

**Department of Religion
Rice University**

**Graduate Studies
Procedural Handbook
2016-2017**



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Department Director of Graduate Studies, Professor Anthony Pinn

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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. It 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, below) 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 June 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

The Qualifying Exams are typically taken during the spring of the fourth year and are to be completed by end of the fourth 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 or graduate area of concentration
3. one exam dedicated to a particular methodology or theoretical orientation
4. one thematic concentration exam selected by the student in consultation with her or his advisor.

See faculty examiners for book lists.

Achieve Candidacy

Candidacy achievement should be completed by end of the fourth year. Completion and submission of Petition for Approval of Candidacy for a Doctoral Degree Form is required (see page 27).

Prospectus

To be completed within a year of achieving candidacy. The dissertation prospectus must be written in cooperation with a dissertation supervisor and at least two other thesis committee members (member within the department and member outside the department). In consultation with the dissertation supervisor, the dissertation proposal must be submitted by the student in a standard written form to the Director of Graduate Studies. The prospectus is then orally defended. For details about the process see pp. 29-30.

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” (see page 31).

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

Teaching Opportunities & 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 33).

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:

- Academic Probation and Dismissal (<http://ga.rice.edu/Home.aspx?id=2147483680>)
- Petition and Appeals (http://ga.rice.edu/GR_disputes/)
- Grievances and Problems (<http://ga.rice.edu/Home.aspx?id=138>)
- To change advisors, 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 9).

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.

Degree Requirements

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

Requirements

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

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

Students planning to take the language examinations must arrange for the test in conversation with appropriate member of the Committee on Languages (Drs. Claire Fanger 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.

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 also abide by this procedure.

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. 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. Claire Fanger (for French) and Dr. Matthias Henze (for German) the book from which they would like to be tested. If the book is approved, Dr. Fanger 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. Fanger 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]

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

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.

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.

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 Work Assignment Form

Graduate students are expected to work 7 hours per week in the department as long as they are receiving a stipend from the department. This work includes assisting a professor with his or her research, teaching (as long as the teaching assignment is not receiving credit for Pedagogy Practicum), editing, organizing conferences, filing, and similar projects, or assisting the Departmental Coordinator with office work.

Graduate students who are receiving a stipend must complete the Graduate Student Work Assignment form at the beginning of each semester and return a hard copy to the Director of Graduate Studies for Religion by the second Friday of the semester.

Name: _____

Semester: _____

Description of your intended work project.

Student's signature

Date

Faculty Member's signature

Date

Graduate Student Annual Report

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

- In the first week of June 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.
- 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.
- 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.
- 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'd to the Advisor no later than the middle of July. A copy of the letter is placed in the student's file in the main office.

Graduate Student Annual Report Form

Part 1 (Graduate Student)

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

Name: _____ Date: _____

Signature: _____

Advisor: _____ Year program began: _____

Concentration: _____

Secondary Area of Concentration (if any): _____

Secondary Advisor (if any): _____

GPA: _____ On probation (Y/N): _____

Total Religion Department courses: _____ Total courses outside department: _____

Local address: _____

Home phone: _____ Cell phone: _____

Email address(es): _____

Respond to the following prompts:

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 not already writing).
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. List other honors or awards received during the last academic year.

Part 2 (Faculty Advisor)

This form is to be completed by the faculty advisor at the end of the Spring semester. 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.

Student Name: _____

Advisor: _____ Date: _____

Advisor Signature: _____

Language Exams

French planned completion date: _____ Date passed: _____

German planned completion date: _____ Date passed: _____

If not French or German, other language: _____

Planned completion date: _____ Date passed: _____

Comprehensive Exams

Only applicable after both language exams are passed

Exam 1 Subject: _____ Tester: _____

Exam 2 Subject: _____ Tester: _____

Exam 3 Subject: _____ Tester: _____

Exam 4 Subject: _____ Tester: _____

Planned completion date: _____ Date passed: _____

Candidacy

Dissertation Form completed (date): _____

Dissertation Title: _____

Dissertation Committee: _____

Prospectus complete (date): _____

Provide a BRIEF written evaluation below of the student's progress 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 regarding these markers of success:

- Successful completion of coursework
- Advancement with respect to language requirements
- Fulfillment of service (7 hours) requirement
- 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

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.

1. 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.
2. 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.
3. A 1½-hour oral review is scheduled by the student with his/her review 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.
4. 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 be granted 3 credit hours. This work does not replace the required seven hours of department service required in exchange for the stipend.

Comprehensives

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 be scheduled to take place on the first working- day following the break day.

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.

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, & 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.

Qualifying 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 place during the summer of the 3rd year or early fall of the 4th year.

Qualifying 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. History, Theory, and Method of the Discipline (required of all students)
2. Religious Tradition (or graduate area of concentration)
3. Methodological or Theoretical Foundations
4. Thematic Concentration (selected by the student in consultation with her/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.

Exam Structure

1. History, Theory, and Methods of the Discipline

2. Religious Traditions or Graduate Areas of Concentration

- African-American religions
- African religions
- Biblical religions
- Buddhism
- Christianity
- Hinduism
- Islam
- Judaism
- New Age and New Religious Movements
- Bible and Beyond
- Early Christian Studies
- Global Christianity
- History of Religions in America

3. 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
- Cognitive Study of Religion

4. 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.

Exams are given over a common two-week period during the spring and fall semesters of each year.

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.

Student Name: _____

Dates of Comprehensives: _____

Exam 1: History, Theory, and Method of Religion

Examiner Name

Examiner Signature

Exam 2: Religious Tradition(s): _____

Examiner Name

Examiner Signature

Exam 3: Methodological Foundations: _____

Examiner Name

Examiner Signature

Exam 4: Thematic Concentration: _____

Examiner Name

Examiner Signature

Evaluation of Comprehensive Examiners

Student Name: _____ Pass _____ Fail _____

Date: _____

Exam 1: History, Theory and Method of Religion

Examiner Signature: _____

Exam 2: Religious Traditions(s)

Examiner Signature: _____

Exam 3: Methodological Foundations

Examiner Signature: _____

Exam 4: Thematic Concentration

Examiner Signature: _____

Additional Comments:

Candidacy Procedures

In order to be awarded a Master's Degree and achieve Ph.D. Candidacy, the comprehensive exams must be successfully passed. In addition, the student must submit to the Department Administrator:

1. The Checklist for PhD Candidacy (with appropriate documentation)
2. Petition for Approval of Candidacy for a Doctoral Degree
3. Candidacy Master's Degree (Note: if an additional dissertation committee member is non-Rice faculty, include a copy of CV).

All students must 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.

Checklist for PhD Candidacy, Religion

Graduate Student

Date

- ☐ 1. Coursework
At time of candidacy student must have earned minimum of 36 credit hours. Upon completion of oral defense, 54 minimum credits hours (18 courses) are required. Include unofficial transcript downloaded from Esther.
- ☐ 2. Annual Report
 - 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.
 - 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.
 - 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. 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.
- ☐ 6. Comprehensive Declaration Form
Usually taken during the spring of the fourth year over a period of five days. (Students are may not 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 reading 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 and 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 advisor

☐ 7. 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.

☐ 8. Submit the documents

- Petition for Approval of Candidacy for a Doctoral Degree (C-2)
- Candidacy Master's Degree (G-1)

Graduate Coordinator Signature

Date

PETITION FOR APPROVAL OF CANDIDACY FOR A DOCTORAL DEGREE (C-2)

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/Graduate program _____ Student ID # _____

☐ **Attach** to this application a current transcript (printed from WebApps; see your graduate coordinator).

☐ **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 _____

RETURN TO DEPARTMENT COORDINATOR



CANDIDACY MASTER'S DEGREE (G-1)

Check one box:

- ☐ December conferral - - - - - Deadline: Oct 31
☐ May conferral - - - - - Deadline: Feb 28

Deadline to turn in this form:

Check one box:

- ☐ Master's of Arts (MA)
☐ 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 _____

Office Use Only

GPS Approval and Certification _____
(Initial)

_____ Date _____

Dissertation Prospectus Procedures

It is strongly advised that candidates for degree complete the dissertation prospectus in cooperation with the Advisor within six months following the completion of the comprehensive exams.

- 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.
- 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.
- 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.
- 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 of Prospectus Review Meeting: _____

Faculty Present (including Director of Graduate Studies):

Comments:

Prospectus Approval:

_____ Thesis Advisor (printed)	_____ Signature	_____ Date
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_____ Director of Graduate Studies (printed)	_____ Signature	_____ Date
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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 event's length is usually between an hour and a half and two hours and is moderated by the Advisor of the particular candidate.

The event proceeds in four simple stages:

1. Dissertation writer will briefly (in no more than 10-15 minutes) summarize his/her dissertation topic and research.
2. 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. 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. Finally, 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 Graduation

☐ Dissertation Prospectus Approval Form

Date: _____

☐ Dissertation Approved by Committee to schedule oral defense

Date: _____

☐ Oral Defense

Date: _____

☐ Final revisions submitted and approved

Date: _____

☐ Pedagogy Practicum: RELI 530

Students are expected to enroll in this course once during their years in the program and then to assist as TAs in courses as needed. List courses taught (semester and year):

Thesis Director approval:

(printed name)

(signature)

(date)

Teaching Opportunity - 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 as 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. Note that 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:
 - The 1st Friday of September (5 PM, CST) for Spring Courses
 - 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

Submit to Department Coordinator and Director of Graduate Studies.

Date received: _____

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

I plan to take my Comprehensive Exams on _____
(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)

Teaching Opportunity - Graduate Student Teaching Assistant

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

The student participates in the development of the syllabus

The student receives opportunities to lecture formally during the semester

The student arranges and leads discussion session

The student is responsible for managing course materials

The student participates in evaluating and grading written assignments

IMPORTANT: The faculty member running the course must complete the Graduate Student Teaching Assistant (GSTA) form and provide a copy of the form and syllabus to the Director of Graduate Studies, the Chair of the Department, and the Department Coordinator by the following dates:

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.

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): _____

Date form received: _____

Additional Funding

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

3CT Certificate Funding Opportunities; Graduate Certificate Program; Research Travel Support. One-time stipend of \$5,000.

- Gnosticism, Esotericism, Mysticism (GEM) Certificate from the Department of Religion. One-time stipend of \$5,000.
- 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 require a one-page statement of research interest and a one-page CV. See <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 Gardner 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 _____
please 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 _____

Please note, if awarded funding, you must complete a travel expense report in Concur no later than 2 weeks after your travel has ended. Also, the department requests a summary of your travels to be used in the annual newsletter to be received no later than 2 weeks after your travel has ended.

Signature of Applicant _____ Date _____

Approved

_____ Date _____
Department Chair

Request is approved for \$ _____

School of Humanities Review & Approval Form for Independent Study Courses

Submit a copy of this completed form to the Office of the Dean of Humanities.

Department and Catalog Number: _____

Title: _____

Level: _____ Undergraduate Credit hours: _____
 _____ Graduate

Faculty Member: _____

Student: _____

Year and Term to be offered: _____

Include a 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

APPROVAL

Department Chair Date

Gnosticism, Esotericism, Mysticism (GEM) Certificate Program

The GEM Certificate provides students with a theoretical orientation, which they then can apply to their chosen concentrations (i.e., African-American religions; African religions; Bible and Beyond; Buddhism; Christianity; Hinduism; Islam; Judaism; American Religion; New Age and New Religious Movements; etc.). Traditionally the study of religion has privileged the authoritative voices of the religious experts and the scriptural texts that uphold orthodox faith traditions. This traditional approach ignores, marginalizes, and even sometimes literally demonizes religious expressions that are against the grain or cannot be fit into the normative worldview. These same expressions have also been identified by orthodox faith traditions as "heresy." For too long, scholars have been reluctant to consider this "other" material central or vital to academic discussions of religion, while these alternative religious expressions have been pejoratively labeled as the stuff of charlatans, the mentally ill, or ignorant folk.

It is our opinion that such an approach has failed to consider fully the process of the construction of orthodoxy and heresy out of a plurality of competing religious voices. This failure creates and sustains political narratives of religion that serve to protect orthodoxies from criticism and promote their biases as historically sound. It disregards religious voices that are vibrant historical witnesses to the shaping of religious landscapes.

GEM is a new approach to the study of religion that does not privilege the public orthodox framings but takes seriously the heterodox and esoteric currents that have been actively repressed, censored, or marginalized in a variety of sociological, psychological, philosophical, and political ways. GEM takes into account the plurality of religious voices and expressions, including the neglected currents, in order to reconceive religion. This approach also engages the psychology and the phenomenology of religious experience, rather than relying exclusively on the authorial framings taught by the faith traditions and transmitted in their scriptural texts, interpretations and rituals. While we recognize that the comparative categories of gnosticism, esotericism and mysticism are modern constructs, each provides us with different nuances that can assist in asking the sort of dialectical questions that will result in a more honest assessment and thick description of religion and the religious traditions we study.

Requirements for the Certificate

12 credits of coursework and 2-semester enrollment in RELI 600 GEM Research Forum (1 credit course) are required.

- **3 Theory-Intensive Core Courses**

Students are required to complete one course in Gnosticism (RELI 581), one course in the Esotericism (RELI 587), and one course in Mysticism (RELI 558).

- **1 Thematic Course** (from list of approved courses; see April DeConick or Jeff Kripal)

- **2 semesters of RELI 600 GEM Research Forum**

Students are required to enroll in consecutive Fall and Spring semesters during the same academic year. Although only one year of enrollment is required, students are encouraged to participate in the Forum throughout their time at Rice.

- **Submission of *Intention of Completion of GEM Certificate*** (in-house form) to the department coordinator, a semester in advance of bestowal. Certificates will be awarded each spring at our departmental graduation ceremony.

Courses

Theory-Intensive Core Courses (3)

These courses are essential to the certificate because they theorize the constructed categories under study: Gnosticism, Esotericism and Mysticism. They do so from the ancient world to the modern period, giving students the necessary historical sweep to fully engage the categories and the debates surrounding them.

RELI 581: Gnosticism Seminar (DeConick)

What is Gnosticism? This course covers the construction of the category Gnosticism by scholars since the 1600s and its long-standing association with the concept of heresy and the literature and religions that people who call themselves Gnostics form. Literary, social, historical and cognitive methods are used to examine Gnostic religious currents and their survival into modernity.

RELI 587: Western Esotericism Method and Theory (Fanger)

This course explores the relation between esoteric texts and the idea of "Western Esotericism." Examines primary writings from Agrippa to Madame Blavatsky and considers the historical and methodological approaches emerging as Esotericism is constructed as an academic area.

RELI 558: Mysticism: Theories & Methods (Kripal and Parsons)

This course is a history of the development of the modern category of "mysticism" from the seventeenth century to today, with side studies of cognate terms like "spirituality," "metaphysical religion," and the "paranormal," as these forms of extreme religious experience are by social-scientific and humanistic methods.

Thematic Courses (1)

Students are asked to select one additional thematic course which focuses on the study of one particular area in detail. This focus should reflect the student's interest. This list is kept updated annually by the Department.

2015-2106 List of Thematic Courses

- RELI 505: American Metaphysical Religion (Kripal)
- RELI 522: Islam's Mystical and Esoteric Tradition (Cook)
- RELI 526: Magic and Popular Religion (Cook)
- RELI 532: Advanced Tibetan Language & Culture (Klein)
- RELI 541: Creating Magic (Fanger)
- RELI 551: Divine Sex (Fanger)
- RELI 562: Kabbalah Seminar (Ogren)
- RELI 566: Pain, Ecstasy & Embodiment in Religious Experience (Fanger)
- RELI 570: Buddhist Wisdom Texts (Klein)
- RELI 574: The Bible and the Brain (DeConick)
- RELI 588: The History of Religions School (Kripal)
- RELI 589: Mutants and Mystics (Kripal)
- RELI 602: The Sacred Spaces of Secular Modernism (Brennan)
- RELI 615: Secret Religion (DeConick)

RELI 600 GEM Research Forum (2 consecutive semesters)

This forum meets monthly throughout the semester. Its purpose is for faculty and students to share, discuss and critique their current research (pre-publication) in GEM subjects in order to improve the quality of the papers and to mentor students in formal academic etiquette and oral communication skills. Students are asked to write academic reflections of each event, identifying key insights and issues that may impact their own research as scholars. At the end of the year, a conference is hosted on a GEM subject. An external keynote speaker is invited. Students are asked to participate as presiders, organizers, and speakers. This is meant to provide students with the opportunity to learn how to organize and host conferences, improve their oral communication skills, and to network with scholars at other institutions.

Request for GEM Certificate

Please submit this completed form to the Administrative Coordinator in HUMA 225 when you have fulfilled the following the requirements.*

Name: _____

Projected date of PhD graduation: _____

- ☐ RELI 581: Gnosticism Seminar
Semester enrolled and completed: _____
- ☐ RELI 587: Western Esotericism Method and Theory
Semester enrolled and completed: _____
- ☐ RELI 588: Mysticism: Theories and Methods
Semester enrolled and completed: _____
- ☐ One thematic course from following list.
Course number and name: _____
Semester enrolled and completed: _____

RELI 505: American Metaphysical Religion (Kripal)

RELI 522: Islam's Mystical and Esoteric Tradition (Cook)

RELI 526: Magic and Popular Religion (Cook)

RELI 532: Advanced Tibetan Language & Culture (Klein)

RELI 541: Creating Magic (Fanger)

RELI 551: Divine Sex (Fanger)

RELI 562: Kabbalah Seminar (Ogren)

RELI 566: Pain, Ecstasy & Embodiment in Religious Experience (Fanger)

RELI 570: Buddhist Wisdom Texts (Klein)

RELI 574: The Bible and the Brain (DeConick)

RELI 588: The History of Religions School (Kripal)

RELI 589: Mutants and Mystics (Kripal)

RELI 602: The Sacred Spaces of Secular Modernism (Brennan)

RELI 615: Secret Religion (DeConick)

- ☐ 2 semesters (minimum) of RELI 600 GEM Research Forum
Semester enrolled and completed: _____
Semester enrolled and completed: _____

☐ Attach one paper you have written for a class, conference presentation, or publication that you think implements or incorporates into your own subdiscipline the knowledge and theoretical perspectives you have learned by participating in this certification program

☐ Attach a 1000 word essay describing how your paper implements or incorporates into your own subdiscipline the knowledge and theoretical perspectives you have learned by participating in this certification program

*We are allowed to graduate two students a year with this certificate and its stipend. If more than two students apply in any given year, students closest to PhD graduation will be given preference and the other students will be placed in the queue.