# Table of Contents

Welcome Message from the Chair, Professor April DeConick ................................................. 3  
Welcome Message from the Department Director of Graduate Studies, Professor Anthony Pinn ... 4  
Graduate Studies Time-Line ........................................................................................................ 5  
General Program Information .................................................................................................... 7  
Title IX and sexual Discrimination ............................................................................................. 7  
Coursework ................................................................................................................................ 8  
Modern Language Exam Procedures .......................................................................................... 9  
Language Proficiency Exams for Primary Source Research Languages .................................. 11  
Graduate Student Annual Report ............................................................................................... 12  
Graduate Student Annual Report Form ...................................................................................... 13  
Second Year Review .................................................................................................................. 16  
Pedagogy Practicum .................................................................................................................. 17  
Comprehensives ....................................................................................................................... 18  
Accommodations For Physical, Sensory, Cognitive, Learning and Psychological Disabilities . 18  
Exam Petition/Exams .................................................................................................................. 19  
Comprehensives Declaration Form ........................................................................................... 21  
Evaluation of Comprehensive Examiners ................................................................................. 22  
Candidacy Procedures ................................................................................................................. 23  
PhD Checklist ............................................................................................................................ 24  
Petition for Approval of Candidacy for a Doctoral Degree ....................................................... 26  
Candidacy Master's Degree ......................................................................................................... 27  
Dissertation Prospectus Procedures ......................................................................................... 28  
Dissertation Prospectus Approval Form ..................................................................................... 29  
Dissertation Defense Procedures ............................................................................................... 30  
Checklist for Post Ph.D. Candidacy ......................................................................................... 31  
Teaching Opportunities .............................................................................................................. 32  
Graduate Student Instruction Request Form .............................................................................. 33  
Graduate Student Teaching Assistant Positions ...................................................................... 34  
Graduate Student Teaching Assistant (GSTA) Request Form ................................................ 35  
Additional Funding .................................................................................................................... 36  
Travel Request for Conferences ............................................................................................... 37  
Independent Study Form .......................................................................................................... 38
Welcome Message from the Chair, Professor April DeConick

The motto of Rice University is strikingly bold. "Unconventional Wisdom." It is a motto that we love to own because it describes the kind of intellectual community that we create and foster in the Department of Religion. To study here means to challenge the status quo, to investigate what is not obvious, to reimagine what was, is and can be when it comes to religion. To study here means to enter an intellectual community where critical thought, disciplined training, and innovation intersect with religion.

We are a bold international faculty with specialties that range across many fields and approaches. We are marvelously interdisciplinary and pluralistic, studying everything from the rich diversity of early Judaism and Christianity to superhero comics and the paranormal, from medieval and renaissance mysticism and magic to African witchcraft, from the origins of Islam to modern apocalypticism and cultural pessimism, from Buddhist models of the mind to Freudian psychology, from modern art and spirituality to hip hop, from the ancient New Age to the modern-day expansion of gnosticism.

Why study religion? Why do it differently from the churches, mosques, synagogues, temples, and theological schools? Religion is a powerful force with many facets and layers. It is part of a bigger historical, social, cultural and political network that links us to the way we perceive our world and our place, as human beings, within it. Many people grow up in a particular religious tradition, which comes to define their view of themselves and their relationship to others and the world. The classes we offer, the conferences we sponsor, the books we write aim to create a space for stepping back and viewing religion from other angles and perspectives, for asking questions that may be considered "way-out" or even "banned" by the religions themselves. We seek answers that help us face and overcome religious intolerance by informing us about other views, challenging our religious stereotypes, and addressing fears that sometimes lead to hostility and violence.

This does not mean that our approach is antithetical to religion. While we approach religion from the perspective of free and informed intellectual inquiry, we do so with an empathy that does not privilege any particular religion. While we take sincerely the claims of religions and religious people, our investigations are not bound to the authority of any particular religious community, scripture, or person. For our students, this perspective often leads to religious awareness and self-evaluation. It facilitates a conversation that promises to reveal shared understandings and real differences between religious people, some of which have existed for centuries. If offers a place for all of us - faculty and student alike - to freely seek the difficult and risky answers to the whys and wherefores of religion. Studying with us means engaging questions of human diversity, purpose and meaning in a global world. It is a study that takes very seriously religious pluralism, that engages the modern reality of religious diversity, and assists us in trying to build understanding across the lines of religious difference. Welcome to our community!
Welcome Message from the Department Director of Graduate Studies, Professor Anthony Pinn

Welcome to Rice and the next phase of your intellectual development. We are proud of the standing of this department on campus and on the national and international stage, and you were admitted because we are convinced you can play a role in the ongoing success of Religion at Rice and beyond. We're delighted to have you in the department and we look forward to your involvement in classes, other professional activities and the general life of the department. While your primary advisor is available to address your questions and concerns, if I can be of any assistance feel free to contact me.

Again, welcome to Rice! Cheers!
Graduate Studies Timeline

*Minimal Course Requirements (54 credit hours/18 hours, including the two required seminars) to be completed in first two years. Students are expected to make satisfactory progress toward the degree in a timely manner and maintain a minimum GPA of B- (2.67)*

RELI 527 History and Methods: Nineteenth Century or Equivalent

RELI 559 History and Methods: Twentieth Century or Equivalent

*Students typically take three courses each semester. However, a student’s primary advisor may require additional work as needed.

*Minimal Research Language Requirements to be completed by the end of the summer of the second year*

Demonstrate proficiency in two modern research languages, usually French and German.

Students studying ancient languages will have additional coursework that must be completed prior to comprehensive exams.

*Advising: First Year Student*

First year students are expected to meet regularly with her/his primary advisor. Through these meetings, the advisor provides guidance related to coursework, language training, and other dimensions of the program. In addition, questions regarding the general structure of the Ph.D. program should be brought to the attention of the Graduate Director at any time.

*Annual Assessment Report*

In the first week of April each year, the Graduate Director sends electronic forms of the Graduate Student Annual Report to all graduate students in the program. In this email, the Graduate Director requests that each student complete the student portion of the form and forward the completed form to the advisor and Department Coordinator.

*Second Year Review*

Written and Oral review of student's progress toward degree, to determine if satisfactory progress is being made and what needs to happen in order for student to achieve candidacy in timely manner. Students are required to provide their portfolio, including progress narratives, all seminar papers, unofficial transcripts, language completion forms, and two annual reports.
Pedagogy Practicum to be completed in third or fourth year

RELI 530

Comprehensive Exams to be completed by end of the fourth year

The Qualifying Exams are typically taken during the spring of the 4th year. (Students are not allowed to substitute research papers in place of exams.) The Qualifying Exams will be four in number:

1. Methods and History of the Discipline, required of all students;
2. one exam dedicated to a particular religious tradition;
3. one exam dedicated to a particular methodology or theoretical orientation; and
4. one thematic concentration exam selected by the student in consultation with her or his advisor.

See faculty examiners for book lists.

Achieve Candidacy to be completed by end of the fourth year

Completion and submission of Petition for Approval of Candidacy for a Doctoral Degree Form required found (see page 26).

Prospectus to be completed within a year of achieving candidacy

With the consultation and cooperation of a dissertation supervisor and at least two other thesis committee members (member within the department and member outside the department), the dissertation proposal must be submitted to the Department in a standard written form (see page 28).

Dissertation

The dissertation must be written and defended by the end of the 8th year in the program. As part of the writing process, students must meet with the chair of their dissertation committee at least once a semester to discuss their progress. For additional information on the dissertation defense, see “Dissertation Defense Procedures” (page 30).

Students are expected to present their thesis as a public commencement lecture in the spring semester that they graduate.

Teaching Opportunities and Service Requirements

Each student may apply to teach a total of 1-2 courses after the fourth year. However, preference will be given to students in the 6-8 years of study (see page 32).

In exchange for the stipend, students are required to provide 7 hours of service to the department. This is to be worked out with the primary advisor, and can include research assistance.
**General Program Information**

Refer to General Announcement guidelines for
2. Petition and Appeals ([http://ga.rice.edu/GR_disputes/](http://ga.rice.edu/GR_disputes/))
4. Students wanting to change advisors should meet with the Director of Graduate Studies. If the advisor is the Director of Graduate Studies, students should meet with the Department Chair.

For more information regarding program requirements, students should reference the Degree Requirements (see page 8).

In addition to being in agreement with the regulation stated in this departmental handbook, students must also be in agreement with the General Announcements and the Code of Conduct. In case there is conflicting information, university-wide regulations take precedence over department-wide regulations, which take precedence over research group-wide regulations.

In doubt, students should seek help first at the department level (graduate coordinator, director of graduate studies, advisor, and/or department chair) and then at the central administration level (Office of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies).

When planning vacations, students should be mindful of ongoing academic obligations and responsibilities. Students should consult with their advisors to be certain that all department obligations are met.

**Title IX and Sexual Discrimination**

Rice encourages any student who has experienced an incident of sexual, relationship, or other interpersonal violence, harassment or gender discrimination to seek support. There are many options available both on and off campus for all graduate students, regardless of whether the perpetrator was a fellow student, a staff or faculty member, or someone not affiliated with the university.

Students should be aware when seeking support on campus that most employees are required by Title IX to disclose all incidents of non-consensual interpersonal behaviors to Title IX professionals on campus who can act to support that student and meet their needs. The therapists at the Rice Counseling Center and the doctors at Student Health Services are confidential, meaning that Rice will not be informed about the incident if a student discloses to one of these Rice staff members. Rice prioritizes student privacy and safety, and only shares disclosed information on a need-to-know basis.

If you are in need of assistance or simply would like to talk to someone, please call Rice Wellbeing and Counseling Center, which includes Title IX Support: *(713) 348-3311*. Policies, including Sexual Misconduct Policy and Student Code of Conduct, and more information regarding Title IX can be found at safe.rice.edu.
Coursework

Fifty-four credits of coursework (18 courses) are required for the Ph.D. The Department recognizes and embraces the fact that the study of religion is an interdisciplinary project that requires forms of knowledge and methodologies from different intellectual traditions. We thus encourage each student to take coursework outside the Department. However, no more than one-fourth of all credits counted towards the Ph.D. in Religion will be accepted from other departments. This does not preclude a student, of course, from exceeding this credit requirement.

Two department seminars (RELI 527 and 559) are required and are usually taken during the first and second spring semesters of the student's career. The seminars will generally draw most of their required readings from the bibliographies, developed by the faculty, for the first and third Qualifying Exams, which all students are required to take (see below).

It is expected that the student will work through a reading list and written assignments equivalent to requirements for 500/600 level courses, in conjunction with faculty advisors. (See faculty examiners for book lists.)
Modern Language Exam Procedures

Requirement

All Ph.D. students are expected to pass reading exams in two secondary research languages, that is, two languages in which modern scholarship is written. Normally, these languages are French and German. In rare cases English may be counted for students for whom English is a second language. *These exams must be taken during the student’s coursework and before the Qualifying Exams.*

In addition to these two language requirements, all students are expected to obtain proficiency in the language(s) of their primary sources for their dissertation research and scholarly career. The student’s dissertation advisor and committee will determine the status of this linguistic proficiency.

Language Examinations Administered by the Department of Religion

1. Language requirements are implemented and monitored by the committee on languages (Director of Graduate Studies, Drs. Bongmba and Henze, with the cooperation of other members of the faculty as necessary).

2. Students planning to take the language examinations must arrange for the test in conversation with appropriate member of the Committee on Languages (Drs. Elias Bongmba and Matthias Henze). Examinations are taken the second Friday of September, November, January, and March. There is also a summer exam date set by the language departments upon completion of the summer language courses that the student may elect to take.

3. Students may use a conventional language dictionary during the exam. This excludes computer or internet dictionaries and access to computer or internet translation aids. Students who take exams administered by the language departments during the summer must abide by this procedure too.

4. All language exams must be completed and passed prior to setting up with the advisor the comprehensive exams. Ideally, students should be completing their language requirements in their second year of coursework.

Language Training Process

Because of the recognized centrality of French and German for the study of religion across various disciplines and subjects, the Department of Religion’s primary focus involves the development of mechanisms for administering and monitoring the language requirement with regard to these two languages. Concerning these two languages:
Examinations for French and German are arranged by the student’s advisor and the appropriate member of the Committee on Languages, and they can be taken the second Friday of September, November, January and March.

After receiving approval to take the exam from the student’s advisor and the appropriate member of the Committee on languages, students must submit (at least three weeks before the exam) to Dr. Elias Bongmba (for French) and Dr. Matthias Henze (for German) the book from which they would like to be tested. If the book is approved, Dr. Bongmba or Dr. Henze will select an appropriate section and use it to test the student.

Examinations are graded by the appropriate member of the Committee on Languages.

Examinations for other languages should be arranged with the student’s advisor, a member of the department faculty equipped to test the student, and in consultation with the Committee on Languages (Director of Graduate Studies, Dr. Bongmba and Dr. Henze).

**Exam dates are the same for all languages.**

*Evaluation of Language Examinations*

Students needing coursework in order to prepare for the language examinations in French and German should plan to take the summer courses. These courses, taught in May, alternate between French and German. Students are advised to find out in advance which language will be offered during a given year.
Language Proficiency Exams for Primary Source Research Languages
Hebrew, Syriac, Greek, Latin, Coptic, Arabic, and Tibetan

These language exams are required for students who need to work in primary source original language texts. They are meant to prepare the students for dissertation research and their scholarly career. They do not replace the requirement for the student to pass proficiency tests in two modern research languages, typically French and German.

Professors responsible for these exams should be consulted directly by the student.

• Cook [Arabic]
• DeConick [Greek-Coptic]
• Fanger [Latin]
• Henze [Hebrew-Syriac]
• Klein [Tibetan]

1. Working with the professor, the student will prepare texts in genres deemed most relevant to the student's area of research.

2. Although the format and length of the exam is at the professor’s discretion, the proficiency exam must consist of a minimum of three passages chosen from genres in which the student has been working. At least one of the passages must be a sight passage.

3. Students cannot use computer or internet dictionaries or access computer or internet translation aids, except in cases where professor determines otherwise. Whether traditional lexicons can or cannot be used is the professor's prerogative.

4. The language exams determined central to the student’s field of study must be completed and passed prior to setting up with the advisor the comprehensive exams.
Graduate Student Annual Report

In addition to regular meetings with the primary advisor, the annual report monitors progress in the program.

1. In the first week of April each year, the Graduate Director sends electronic forms of the Graduate Student Annual Report to all graduate students in the program. In this e-mail, the Graduate Director requests that each student complete the student portion of the form and asks the student to then forward the completed form to the advisor.

2. The Advisor and student should schedule an appointment in the beginning of May to review the student’s progress in the program and complete electronically the advisor portion of the form.

3. The Advisor prints two copies of the form, giving one to the student and putting the other in the student’s file in the main office. The Advisor forwards the completed electronic form to the Graduate Director.

4. The Graduate Director uses the information from the form to write letters to students who are not making appropriate progress in the program. Written letters are distributed to each of these students, and cc’ed to the Advisor no later than the middle of June. A copy of the letter is placed in the student’s file in the main office.
Graduate Student Annual Report Form

Part 1: Directions

This part of the report is to be filled out by the student and e-mailed to the Advisor.

Name__________________________________________ Date________________________
Signature_____________________________________________________________________
Advisor_____________________________ Year you began program_____________
Concentration_______________________________________________________________
Secondary Area of Concentration (if any)________________________________________
Secondary Advisor (if any)_____________________________________________________
GPA________________________________________ Are you on probation?___________
Classes/credits have you taken in department?___________ Outside department_______

Update contact information
Local address_______________________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________________________
Home phone_____________________________Cellphone_________________________
E-mail address(es)_________________________________________________________________

1. Outline your academic progress this past year (include areas of strength that you feel you are developing; areas of weakness that you wish to improve and how we might make this happen).

2. Identify areas of future interest (include what areas you would like to gain more knowledge of in the coming years at Rice and how we might make this happen).

3. Outline your academic plans for the next academic year, including summer.

4. Outline where you are in thinking about your dissertation (if you are not already writing it).

5. List any professional papers, panel discussions, etc. – if any – that you have given in the last academic year.

6. List any publications – if any – that have appeared during the last year, indicating whether they are referred publications or not.

7. List any pending publications with due dates.

8. Other honors or awards received during the last academic year.
Part 2: Directions

To be completed by advisor at the end of the Spring semester during a meeting with the student to discuss student’s progress. The advisor should see that the student is given a printed copy of this report. The Advisor should file another printed copy in the student’s file in the main office. An electronic version should be forwarded by the Advisor to the Director of Graduate Studies.

Name of Advisor__________________________ Date________________
Signature_____________________________________

Language Exams
French plan to complete_________/date passed_________/date
German plan to complete_________/date passed_________/date
If not French or German, what other language?_____________________________________
plan to complete_________/date passed_________/date

Comprehensive Exams (only applicable after both language exams are passed)
Subject of Exam 1__________________________ Tester__________________________
Subject of Exam 2__________________________ Tester__________________________
Subject of Exam 3__________________________ Tester__________________________
Subject of Exam 4__________________________ Tester__________________________
plan to complete_________/date passed_________/date

Candidacy
Dissertation Form completed_________/date__________________________
Dissertation Title_____________________________________________________
Dissertation Committee________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________
Prospectus complete_________/date__________________________
Provide a BRIEF written evaluation below of the progress that the student has made in the program. Include – if any – concerns that you may have about the student’s progress, and plans that you and the student have agreed to implement in order to address these concerns.

IMPORTANT: In completing this section, please write in light of the following markers of success:

1. Successful completion of coursework;
2. Advancement with respect to language requirements;
3. Fulfillment of service (7 hours) requirement;
4. Demonstration of satisfactory professional development (e.g., attending professional meetings, submission of paper proposals to various conferences, publications, adequate efforts to establish professional networks, participation in department events).
Second Year Review

1. Every graduate student participates in a second year review in order to ensure the proper progress and development of each Ph.D. student and to measure the quality of the program.

2. Students are required to provide their portfolio, including progress narratives, all seminar papers, unofficial transcripts, language completion forms, and two annual reports. The portfolio is submitted by the student to each member of the review committee one week in advance of the oral review.

3. For the narrative, the graduate student writes a 5-10 page narrative discussing his/her progress in the program to date, strengths and weaknesses, research trajectory, and plans to complete the degree.

4. An oral review of 1½-hour is scheduled by the student with his/her committee. The review committee consists of the Advisor, the Graduate Director, and any other faculty member who may sit on the student’s thesis committee. These faculty members should be selected in consultation with the Advisor and solicited by the student.

5. The Graduate Director provides advisor, student AND the Department Coordinator with written summary of feedback from the review committee regarding progress toward the degree.
Pedagogy Practicum

In return for their annual stipends, all students are expected to perform modest tasks for the department and/or individual faculty. First-year students normally provide assistance to the Department Coordinator in the main office. Second-, Third-, and Fourth-Year students are expected to work no more than seven hours a week for a particular faculty member as a research assistant.

In some cases, this might also involve providing teaching assistance for specific courses. Faculty are expected to submit their request(s) for such assistance in the spring for the upcoming fall to the Director of Graduate Studies (Graduate Advisor), who then coordinates the assignments with the Graduate Representative. Students are strongly encouraged to approach these assistantships as real and integral parts of the mentoring process and as essential to their graduate education.

IMPORTANT:

If a student is enrolled in the pedagogy practicum, she/he will earn 3 credit hours. This work does not replace the required seven hours of department service required in exchange for the stipend.
Comprehensives

1. Comprehensives are administered every year in the third and fourth weeks of October, and again in the third and fourth weeks of March. Exams take place on a Tuesday-Friday schedule. If an exam date falls on an official holiday or university break, the exam will take place on the first working-day following the break day.

2. All students should pass comprehensives no later than the second semester of their fourth year, but ideally sooner. For students without a Master’s degree, this may mean enrolling in four courses a semester. This should be done in consultation with the advisor.

3. Students must set up their exams in conversation with their Advisor and turn in the completed Comprehensive Declaration Form (see page 21) to the Department Coordinator two weeks prior to the exams.

Accommodations For Physical, Sensory, Cognitive, Learning and Psychological Disabilities

The Department of Religion is committed to providing reasonable accommodations for students with physical, sensory, cognitive, learning and psychological disabilities. At the Ph.D. level this includes dimensions of program requirements such as qualifying examinations. Students in need of special consideration for qualifying examinations must provide documentation of their condition as well as indication of the needed accommodations. This request must be made in writing and given to the Chair of the Department and the Director of Graduate Studies. It should be made no later than one month prior to sitting for examinations.
Exam Petition

The student will petition to take a set of four Qualifying Exams. Exams 1 and 3 are standard, with fixed bibliographies. However, students must list exams 2 and 4 and explain in brief the logic for taking them, that is, how they fit into the general trajectories of the student's research agenda. This process also includes presentation of bibliographies for exams 2 and 4. These bibliographies must be developed in consultation with appropriate members of the faculty. Any special exam (such as the fourth Thematic Exam) will require the formal approval (that is, a signature) of the faculty member(s) who will be reading and grading it. Once the scheme and bibliographies for exams 2 and 4 are approved, examinations are scheduled and written by the appropriate members of the faculty (the Qualifying Exams Committee). This process usually takes places during the summer of the 3rd year or early fall of the 4th year.

Exams

The Qualifying Exams are typically taken during the spring of the 4th year. (Students are not allowed to substitute research papers in place of exams.) The Qualifying Exams will be four in number:

1. Methods and History of the Discipline, required of all students;
2. One exam dedicated to a particular religious tradition;
3. One exam dedicated to a particular methodology or theoretical orientation; and
4. One thematic concentration exam selected by the student in consultation with her or his advisor.

Normally, the Qualifying exams are taken over a two-week period. Finally, students majoring in the history of religions (and students interested in comparative work) are strongly encouraged to take their second exam in a religious tradition that is not the subject of their dissertation in order to demonstrate a developed comparative perspective. Students may also highlight their comparative interests by addressing two traditions in Exam 2. Exam 1 will be based entirely on a standard bibliography prepared by the entire faculty. For Exam 3, bibliographies corresponding to the various methodological foundations will be prepared by the appropriate members of the faculty. For some students, it may be useful to present two methodological foundations in Exam 3. This should be worked out with the appropriate members of the faculty.

Normally, each bibliography will include a required list of readings roughly equivalent to twenty to twenty-five books. The bibliographies for exams 2 and 4 will be prepared by the student in consultation with appropriate members of the faculty. Together, the Qualifying Exams are designed to give the student a broad and solid reading foundation that he or she can draw on for the rest of his or her career.

See faculty examiners for book lists.
The exam structure, then, breaks down as follows:

- **Methods and History of the Discipline**

- **Traditions**
  - African-American religions
  - African religions
  - Biblical religions
  - Buddhism
  - Christianity
  - Hinduism
  - Islam
  - Judaism
  - New Age and New Religious Movements

- **Methodological Foundations**
  - Religious Ethics
  - Contemplative Studies
  - Gender Theory
  - History of Religions
  - Philosophy of Religion
  - Psychology of Religion
  - Religion and the Social Sciences
  - Biblical Criticism and Scriptural Interpretation
  - Theology

- **Thematic Concentration**

The Qualifying Exams Committee (composed of the Graduate Advisor and other appropriate members of the faculty) will review the exams within a reasonable period of time. Marked exams are returned and an oral interview (1-2 hours) is scheduled. During this interview the student responds to questions related to the written examinations. If there are deficiencies in the written exams that are not addressed adequately by the student during the oral interview, the Qualifying Exam Committee can require the student to write a short essay (15-20 pages) addressing the deficient areas. The exams are given over a common two-week period during the spring and fall semesters of each year. After successfully completing the Qualifying Exams, the graduate student automatically enters Ph.D. candidacy. He or she is also awarded an M.A. at this point.
Comprehensives Declaration Form

Student must complete this form and return it to the Department Coordinator two weeks in advance of the first comprehensive scheduled. Students should make a copy of the completed form for each of the examiners and for him-/herself.

Name

Dates of Comprehensives

Exam 1: History, Theory and Method of Religion

Exam 2: Religious Tradition(s)

Exam 3: Methodological Foundations

Exam 4: Thematic Concentration

Signature of examiner
Evaluation of Comprehensive Examiners

________________________________________________ passed/failed her/his exams
on ________________________________________________.
Date

Exam 1: History, Theory and Method of Religion

________________________________________________ signature of examiner

Exam 2: Religious Traditions(s)

________________________________________________ signature of examiner(s)

Exam 3: Methodological Foundations

________________________________________________ signature of examiner(s)

Exam 4: Thematic Concentration

________________________________________________ signature of examiner(s)

Additional Comments:

_________________________________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________________________
Candidacy Procedures

1. Ph.D. Candidacy is achieved once the comprehensive exams are successfully passed. The student submits to the Department Coordinator (1) the dissertation title and (2) members of the thesis committee (thesis director, a member within the department, and member outside the department), who will then process the appropriate documents. If an additional member is non-Rice faculty, include a copy of her/his CV. The PETITION FOR APPROVAL OF CANDIDACY FOR A DOCTORAL DEGREE and CANDIDACY MASTER’S DEGREE with appropriate documentation are then forwarded for approval to Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies.

2. All students should achieve candidacy no later than the second semester of their fourth year, but ideally sooner. For students without a Master’s degree, this may mean enrolling in four courses a semester. This should be done in consultation with the advisor.

3. It is strongly encouraged that candidates for degree complete the dissertation prospectus and receive approval from the advisor for this proposal within six months following the completion of the comprehensive exams.
DEPARTMENT OF RELIGION
Checklist for PhD Candidacy

Graduate Student Name ___________________________ Date ___________________________

☐ 1. Coursework
At time of candidacy student must have earned minimum of 36 credit hours. Upon completion of oral defense, 54 minimum credit hours (18 courses) are required. Include unofficial transcript downloaded from Esther.

☐ 2. Annual Report
a. Every year during first week of April, Graduate Director sends electronic forms of the Graduate Student Annual Report to all graduate students in the program. In this e-mail, the Graduate Director requests that each student complete the student portion of the form and asks the student to then forward the completed form to the advisor.

b. The Advisor and student should schedule an appointment in the beginning of May to review the student’s progress in the program and complete electronically the advisor portion of the form.

c. The Advisor prints two copies of the form, giving one to the student and putting the other in the student’s file in the main office. The Advisor forwards the completed electronic form to the Graduate Director.

☐ 3. Two Department Seminars or its equivalent
   RELI 527 HISTORY & METHODS: 19th CENTURY
   RELI 559 HISTORY & METHODS: 20th CENTURY

☐ 4. Language Training
Pass reading exams in both French and German. May petition to substitute another modern research language for one of these, provided that the substituted language can be shown to be more appropriate for student’s particular research agenda determined by the student’s dissertation advisor and committee.

Language #1 date passed _______________
Language #2 date passed _______________

☐ 5. Apprentice Experience
Students are expected to perform modest tasks for the department and/or individual faculty. First-year students normally provide assistance to the Department Coordinator in the main office. Second-, third-, and fourth-year students are expected to work no more than seven hours a week for a particular faculty member as a research assistant. In some cases, this might also involve teaching assistance for specific introductory courses. These assistantships are real and integral parts of the mentoring process and are essential to their graduate education. List courses taught:

_______________________________________ __________________________
_________________________________________ __________________________

☐ 6. Second-Year Review
To ensure proper progress and development of each PhD candidate, the Director of Graduate Studies will solicit a substantive report from each second-year student in the spring semester and hold an hour oral interview with each student along with their faculty mentor. A summary of the report is given to the student on his/her progress in the program.
7. Comprehensive Declaration Form

Usually taken during the spring of the fourth year over a period of five days. (Students are not allowed to substitute research papers in lieu of exams.) The Qualifying Exams are four in all and given over a two-week period during the spring and fall semesters of each year. Exam 1 will be based entirely on a standard bibliography prepared by the entire faculty. Students majoring in the history of religions (and students interested in comparative work) are strongly encouraged to take Exam 2 in a religious tradition that is not the subject of their dissertation to demonstrate a comparative perspective. Students may also highlight their comparative interests by addressing two traditions in Exam 2. For Exam 3 appropriate members of the faculty will prepare bibliographies corresponding to the various methodological foundations. Some students may find it useful to present two methodological foundations in Exam 3 worked out with the appropriate faculty member(s). The student in consultation with appropriate members of the faculty will prepare bibliographies for exams 2 and 4. The Qualifying Exams are designed to give the student a broad and solid reading foundation that she/he can draw on for the rest of her/his career. Each bibliography will include a required list of readings equivalent to twenty to twenty-five books. Reading lists for exams are available from the Department Coordinator. The exam structure, then, breaks down as follows:

- Methods & History of the Discipline, required of all students;
- One exam dedicated to a particular religious tradition; African-American religions, African religions, Biblical religions, Buddhism, Christianity, Hinduism, Islam, Judaism, New Age and New Religious Movements
- One exam dedicated to a particular methodology or theoretical orientation; Comparative religious ethics, gender theory, history of religions, philosophy of religion, psychology of religion, religion & the social sciences, scriptural interpretation, and theology
- One thematic concentration exam selected by student in consultation with his/her advisor

8. Evaluation of Comprehensive Examinations

The Qualifying Exams committee (composed of the Graduate Advisor and other appropriate members of the faculty) will review the exams within a reasonable period of time. Marked exams are returned and an oral interview (1-2 hours) is scheduled. During this interview the student responds to questions related to the written examinations. If there are deficiencies in the written exams that are not addressed adequately by the student during the oral interview, the Qualifying Exam committee can require the student to write a short essay (15-20 pages) addressing the deficient areas.

9. Dissertation Prospectus Approval Form

10. Submit the documents for PhD Candidacy

Upon successfully completing and passing the Qualifying Exams, the graduate student emails the Department Coordinator with (1) the working title of the dissertation and (2) the complete names of the dissertation committee. For non-Rice committee member a CV must be included.

__________________________  ________________________
Graduate Coordinator Signature       Date
PETITION FOR APPROVAL OF CANDIDACY FOR A DOCTORAL DEGREE

Candidacy for the Doctoral degree cannot be approved until the applicant has completed all course requirements, all qualifying or preliminary examinations or department equivalent, and any foreign language requirements.

1. Name of applicant ____________________________
   (Last) (First) (M.I.)

2. Department ____________________________ Student ID# ____________

☐ Attach to this application a current transcript (printed from Esther).

☐ Attach to this application a statement of all applicable departmental requirements for both course work and qualifying or preliminary examinations.

☐ Attach student's departmental checklist to candidacy to document how the student has fulfilled departmental requirements.

3. Proposed thesis topic (tentative title) ____________________________

4. Thesis Committee, subject to the approval of the GPS. (type or print) Please see the General Announcements for rules regarding the composition of thesis committees

   (a) Thesis Director ____________________________

   Committee Chair within the department (if different) ____________________________

   (b) Member within the department ____________________________

   (c) Member outside the department ____________________________

   Additional member(s) ____________________________

*Thesis committees may later be changed. See http://graduate.rice.edu/thesis for additional information

5. Signatures:

   Original signature of Department Chair or Director of Graduate Studies
   Date_________________

   Graduate Coordinator signature
   Date_________________

   Dean of Graduate & Postdoctoral Studies
   Date_________________
CANDIDACY MASTER’S DEGREE

Check one box: Deadline to turn in this form: Check one box:
[ ] December conferral - - - - Deadline: Oct 31 [ ] Master’s of Arts (MA)
[ ] May conferral - - - - - - Deadline: Feb 28 [ ] Master’s of Science (MS)

This degree will be conferred only if the following conditions are satisfied by the Candidate:

1. Student must be registered for the semester in which the award is to be made.
2. Ph.D. candidacy must have been approved prior to or in conjunction with submission of this petition form.
3. This form must be returned to the Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies office by October 31 for December conferral or February 28 for May conferral.

Name of Candidate ____________________________
Last First Middle

Student ID: ____________________________ Department Name: ____________________________

Statement of Candidate:
I wish to accept the Master’s Degree. ____________________________________________________
Signature of Candidate

☐ I have submitted An Application for Degree with the Registrar’s Office (available through your ESTHER account) on or before the deadlines listed above.

Signature of Department Chair: ____________________________ Date ________________

GPS Approval and Certification____ Office Use Only
(Initial)
________________________________________________________ Date________________________
Dissertation Prospectus Procedures

1. The student in consultation with the Advisor will write and submit a prospectus to the Director of Graduate Studies for the Department. *This should be submitted by the end of the semester following successful completion of the comprehensives and the Dissertation Prospectus*. The student then enrolls as a candidate for degree in RELI 800: Research and Thesis.

2. The prospectus will be reviewed by a committee consisting of the Director of Graduate Studies, the Advisor, and the other members of the dissertation committee.

3. The prospectus will be submitted to the members of the committee at least one week in advance of the review meeting. The committee will meet with the candidate to discuss the proposal. At the end of the meeting, the prospectus will either be passed or returned for modifications or resubmission.

4. Prospectus requirements 4000-5000 words
   - Abstract
     Articulate the question and the thesis in 500 words. State
     Question/Literature Review Section outlining the secondary
     research on the student’s question and/or a literature review, with
     a discussion of the student’s contribution to the state of the
     question.
   - Approach
     Explain the student’s approach to the materials, with reference
     to theorists and/or methods appropriate to the student’s question.
   - Contents
     Describe the planned content of each chapter of the dissertation.
   - Timetable
     Set up timetable for completion of the project, with real
     deadlines for completion of each chapter.
Dissertation Prospectus Approval Form

Student Name: ____________________________________________

Date Approved: __________________________________________

Faculty Present:

_______________________________________________________

_______________________________________________________

_______________________________________________________

_______________________________________________________

_______________________________________________________

Thesis Director Approval:

__________________________________   _______________________
(Signature)  (Name- Printed)  (Date)
Dissertation Defense Procedures

The dissertation defense, also called the oral defense, is a public event that is announced to the Rice Community via the Office of Graduate Studies. The actual event usually takes between an hour and a half and two hours. The Graduate Advisor of the particular writer serves as the moderator.

The event proceeds in four simple stages.

1. In the first, the dissertation writer briefly (in no more than 10-15 minutes) summarizes his or her dissertation topic and research.
2. In the second, the committee members engage the student via any questions that they choose to ask. Normally, each committee member will be given a separate turn to query the writer.
3. In the third, after the questions are exhausted and the committee feels like it has heard what it needs to hear, the writer and any audience members will be asked to leave the room, at which time the committee will deliberate and come to a decision about the dissertation.
4. In the fourth and final stage, the Ph.D. candidate is brought back into the room and informed of the results of the deliberation.

Four outcomes are possible: (1) pass; (2) pass with distinction; (3) fail; and (4) revise. In the latter case, the candidate has six months to make all necessary revisions.

For full details of all the requirements and procedures around the oral defense, see graduate.rice.edu/thesis.
Checklist for Post Ph.D. Candidacy

☐ 1. Dissertation Proposal Approved
   Date __________

☐ 2. Dissertation Approved by Committee to schedule oral defense
   Date __________

☐ 3. Oral Defense
   Date ______________

☐ 4. Final revisions submitted and approved
   Date __________

Thesis Director approval:

_____________________________ ____________________________ ________
(Signature) (Name- Printed) (Date)
Teaching Opportunities

Graduate Student Instructor (GSI)

• Each student may apply to teach a total of 1-2 courses after the fourth year.

• The course may be independently taught or team-taught with another graduate student (determined by the student’s advisor and approved by the Department Chair and the Director of Graduate Studies).

• If funding is available, the student teaching the course will receive $5,000 in compensation.

• Students must select courses offered by his/her advisor in consultation with the advisor.

Qualifications

• The student must be in at least the fourth year of the Religion Ph.D. program at the time the course is taught.

• The student must be in good academic standing at the time the course is taught.

• The student must have successfully completed the Pedagogy Practicum (RELI 530) and register for the appropriate advisor’s section at the time the course is taught. The Graduate Student Teaching opportunity does not substitute for the Pedagogy Practicum.

Application

• The application must be made in consultation with the student’s advisor.

• The student must apply to teach a course from Course Offerings, available online from the Registrar’s Office.

• The student must submit the GSI Request Form (see below), a letter of support from the student’s primary advisor, the syllabus, a statement of teaching philosophy (no more than two pages in length), and a CV.

• The deadlines for applications are:
  o The 1st Friday of September (5 PM, CST) for Spring Courses
  o The 1st Friday of January (5 PM, CST) for Fall Courses

• Applications are to be submitted to the Department Coordinator, with a copy to the Director of Graduate Studies and the Chair of the Department.

Selection Process

• Final approval of courses will be made by the Chair and the Graduate Director.

• Students will be notified of the results.
GRADUATE STUDENT INSTRUCTION REQUEST FORM

Date received:

Submit to Department Coordinator and Director of Graduate Studies.

It is important to remember that this is a competitive process, and students are not guaranteed a course assignment.

Name ___________________________ DATE ___________________________

Year in Program

YES/NO (circle one) I have successfully completed Pedagogy Practicum RELI 530

YES/NO (circle one) I am currently enrolled in Pedagogy Practicum RELI 530

YES/NO (circle one) I have successfully passed Comprehensive Exams

YES/NO (circle one) I plan to take my Comprehensive Exams in ___________________________ (date)

Course Title

☐ I would like to teach this coming spring semester

☐ I would like to teach next fall semester

Time preference

Checklist
☐ Teaching Request Form
☐ Syllabus
☐ Statement of Teaching Philosophy
☐ Course Goals
☐ C.V.

I, ___________________________, understand that teaching this course will be compensated in the amount of $5,000 contingent upon the availability of funds, and that priority will be given to student in the 6-8 year of the program.

______________________________ (Signature – Student)

______________________________ (Signature – Advisor)
Graduate Student Teaching Assistant Positions

GRADUATE STUDENT TEACHING ASSISTANT (GSTA) REQUEST FORM
DATE RECEIVED:
Submit to Department Coordinator and Director of Graduate Studies

This work will count toward the 7-10 hours required in exchange for the stipend or for credit—Pedagogy Practicum RELI 530; BUT will not involve compensation from the department.

1. The student participates in the development of the syllabus;
2. The student receives opportunities to lecture formally during the semester;
3. The student arranges and leads discussion session;
4. The student is responsible for managing course materials;
5. The student participates in evaluating and grading written assignments.

TA positions are arranged with individual faculty members for specific courses. Students should contact faculty members directly to make these arrangements.

IMPORTANT: The faculty member running the course must complete the following form and provide the Director of Graduate Studies, the Chair of the Department and the Department Coordinator a copy of the form and syllabus by:

August 1 for Fall Courses

December 1 for Spring Courses
Graduate Student Teaching Assistant (GSTA) Request Form

**Before completing this form, please review the regulations posted as part of the graduate student handbook (page 32).**

Faculty Member: 

Course:  

Semester:  

Course Enrollment:  

Course Description:  

Student Requested for the Course: 

Student’s Year in the Program: 

Teaching Assistant Work Assignments (be mindful of the requirements):
Additional Funding

Graduate students may apply for additional funding through the following sources at Rice:

- Certificate in the Study of Women, Gender, and Sexuality from the Center for the Study of Women, Gender, Sexuality (CSWGS). One-time stipend of $5,000.00.
- 3CT Certificate Funding Opportunities
  - Graduate Certificate Program
  - Research Travel Support
  - [http://3CT.rice.edu](http://3CT.rice.edu)
  - One-time stipend of $5,000.00.
- Instructor of record in a Freshman Writing Intensive Seminar (FWIS) administered by the Program in Writing and Communication (PWC).
- Tutoring work at the Center for Written, Oral, and Visual Communication (CWOVS).

Special Graduate Fellowship for Continuing Students

Each spring, the department chairs are invited to nominate continuing graduate students for the following special endowed fellowships. The final recipients are chosen by the Graduate Council. The amount of the fellowship and the number of recipients vary from year to year.

- **Lodieska Stockbridge Vaughn**- To provide a fellowship for a graduate student whose record at Rice shows evidence of outstanding achievement and promise. Four or five awards are usually given.
- **Mellon Graduate Research Seminar**- The Mellon Graduate Research Seminar provides an opportunity to apply for a research stipend of approximately $6,900 as well as conference funding upon completion. One must have passed Comprehensive Exams and have research interest fitting with seminar topic to qualify. Applications are through the Humanities Research Center in the spring semester for the following academic year and requires a one-page statement of research interest and a one-page CV. See [http://hrc.rice.edu/seminars](http://hrc.rice.edu/seminars) for further information.
- **James T. Wagoner Fellow- Foreign Study Scholarships**- Applicant is expected to enroll in a foreign university or conduct research in a foreign country. Funding ranges from $3,500-15,000 and is related to the scholar’s projected expenses for a year, semester, or summer.

Prizes

**John Gardiner Prize**- The School of Humanities offers the $1,000 John Gardiner Prize to the student with the best dissertation in the School of Humanities. Submission is determined by department. Dissertations are read by a committee of 3 humanities faculty from departments with graduate programs, and a joint recommendation is made to the Dean of Humanities for final approval.
GRADUATE TRAVEL REQUEST FOR CONFERENCES

Application must be submitted PRIOR to travel

Name ___________________________ Email ___________________________

Print

Date ______________

Purpose _______________________________________________________

______________________________________________________________

Presentation Title _____________________________________________

______________________________________________________________

Destination __________________________________________________

Travel Dates __________________________________________________

Amount Requested __________

Requested conference funds from department this fiscal year?

Yes ☐ No ☐

If yes, identify trip/dollar amount of support ________________________

Signature of Applicant __________________________ Date ____________

______________________________________________________________

Approved

____________________________________________________________

Department Chair Date ______________

Request is approved for $ __________
SCHOOL OF HUMANITIES
Review and Approval Form for
Independent Study Courses

(Please type or print legibly)

Department and Catalog Number: ______________________________

Title: __________________________________________________________

Level: Undergraduate _____ Credit: _____ semester hours
       Graduate

Faculty Member: ________________________________________________

Student: ________________________________________________________

To Be Offered: ___________ Semester, 200________

Description of Project, Research, or Reading Assignments, or attach a plan of study or
syllabus to this form.

________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________
The course plan or assignments as outlined above, or attached hereto, has/have been discussed and agreed to by both parties as the work which must be successfully completed to receive course credit.

______________________________  ________________________
Faculty Member's signature      Date

______________________________  ________________________
Student's signature             Date

*******************************************************************************
APPROVALS
Dept. Chair:                    ________________________  
                                         Date

PLEASE PRINT DOUBLE SIDED