior to the Filing leave quarter. See Grad Div's policy and requirements: https://www.graddiv.ucsb.edu/forms/leave-absence

Returning from an Approved Leave
Students who plan to return to registered status will enroll per usual in the quarter following their last quarter of approved leave.

In Absentia Registration

In Absentia policy allows students conducting their research or studies away from the University to receive a fee reduction, while maintaining full-time student status. *In Absentia* registration may be approved for one to three quarters for students pursuing graduate **study or research** outside Santa Barbara, San Luis Obispo, and Ventura Counties. Additional quarters of *In Absentia* registration may be approved by Grad Div by petition to a limit of six total. Research or coursework must be of a nature that makes it necessary to be completed outside of the local campus region for the entire *In Absentia* registration period. Moreover, research or coursework must be directly related to the student's degree program as evidenced by faculty approval.

Doctoral students must be advanced to candidacy by the time the *In Absentia* status would begin, and they must be enrolled full-time (minimum of 8 units) during the *In Absentia* period. Students who are approved for *In Absentia* registration will receive a reduction of 85% of the combined Tuition, Student Service Fee, and Campus Fees. Nonresident Supplemental Tuition and graduate student health insurance fees remain unchanged. The Department is willing to consider funding certain *In Absentia* fees if departmental finances. For further details and to apply for *In Absentia* status, please see https://www.graddiv.ucsb.edu/forms/absentia.

In Absentia and Leaves of Absence have consequences for how the university "counts" quarters to Time-To-Degree completion. That is, some leaves "stop the clock" while others do not:

	***In Absentia* Registration**	**Filing Leave**	**Personal Leave**
Time-to-Degree	Does not extend	Does not extend	Extends up to 3 qtrs
PhD Classification	Does not extend	Extends P2	Extends P2
Non-Resident Tuition Reduction	Does not extend	Does not extend	Does not extend

Lapsing

If you are neither enrolled nor on approved leave for a quarter you are considered to have lapsed your status as a graduate student. If quarterly fees are unpaid you are considered to have lapsed. Students who enter lapse status relinquish all student privileges, including contact with advisors and use of university facilities – that is, if you lapse you are no longer considered part of the university. In order to return to regular student status you must petition for Reinstatement to the University. Contact the GPC to begin this process. The petition will be evaluated by the Graduate Committee in consultation with the student's advisor for approval or disapproval. A plan for completion and a timetable must be verified by the student's advisor and submitted with the Reinstatement Petition. All requests for reinstatement must be approved by the DGS for further evaluation and approval by the Graduate Division. In some cases, students who have been unregistered for a long period of time may be required to re-do qualifying examinations and/or coursework following reinstatement to guarantee currency in the field. Once a student is reinstated, they must be continuously enrolled. Students are advised to avoid lapsing more than once as reinstatement by Graduate Division is not guaranteed even with department approval.

Leave of Absence vs. Lapsing

Consider the differences between Leave of Absence and Lapsing and consult with the GPC and/or the DGS. Note:

- **Leaves of Absence:** You are approved by Graduate Division to be out of registration status for a set period of time (and only for this period of time). Your return to the program is guaranteed.

Lapsing: you choose not to register for a quarter and are therefore no longer considered a student by the university. To return you must petition for reinstatement requiring departmental and Graduate Division approval. If you have not demonstrated progress and/or have not been in communication with your committee, reinstatement may be denied. **Note:** You can inadvertently transition from leave of absence status to lapsed status if you do not register/return to the university at the end of an approved leave of absence. In this case you must petition for reinstatement.

Comparison Chart on *In Absentia* / Leaves of Absence / Lapsing

	In Absentia	Leave of Absence/Filing Qtr.	Lapse
Purpose	To enable **research** or **coursework** of the nature that makes it necessary to be conducted *outside* of the tri-county area (no other uses approved)	Considered for these reasons: *Personal up to 3 quarters, and up to 6 by exception. ***Filing quarter** - requires submission of a *Filing Leave of Absence Petition*	Graduate students who **fail to register** (lapse) **relinquish ALL student privileges**
Eligibility criteria	*Student's research or coursework must require work outside of SLO, SB, Ventura counties. *Must be directly related to degree program as evidenced by faculty approval *Must involve only indirect supervision *Must enroll full-time *Must be advanced to candidacy	*Must have been registered the preceding academic quarter, unless requesting to extend a leave.	*Relinquish all student privileges including: *pre-existing offers of department/ other financial support *use of student health services *umail (terminated within 13 months) *ability to defer repayment of loans *Int'l student immigration status *non-resident tuition reduction is *not* deferred by the number of lapsed quarters
Terms and conditions	*Int'l students require OISS approval *Eligible for university support *Not eligible to hold student academic or other appt. titles *remain covered by health insurance *maintain library borrowing privileges	*Int'l students require OISS approval *Not eligible for university support; Financial Aid may be affected *Not eligible to hold student academic or other appointment titles *Not exempt from payment of loans *May be eligible to access Student Health on a fee-for-service *continue library borrowing privileges *If on Filing leave, may *not* subsequently register in absentia; FULL fees will be assessed for all registration post filing leave quarter *If on Filing leave, a nonrefundable filing fee paid at time of degree completion.	n/a
Registration status	Registered student, minimum 8 units	Not registered, on approved leave	Not registered
Tuition and Fees	Tuition and fees **reduced by 85%**; reduction is not applied to other fees, such as health insurance and non-resident tuition	n/a	n/a
Required Paperwork	In Absentia Registration Petition; **Due 6 weeks prior to start of quarter**	*Leave of Absence Petition*, or *Filing Leave of Absence Petition* (specifically for filing leave); **Due 6 weeks prior to start of quarter** $20 fee for Leave for Absence Petition or Filing Leave of Absence Petition	No paperwork, however a *Petition for Reinstatement to Graduate Status* is required for students with a break who wish to return. **Reinstatement is NOT guaranteed. Due at least 6 weeks prior to start of quarter.** Reinstatement petition fee of $135 (domestic), $155 (international)
Maximum allowed	Maximum of 6 quarters, with the 4th-6th quarters requiring letter of support from advisor and Graduate Dean's approval	*Maximum of 3 quarters of non-filing leave; 6 quarters by exception *Maximum 1 quarter Filing leave	n/a

DEPARTMENT MISCELLANEA

Department Colloquia. Students are strongly encouraged to attend the departmental colloquia held periodically (usually two or three times a quarter) throughout the academic year from 3:00-5:00 on Wednesdays. A traditional hallmark of the department, the colloquia are occasions for faculty and graduate students to present and discuss research in progress. For more information or if you want to propose a session, for 2026-2027 please consult with the Graduate Student - Faculty Liaison.

Education Abroad Program. Graduate students are eligible for the University of California Education Abroad Program (UCEAP). With institutional partners in 40 countries worldwide, UCSB graduate students can spend from one quarter to an entire year abroad. General information can be found at https://uceap.universityofcalifornia.edu/. The planning process for going overseas through UCEAP is extensive and bureaucratic as all of the decisions and approvals go through a system-wide process involving the administration in foreign campuses; students should consult early on with the UCEAP office. (It is helpful to note that the UCSB Education Abroad Program (EAP) is the campus-specific program for undergraduates; the systemwide UCEAP handles graduate student study abroad.)

Department Honorary Awards. The faculty honors undergraduate and graduate students at the end of every academic year at a ceremony typically held the last week of classes in June. Certificates of excellence are presented to students in areas represented by emeriti faculty in their honor. Awards are also given for service to the Department. Students are nominated by faculty to the undergraduate faculty advisor who convenes an ad hoc committee for deciding the winners. A list of awards is in Appendix B.

Annual Memorial Lectures, Endowed Chair Lectures, Post-Doctoral Visitors, Other People You Will See in the Hallway, Undergraduate Majors/Minors and Centers. The department sponsors annual public lectures to honor the legacies of emeriti professors and hosts programming through the various endowed chairs installed in Religious Studies. We are also host to any number of visiting scholars (post-doctoral researchers, visiting scholars, adjunct lecturers) who contribute to the vitality and scope of the department's intellectual life. These events and scholars include:

Robert S. Michaelsen Memorial Lecture – on American religion topics

Ninian Smart Memorial Lecture – on comparative religion

Programming through the Virgil Cordano, OFM, Chair in Catholic Studies Endowment

Programming through the Marsha and Jay Glazer Chair in Jewish Studies Endowment

Programming through the Walter H. Capps Center for the Study of Ethics, Religion, and Public

Life Programming through the XIV Dalai Lama Chair in Tibetan Buddhism and Cultural Studies

Visiting scholar in Catholic Studies through the J.E. & Lillian Byrne Tipton Distinguished Visiting Professorship in Catholic Studies Endowment.

In addition to these public events, the Department is host to the Walter H. Capps Center for the Study of Ethics, Religion, and Public Life; the Religious Studies Undergraduate Major and Minor; the Middle East Studies Undergraduate Major; the Jewish Studies Undergraduate Minor, and the Iranian Studies Undergraduate Minor.

The Department strongly urges students to take advantage of low-cost **swim lessons** with the university's Department of Recreation. The central coast is blessed with ample opportunities for enjoying water recreation: https://register.recreation.ucsb.edu/Program/GetProgramDetails?courseId=c112a639-429b-409d-88c5-348d66fe02d0



APPENDIX A.

PhD Milestones: Department Recommendations

	MA/PhD – Track 1	MA/PhD – Track 2	PhD – Track 1	PhD – Track 2
Year 1	RGST 201	RGST 201	RGST 201	RGST 201
	200 Courses	200 Courses	200 Courses	200 Courses
	Choose advisor by end of winter qtr	Choose advisor by end of winter qtr	Choose advisor by end of winter qtr	Choose advisor by end of winter qtr
	Finalize MA committee by end of spring qtr	Finalize MA committee by end of spring qtr		
Year 2	Complete 200 Courses	Complete 200 Courses	Complete 200 Courses	Complete 200 Courses
	Complete MA thesis by end of 6th qtr or beginning of 7th qtr			
	Language requirement	Language requirement	Language requirement	Language requirement
Year 3	Choose exam committee by end of fall qtr	Complete MA thesis by end of 9th qtr or beginning of 10th qtr	Choose exam committee by end of fall qtr	
Year 4	Advance to PhD candidacy by end of spring qtr/end of coursework/ language req met	Choose exam committee by end of fall qtr	Advance to PhD candidacy by end of spring qtr/end of coursework/ language req met	Choose exam committee by end of fall qtr
Year 5	Research	Advance to PhD candidacy by end of spring qtr/end of coursework/ language req met	Research	Advance to PhD candidacy by end of spring qtr/end of coursework/ language req met
Year 6	Dissertation writing	Research	Dissertation writing	Research
Year 7	Complete PhD	Dissertation writing	Complete PhD	Dissertation writing
Year 8		Complete PhD		Complete PhD
	(21 quarters total)	(24 quarters total)	(21 quarters total)	(24 quarters total)

APPENDIX B

DEPARTMENT HONORARY AWARDS

NAMED FACULTY AWARDS

The Catherine L. **Albanese** Award given for academic achievement in American Religious History

The Professor Walter H. **Capps** Memorial Award given for academic achievement in the study of Religion and Public Life

The Professor W. Richard **Comstock** Award given for academic achievement in the study of Religion and Culture

The Professor Wilbur M. **Fridell** Memorial Award given for academic achievement in the study of Japanese Religions (this award may carry a cash prize when Fridell Endowment funds are available)

The Professor Phillip E. **Hammond** Memorial Scholarship given for academic achievement in the field of Sociology of Religion and/or Religion and Government Studies (includes $2000 stipend for research support during the year of tenure as designated Hammond Scholar, from Rowny funds) (year of tenure is the ensuing year; i.e., for an award given during June 2022, the academic year of tenure as the Hammond Scholar is 2022-23)

The Professor Gerald J. **Larson** Dissertation Award given for the best doctoral dissertation completed annually in the Department of Religious Studies (includes $500 stipend from Rowny funds)

The Professor Charles H. **Long** Memorial Award given for academic achievement in the study of the History of Religions

The Professor Robert S. **Michaelsen** Memorial Award given for academic achievement in the field of American Religions

The Professor Thomas F. **O'Dea** Memorial Award given for academic achievement in the study of Religion and Society

The Professor Raimundo **Panikkar** Memorial Award given for academic achievement in the study of Comparative Religions in South Asia (this award will include a cash prize once the Pannikar endowment is sufficiently funded)

The Professor Birger A. **Pearson** Award given for academic achievement in the study of Christian Origins and Hellenistic Religions

The Professor R. Ninian **Smart** Memorial Award given for academic achievement in the Comparative Study of Religion and Philosophy

The Inés M. **Talamantez** Memorial Award given for excellence in the study of religion to a Latinx and/or Native American student. Preference will be given to an undergraduate who demonstrates promise and commitment to the academic study of religion.

The Professor Charles **Wendell** Memorial Award given for academic achievement in the field of Islamic and Middle Eastern Studies

OTHER AWARDS

The Michael Evan **Porzucki** Prize in Jewish Studies given to a Religious Studies undergraduate or graduate student for excellence in the study of Judaism (includes stipend award of approximately $250)

Edward C. **Truman** award (Undergraduate only) The UCSB Affiliates of the University of California, Santa Barbara award one scholarship of $1,000 to a qualified freshman, sophomore or junior majoring in the area of Religious Studies with an aspiration to pursue a religious-related avocation. The award is made on the basis of academic achievement, work history and community service, and relevant future plans. Students must apply in writing during Spring Quarter.

Theta Alpha Kappa Undergraduate Achievement Award given in years by rotation across National Honor Society for Religious Studies and Theology Society chapters. Undergraduate Advisor & Undergraduate Assistant nominate.

The **Chair's Distinguished Service Award** given for distinguished service that fosters the multidisciplinary and cross-cultural objectives of the Department of Religious Studies (given by past chairs to students who have helped the department in some significant way, e.g. with setting up a new center or could be used by the Chair to recognize any "distinguished service"). Department Chair nominates.

The **Graduate Advisor's Exceptional Service Award** for extraordinary efforts on behalf of the Religious Studies Graduate Program. DGS & Graduate Program Advisor nominate.

Departmental Honors (Undergraduate) for Undergraduates who complete the Senior Honors Thesis

Second Year Language Accomplishment Certificates for students in Arabic or Persian

Religious Studies Graduate courses page from the 1984-1985, University General Catalog

206. Seminar on Indic Religious Studies
(4) Larson
Prerequisites: Religious Studies 159A-B-C or equivalent.
Analysis and interpretation of selected research topics in South Asian religion and thought. Attention to research methodology and the use of primary source materials.

207. Guided Readings in Classical Sanskrit Religious Texts
(4) Larson
Course content variable; may be repeated.
Selected readings in classical Sanskrit, Pali, and Vedic religious texts.

210. Guided Readings in Arabic Religious Texts
(4) Campo
Prerequisites: Arabic I-VI (Religious Studies 10A-F) or consent of instructor.
Selected readings on Islamic subjects in Arabic. Focus on scripture, interpretation, and religious biography.

219. Sartre's Critique of Dialectical Reason
(4) Larson
A critical analysis of such notions as "history," "totalization," "praxis," and "collectivities" as set forth in Sartre's *Critique of Dialectical Reason* and the implications of that analysis for doing "history of religions."

220. Bibliography and Research Methods in the Study of Religion
(1-12) Hecht
An advanced study of bibliography and research methods in preparation for doctoral study in the field of religion.

222. Aesthetics of Religion
(4) Comstock
Course content variable; may be repeated.
Analyses of art forms, conceptual models, paradigm formation, visual portrayal, projective techniques; correlations between art and religion.

229. The Archaeology of Religious Knowledge
(4) Staff
An investigation of the relevance to religious studies, particularly to the history of religions, of the work of the philosopher/historian Michel Foucault.

230. Seminar in the History and Theory of Religion
(4) Staff
Scholarly perspectives and disciplinary approaches to critical study and research in the history and theory of religion.

231. Phenomenology of Religion
(4) Smart
The course involves an examination of some approaches to phenomenology in recent literature; and then examines specific concepts and phenomena, such as worship, shamanism, sacrament, and religious identity.

232. Religion and Philosophy: Theories and Method
(2-4) Comstock
Course content variable; may be repeated.
A survey of ways in which religion and philosophy have been related in the history of western civilization. Religious metaphysics, theology, and the approach of contemporary analytic philosophy to religion are considered.

233. Religion and Literature: Theories and Method
(2-4) Comstock
Course content variable; may be repeated.
A survey of the work of literary critics and religious thinkers who have developed connections between the study of literature and religious thought.

235. Seminar in Western Religious Thought
(4) Capps
Historical and critical examination of selected figures and movements.

236. Seminar on Exegetical Perspectives in Judaism and Islam: The Joseph Narrative
(4) Hecht
A study of the Joseph narrative in terms of biblical and Koranic presentation as interpreted by medieval and modern exegetes. Attention will be given to the literary dimensions of the text as perceived by medieval and modern belletrists.

238. Seminar in Modern Religious Thought
(4) Comstock
Detailed examination of the intellectual structures of major nineteenth- and twentieth-century representatives of western religious thought. Emphasis on methodologies and systematic form of basic positions.

239. Seminar on Teilhard de Chardin
(4) Staff
Reading and critical analysis of the works of Teilhard de Chardin.

240. Seminar in the Sociology of Religion
(4) Hammond
Course content variable; may be repeated.
Detailed examination of major figures, schools, and types of research.

244. Problems in Religion and Society
(4) Michaelsen
Prerequisite: graduate standing or consent of instructor. Course content variable; may be repeated.
Influence of religion upon society and society upon religion; institutional roles; transcendent referents; law and justice; value conflicts. Analysis of the thought of such figures as Weber, Troeltsch, Reinhold Niebuhr, H. Richard Niebuhr, J. D. Murray, Ellul, and C. Dawson.

246. Seminar in Comparative Mysticism
(4) Smart
Historical and comparative analysis of selected mystical traditions in the East and the West.

247. Seminar in Native American Religious Traditions
(4) Talamantez
Course content variable; may be repeated.
Historical and critical examination of selected figures, categories, and phenomena pertaining to the diversity of Native American religious traditions.

248. Semantics in Religious Pluralism
(4) Panikkar
The question of universals in a cross-cultural setting. The names of and for God, religion, man, grace, etc. Questions are addressed such as the following: Can names be transcended? Do they have a transcultural value?

249A. Heidegger and the Problem of a Cross-Cultural Language
(4) Panikkar
A reading of Heidegger's works, centered on his analysis of the nature of language, as a basis for a diatopical hermeneutics of the contemporary encounter of traditions.

249B. Heidegger and the Problem of a Cross-Cultural Language
(4) Panikkar
Application of Heidegger's insights to a cross-culturally valid philosophy of language.

250. Seminar in the History of Religions
(4) Staff
Course content variable; may be repeated.
Comparative study of selected religious structures or symbols, from eastern and/or western religious traditions.

251. Seminar in Hellenistic Religions
(4) Pearson
Prerequisite: reading knowledge of Greek required. Course content variable; may be repeated.
Historical and critical examination of selected figures, texts, and phenomena pertaining to Graeco-Roman religion.

252. Seminar in Christian Origins
(4) Pearson
Prerequisite: Religious Studies 116 or equivalent. Course content variable; may be repeated.
Historical and critical examination of selected figures, ideas, and movements pertaining to nascent Christianity.

253. Seminar in Hellenistic Judaism
(4) Hecht, Pearson
Prerequisite: knowledge of Greek and/or Hebrew highly recommended.
Historical and critical examination of selected figures, texts, and phenomena pertaining to Judaism in the Graeco-Roman world, and its interaction with Hellenistic culture and religion.

254. Seminar on Vedic Scriptures
(4) Panikkar
Prerequisite: Religious Studies 160 or consent of instructor.
An analysis of the philosophical and religious motifs in the ancient Vedic texts of India. Research and discussion of the following: the Vedic sacrifice, the theory of creation, the views about man and gods, and the life of meditation.

255. Seminar in Comparative Hindu-Buddhist Thought
(4) Larson
Thematic and comparative analyses of Hindu theological traditions in India with Buddhist philosophical traditions in South and East Asia. Analysis of such problems as Hinduization, Sanskritization, Chinese Buddhist appropriation of Indian ideas, and methodological presuppositions for cross-cultural study.

256A. Seminar in Cross-Cultural Religious Anthropology
(4) Panikkar
An interdisciplinary approach towards an integral understanding of man taken from the human experience of the various religious traditions of mankind. Focus on problems of methodology.

256B. Seminar in Cross-Cultural Religious Anthropology
(4) Panikkar
Prerequisite: Religious Studies 256A or consent of instructor.
Sequel to Religious Studies 256A with focus on primordial myths.