

**DEPARTMENT OF RELIGIOUS  
STUDIES  
BROWN UNIVERSITY**

**GRADUATE STUDENT  
HANDBOOK**

**2020-2021**

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

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# GRADUATE STUDY IN RELIGIOUS STUDIES

## AN OVERVIEW

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

### DEGREE PROGRAMS

Graduate study in Religious Studies at Brown is designed primarily to train students for careers in teaching and research in colleges, universities, and related institutions. A full description of the graduate areas currently offered is found below. Ordinarily, graduate students are admitted only to do doctoral work. Students already accepted into the Ph.D. program who do not have a M.A. in religion from another institution may obtain the M.A. degree from Brown by petitioning the Graduate School after eight successfully completed graduate-level courses plus any additional departmental requirements.

#### MASTER OF ARTS

In 2012, the Faculty voted not to institute a formal M.A. program, so presently, the Department of Religious Studies does not invite applicants who wish to receive a terminal M.A. As in the past, however, the department reserves the right under very unusual circumstances, to grant a terminal M.A..

The Department does, however, welcome applications from qualified Brown doctoral students in other departments, under the Open Graduate Education program recently instituted by the Graduate School. For information on how to apply, see the Graduate School website, and consult the appropriate Directors of Graduate Study.

The terminal M.A. in Religious Studies requires the completion of an approved program of eight semester courses and a thesis. The candidate must take RELS 2000, *Theory of Religion*, or an equivalent course, and must pass a language examination in either French or German, as well as demonstrate competence in other languages necessary for the particular program of study. Since this degree provides a more general overview within the field of Religious Studies than the Ph.D., the specific content depends on the student's interests and the faculty available in any given area.

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



## DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

The Ph.D. program in Religious Studies at Brown offers three areas of study: Asian Religious Traditions (ART), Religion and Critical Thought (RCT), and Religions of the Ancient Mediterranean (RAM). The Department is currently also preparing an area of specialization in Islamic Studies.

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

## GENERAL PH.D. REQUIREMENTS

(SEE ALSO AREA-SPECIFIC REQUIREMENTS BELOW)

*Regardless of the specific focus, all Ph.D. work in Religious Studies at Brown has the same general five-part structure: 1. Residence (coursework); 2. Satisfaction of Qualifying Requirements (languages, subject-specific competences, theory and method); 3. Teaching Preparation; 4. Preliminary Examinations; 5. Professionalization seminar; 6. Dissertation (Prospectus and defense, actual dissertation; final public oral examination).*

### RESIDENCE (COURSEWORK)

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

### QUALIFYING REQUIREMENTS

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

## TEACHING TRAINING

All RS graduate students are expected to serve as Teaching Assistants for courses in their areas of specialization. In addition, most students will be asked to serve as TAs in other departmental courses or, occasionally, in courses outside the department, depending on Department or University needs. All RS graduate students should also participate in the teaching training programs run by the Sheridan Center, including their certification programs. (See below, “Guidelines for Teaching Assistantships.”)

## PRELIMINARY (DOCTORAL) EXAMINATIONS

Ordinarily, all Ph.D. students sit for the Preliminary Examination in at least three areas, a major area, a minor area, and the area of dissertation specialization. Although the precise forms of these examinations are at the discretion of the area faculty, and may vary depending on the specifics of the student’s program, each area has designed its exams to help students acquire specialized expertise as well as disciplinary breadth. All students should work out the format and general content of these examinations with their area advisor (and other faculty) early in their graduate program: all areas require students to be involved actively in developing their own reading lists. While exams in some areas are taken in the first and second year of residence, students are generally expected to complete all their exams by the end of the third year, with occasional exceptions. At the discretion of area faculty, students may be required to revise portions of their exams or given an opportunity to rewrite or retake an exam. If, in the end, the faculty determines that the student has not passed the Preliminary Exams, the student will be asked to leave the program. The area faculty will decide whether the student may be awarded a terminal M.A., contingent on the quality of the student’s coursework and examinations.

## PROFESSIONALIZATION SEMINAR

Professionalization is an essential aspect of graduate education. The primary tasks of the scholar are research, teaching, and service. Professionalization, formal and informal, is the process of learning to do these tasks well and to be a good colleague and a good citizen of the academy, University, and Department. Professionalization is a broad and somewhat nebulous term that concerns navigating all the (oftentimes) unspoken and oftentimes disputed norms of academic life: relating to colleagues and mentors; preparing materials for academic jobs and interviews; publishing; supporting and sustaining multi-cultural, diverse, and inclusive academic communities. These efforts happen in various ways, but one principal site in Religious Studies is the professionalization seminar, a required seminar for all fourth-year students.

## DISSERTATION

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

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

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

## DISSERTATION PROSPECTUS

### WRITTEN PROSPECTUS

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

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

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

availability of the committee members.

When the committee members have had an opportunity to comment on the draft and the proposed dissertation director is satisfied that the prospectus is ready, the director notifies the DGS that the prospectus is ready and the Department Administrator schedules the meeting. The DGS then announces the meeting to the department faculty and any appropriate outside faculty, and circulates the prospectus electronically. The faculty should be given notice of the meeting and be sent the approved draft of the prospectus, no less than two weeks in advance. To facilitate this, the DGS should receive the approved prospectus no less than 17 days before the proposed meeting date, and ideally 21 days in advance of the proposed meeting.

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

#### PROSPECTUS PRESENTATION

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

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

## DISSERTATION ADVISING

Different institutions (and departments) have different procedures for dissertation advising. In Religious Studies, it is often the case that only the advisor reads first drafts, and that second and third (and fourth, if applicable) readers only see and critique the project at a later stage. These practices, however, are flexible, and students are encouraged to devise a process with their advisors that provides the most constructive guidance to the student, and produces the strongest possible result. Students should keep in mind, though, that reading and critiquing dissertations is highly time-consuming for faculty. Being mindful of faculty schedules and workload makes it more likely that students will receive productive feedback and complete their dissertation in a timely manner. Students should always let faculty members know well in advance when to expect drafts, and should have reasonable expectations about faculty turn-around time.

## DISSERTATION DEFENSE/ORAL EXAMINATION

The Department of Religious Studies requires that the dissertation, demonstrating original research and advanced scholarship, be defended in an oral examination before the faculty. This occasion brings the student together with the readers and other pertinent faculty, and is usually open to the larger university community, including graduate students.

It is the responsibility of the dissertation advisor to determine, in consultation with the full dissertation committee, that a dissertation is acceptable and ready for defense. All committee members must thus have read the final version of the dissertation sufficiently to participate in this determination. When the advisor, having consulted with the whole committee, judges that a dissertation is ready for defense, she or he will, in consultation with the DGS, schedule a date, time and place for the defense. Defenses are not ordinarily scheduled during the winter break or during the summer months.

Notice of the defense must be provided to the full faculty no less than two weeks prior to the defense. An electronic copy of the dissertation and an abstract must also be circulated to the faculty no less than two weeks prior to the defense.

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

## DEPOSIT OF THE DISSERTATION

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

## DISSERTATION DEADLINES

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

## RECEIVING THE ACTUAL DEGREE

Ph.D. degrees are awarded only at Spring commencement, regardless of when the actual defense takes place. To receive a Ph.D. degree at commencement students must submit the dissertation by the first business day in May, although an extension to May 15 is possible when a request is submitted to the Graduate School. Students who anticipate completing the dissertation within one month of the semester following that in which they are presently registered may request a one-month extension that allows them to complete their work without registering (and paying) for the following semester.

## SAMPLE PH.D. PROGRAM SCHEDULE

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

### YEAR 1

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

### YEAR 2

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

### YEAR 3

Fall: RCT & RAM: 1 course; departmental assignment (TA, TF, RA, proctorship); begin preliminary exams and work on dissertation prospectus.  
ART: 2-3 course; departmental assignment (TA, TF, RA, proctorship); complete preliminary exam bibliography.  
Spring: 1 course; departmental assignment (TA, TF, RA, proctorship);  
RCT & RAM: Complete preliminary exams.  
ART: Complete first two preliminary exams by semester's end.  
Summer: Complete dissertation prospectus (RCT & RAM)  
Funding: Departmental Assignment

### YEAR 4

Fall: RCT & RAM: Dissertation prospectus conference (early fall); then work on dissertation:  
ART: third preliminary exam (research paper); grant applications for fieldwork in Asia.  
Professionalization seminar  
Spring: RCT & RAM: Work on dissertation  
ART: Prospectus conference and approval by semester's end.  
Summer: Work on dissertation.

Funding: Departmental assignment (TA, TF, RA, proctorship) or Dissertation Fellowship. Students who receive dissertation funding in the 4<sup>th</sup> year will normally be funded through department assignment in the fifth year, unless they obtain external funding.

#### YEAR 5

Fall: RCT & RAM: Work on dissertation; apply for jobs.  
ART: Dissertation research/fieldwork in Asia

Spring: RCT & RAM: Complete and defend dissertation.  
ART: Dissertation research/fieldwork in Asia.

Summer: Work on dissertation.

Funding: RCT & RAM: Dissertation Fellowship (unless held in Year 4: see above)  
ART: External Funding.

#### YEAR 6 (ART ONLY)

Fall: Dissertation writing; apply for jobs.

Spring: Dissertation completion, submission and defense.

Funding: Final year of University funding (provided 5<sup>th</sup> year was external funding).

#### ADVISING

Each Ph.D. area has its own core faculty. One faculty member is usually designated as the program coordinator and advisor (designated with an asterisk below). For 2020-21, the core faculty members are:

Asian Religious Traditions (ART): Jason Protass, Harold Roth, Janine Sawada\*,  
Religion and Critical Thought (RCT): Stephen Bush\*, Mark Cladis,  
Thomas Lewis, Paul Nahme, Andre Willis  
Islamic Studies: Shahzad Bashir, Nancy Khalek\*  
Religions of the Ancient Mediterranean (RAM): Jae Han, Susan Harvey\*,  
Nancy Khalek, Saul Olyan, Michael Satlow.

The area advisor generally serves as the student's primary advisor through the Preliminary Examination phase, except in RAM, where entering students are generally assigned an advisory committee by the end of their first year, on which see below. Graduate students, however, are expected to take primary responsibility for their schedules. This means that while students must carefully consult with the members of the core faculty in their area, the faculty expect students to develop and be able to justify their own schedule. Typically, students still taking courses should develop a preliminary schedule and discuss it with other core faculty before meeting with the area advisor.

Although students may begin formulating a dissertation topic at any time during their course work, during the early stages of the examination process, students should be actively thinking about the formal dissertation proposal and the best person to advise the dissertation. The area coordinator is often the primary contact person to guide students through this decision.



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

## SATISFACTORY PROGRESS AND EVALUATION

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

Graduate students are evaluated annually in writing; first-year students are also evaluated at the end of their first semester in residence. Currently, different areas use somewhat different evaluation processes. In all cases, however, at the end of each academic year, each area's faculty discuss the progress of each student, and the area advisor then writes a formal evaluation summarizing these discussions. This evaluation indicates whether the student is in Good standing, Satisfactory standing, or on Warning. The parameters for each status are set forth in the Graduate Handbook, available on the [Graduate School website](#). They are intended to provide a formal feedback mechanism that conveys the expectations of the faculty for the coming year. Should a student fall behind or in another way not fulfill the faculty's expectations, the letter will specify precisely what the student needs to do, and within what time-frame, to maintain a status of "satisfactory progress" in the program. Students are encouraged to discuss any issues raised in these evaluations with the appropriate faculty, and if necessary, with the DGS as well.

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

## ACADEMIC SUPPORT AND WELLNESS

If an academic issue arises, students are encouraged to consult with their primary advisor, area advisor, DGS or Chair. The following are additional sources of personal and academic support provided by the Graduate School:

[Student and Employee Accessibility Services \(SEAS\)](#) coordinates and facilitates services for students with physical, psychological, and learning disabilities, and temporary injuries (20 Benevolent Street, 1<sup>st</sup> Floor).

Students should inform their instructor if they have a disability or other condition that might require accommodation or modification of any course procedures. They may speak with the instructor after class or during office hours. As part of this process, they should register with the Student and Employee Accessibility Services (SEAS) and provide their instructor with an academic accommodation letter from SEAS. For more information, contact SEAS at 401-863-9588 or [SEAS@brown.edu](mailto:SEAS@brown.edu).

[Counseling and Psychological Services \(CAPS\)](#) provides free confidential counseling (J. Walter Wilson, Room 516, 401-863-3476). CAPS offers Saturday appointments for graduate students from 9am to 4pm during the academic year at Health Services, 13 Brown Street.

Students seeking more information about Medical Leave should contact [Student Support Services](#) (Graduate Center, 4<sup>th</sup> Floor). (See also below: "Leaves of Absence").

Recording a lived or chosen name change into University systems can be done through banner by logging on to [Self-Service Banner](#), clicking Personal Information, and clicking the My Name tab. The chosen (or preferred) first name may only be changed and/or deleted once per semester if you are an actively enrolled degree-seeking student.

Maria Suarez, Associate Dean of Student Support in the Graduate School, is dedicated to serving master's and PhD students (Horace Mann 110, [maria\\_suarez@brown.edu](mailto:maria_suarez@brown.edu), 401-863-1802).

## ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNING

[The Center of Language Studies](#) and the [Writing Center](#) at Brown offer a number of programs to improve English language skills, such as Language Partners and English Language Learners seminars on academic writing for graduate students whose first language is not English. (See also below, under "Teaching: English for International Teaching Assistants").

## SPECIFIC AREA PROGRAMS

### ASIAN RELIGIOUS TRADITIONS (ART)

#### OVERVIEW

ART offers training in Asian religions in their historical, intellectual, and cultural contexts. Students normally specialize in one cultural area (China or Japan) and choose their tradition or region of specialization from among the fields of expertise of the Brown faculty.

Harold Roth specializes in Chinese thought and religion of the classical period, and in early Daoist contemplative traditions. Jason Protass works on Chinese Buddhism, especially Chan and Zen studies. Janine Anderson Sawada specializes in Japanese religions, with particular emphasis on popular religions and Buddhist and Confucian movements of the 16<sup>th</sup> through 19<sup>th</sup> centuries.

### EAST ASIAN RELIGIONS

#### DESCRIPTION

Students of East Asian Religions concentrate in the religious traditions of either China or Japan, but attain broad competence in the religious history of the alternate area as well. Students may also focus on a specific religious tradition (Daoist, Confucian, or Buddhist) whether within the parameters of one cultural area or across the broader East Asian context. Most students who specialize in the Daoist tradition concentrate on its origins and development in the intellectual contexts of early China and selected later developments, while students of Confucianism focus on Neo-Confucian interpretations of China and Japan. Students of Buddhism concentrate on the cultural, literary, and institutional history of Song, Yuan, and Ming Chinese Buddhism, and/or Japanese Buddhism of the late medieval through early modern periods. A specialization in the history of the Japanese new religions is also possible. Regardless of their area of concentration, all students are expected to develop an understanding of the key issues involved in the historical interaction of the major East Asian religious traditions.

#### ADMISSION

Successful applicants to the doctoral program in East Asian Religions usually possess an M.A. or the equivalent in a related field of study. For students who wish to concentrate in Chinese religions, at least two years of Chinese are required; three or more is recommended. For students who wish to concentrate in Japanese religions, at least three years of Japanese are required. Excellent command of English, both spoken and written, is essential.

## COURSEWORK

Courses are selected in consultation with the student's primary advisor, usually in a meeting at the beginning of each semester. Before their preliminary examinations, students in East Asian Religions are expected to complete at least six graduate seminars or the equivalent; at least four of the seminars will be in the main concentration (China or Japan), and at least two in the secondary area. With the approval of the area faculty, a Brown University undergraduate course numbered above 1000 may count toward the seminar requirement if the student receives an "A" grade on a graduate-level paper for the course.

Students should draw on resources at Brown University not only in Religious Studies, but also in East Asian Studies, History, History of Art and Architecture, Comparative Literature, and/or the social sciences as appropriate. It is also possible to cross-register for specialized courses at Harvard University, as time permits (usually after modern East Asian language requirements are completed), and subject to the approval of both the ART advisor and the Harvard instructor.

Before their first preliminary examination, students should also complete the following specific courses:

- RELS 2000 Theory of Religion
- A course in Chinese or Japanese bibliography and reference resources (in accordance with the area of specialization) or the equivalent, depending on availability.
- A course in the history of China, Japan, or Korea (numbered above 1000)
- A course in the literature or art history of China, Japan or Korea (numbered 1000 or above).

For current courses related to East Asian at Brown, see "East Asia Related courses" posted annually by the Department of East Asian Studies.

#### LANGUAGES

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

Students of Chinese religions must demonstrate competence in modern Chinese, proficiency in classical Chinese, and reading ability in modern Japanese. Students of Japanese religions must attain proficiency in modern Japanese and competence in classical Japanese (*bungo*); depending on their period of specialization, they should also learn how to read Sino-Japanese (*kanbun*).

Entering students are expected to take diagnostic examinations in the modern East Asian languages, which are administered at the beginning of each

academic year by the Department of East Asian Studies. Successful completion of the language requirements is certified as follows, subject to the discretion of area faculty:

Modern East Asian languages:

Completion of the following courses or demonstration of the equivalent level by passing a diagnostic exam administered by Brown University faculty (in either case with a grade of B or better):

China concentrators: CHIN 0800 and JAPN 0400 (JAPN 0600 recommended)

Japan concentrators: JAPN 0800 or JAPN 0910

Classical Chinese and *kanbun*:

Successful performance in a written test administered by the area faculty. These are translation exams in which lexical aids may be used. In some cases, advanced (graduate level) coursework, with a grade of B or better, may satisfy this requirement, subject to faculty approval.

Graduate students should take intensive language courses in accredited and approved language programs, whether in North America or East Asia, during the summer when possible, so as to complete their requirements in a timely fashion. They are expected to apply for external funding for these programs well in advance of the projected study period.

#### ANNUAL PROGRESS REPORT

Each academic year, students will submit a brief written self-evaluation in which they describe their progress and achievements during the previous year, and their prospective plan of study for the coming year(s). This document, no more than one page in length, should be submitted by email to the ART coordinator by April 20th.

#### SECOND YEAR REVIEW

During the fourth semester, students will submit two seminar papers written at Brown University for a formal review. No later than the first Monday after Spring Recess, students must submit to the ART Coordinator the papers, both the original with the comments and feedback from the instructor, and an edited version as appropriate. The ART faculty will review the student's progress in academic writing and take it into account in determining the student's standing in the program.

#### PRELIMINARY EXAMINATIONS

The first of two ART Preliminary Examinations consists of take-home essays and an oral defense, covering the student's major and minor fields in the Asian Religious Traditions area. In general, the first exam is designed to ascertain

broad teaching and research competence as well as familiarity with major scholarly debates in the primary field. With the approval of the advisory committee, students may pursue additional minor fields to address varying types of primary sources or methodologies, and may involve the participation of faculty outside the area. The second exam takes the form of a research paper and is designed to certify that the student is qualified to carry out research and writing in her or his proposed field of specialization. The details for examinations are to be arranged with the primary advisor and approved by the area faculty in accordance with the guidelines below.

### FIRST EXAMINATION

The first preliminary exam consists of three or four take-home essays about five pages each, to be completed over the course of seven days. The writing of the essays will be followed by an oral defense with the area faculty, which will ordinarily take place one week after the essays are submitted.

The exam questions will be based on a bibliography of English-language works compiled by the student in consultation with the advisory committee. The bibliography, ordinarily about 10-12 pages, should be organized into sections by major and minor fields, whether geo-cultural areas (China, Japan, and in some cases Korea) or major religious traditions (Daoism, Buddhism, Confucianism, Shinto). Translated primary sources should be set off from secondary literature. The bibliography must be developed and submitted to the committee for approval at the latest by the end of the semester preceding the one in which the exam is taken.

For students who entered with an M.A. in a relevant field, the first exam should be completed by the end of the third year in the program. For students who entered without an M.A. in a related field, this exam should be completed by the start of the second semester of their fourth year of study.

### SECOND EXAMINATION

The second preliminary exam is a 30 to 45-page research paper written under the guidance of the members of the examination committee. The paper must include a literature review of 5 to 10-pages and an original analysis based on primary sources, roughly 25 to 35-pages in length. The topic of the paper is chosen in consultation with the student's main faculty advisor, who in most cases will chair the student's exam committee and become the dissertation supervisor. The subject matter should be related to the student's projected thesis area and demonstrate significant use of primary sources in the student's main research languages as well as critical engagement with secondary sources.

The literature review should engage in a comprehensive manner current knowledge, major theories or pertinent methodologies, and ongoing debates in the field in which the student plans to specialize for the dissertation. The remainder of the paper should take the form of an analysis or argument that is

based on the student's original research into primary source materials and that takes into account relevant secondary perspectives.

This examination is a substantial research paper, not a dissertation prospectus (though it may eventually serve as source material for some part of the dissertation). The paper should be completed by the end of the first semester of the fourth year in the program (or, in the case of students who entered the program without an M.A. in the field, by the end of the second semester of the fourth year), and under no circumstances may be completed more than one semester after the completion of the first examination.

### DISSERTATION RESEARCH

Scholars of Japanese or Chinese religions conduct on-site research using original sources, whether primary texts in archives and libraries, works of art in museums, interviews with subjects, or other materials. In many cases, primary texts must be located, read, and understood under the guidance of a Japanese or Chinese specialist in the field. East Asian Religions graduate students should therefore plan to conduct research for an extended period, usually for at least one year, in China and/or Japan after they have been admitted to Ph.D. candidacy. Ordinarily they will apply for external fellowships to conduct research abroad in the fall of the year preceding the academic year in which they plan to live in China or Japan.

## ISLAM, SOCIETY AND CULTURE (ISC)

### DESCRIPTION

Students in this field will specialize in the texts, traditions, and critical analysis of Islamic society and culture from the medieval (6<sup>th</sup> century) to the modern era. This field is devoted but not limited, to the study of Islamic beliefs and practices within the cultural and historical context of the Middle East and South and Central Asia. Students interested in the study of Islam and ethics, or Islam in the US and North America (i.e. from a contemporary perspective) will find intersections with the Department's track in Religion and Critical Thought; those interested in comparative study between Islam, Christianity, and Judaism will find intersections with the track in Religions of the Ancient Mediterranean; and those interested in South and Central Asia will have overlap with Asian Religious Traditions track. Applicants should have advanced preparation in the relevant research languages. Students in this field may pursue their graduate work in conjunction with area studies programs (Middle East Studies, South Asian Studies, African Studies, etc.) and will make use of the resources provided by the Departments of History, Comparative Literature, Art History, and Anthropology.



## ADMISSION

Successful applicants to the doctoral program in ISC ordinarily possess an M.A. or the equivalent in a related field of study. Prior language training is also an important factor taken into consideration in the admissions decision. At least two years of a core language such as Arabic, Persian, Turkish, Urdu, etc. is required; three or more years is highly recommended. Excellent command of English, both spoken and written, is also required.

## COURSEWORK

Students normally take six semesters of course work and then spend two years in the research and writing of the Ph.D. dissertation. Students will work with their advisor to design a six-semester curriculum of course-work that should lead the student to a successful performance on the necessary language exams and the preliminary exams and lay a good foundation for a program of original research that will mature into a significant contribution to scholarship as a Ph.D. dissertation.

Courses should be selected each semester in consultation with the student's primary advisor. In addition to the departmental course requirement in theory and method (RELS 2000), ISC students are expected to complete at least six graduate seminars or the equivalent. Students in this field may pursue their graduate work in conjunction with courses offered by the various area studies programs and may also make use of the resources provided by the Departments of History, Comparative Literature, and Anthropology, among others. Students are also encouraged to cross-register for other specialized courses at Harvard University, as appropriate.

## LANGUAGES

In addition to a) two (usually) pre-modern research languages, ISC students must attain reading competence in b) two modern research-related languages other than English (ordinarily French and German, but this may be adjusted according to field of study). Native speakers of one research language in category a) will be asked to demonstrate mastery of a second as well as in two modern research-related languages other than English.

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

### PRE-MODERN LANGUAGES

Depending on the area of study, the ability to conduct research in Arabic, Persian, Hebrew, Turkish or other pre-modern language (e.g. Syriac) should be attained as early as possible and students in ISC should be prepared to demonstrate competence in one of these languages by the end of the fourth semester, and in the second no later than the end of the sixth semester by

passing an exam administered by a faculty member.

#### MODERN LANGUAGES

Ordinarily, and depending on area of study, reading knowledge of German and French needs to be attained as early as possible (other Modern languages, such as Persian, Turkish, Hindi, or Spanish may be options as well). Students in ISC should be prepared to prove competence in these languages no later than the end of the fourth semester by passing an exam administered by a faculty member or by receiving an honors grad in German 12 (“German for Reading”) or a similar course in French when offered.

#### PRELIMINARY EXAMINATIONS

Doctoral examinations are based on bibliographies negotiated by the student and the advisory committee several months in advance. Students will complete three exams in total, one Major Field exam and two Minor Field exams. Minor Field exams may be conducted with a professor outside the department, in consultation with the graduate committee for ISC (Khalek/Bashir).

Ordinarily, Major Fields will cover areas of Islamic intellectual and/or social history, while Minor Fields will cover more thematically specific areas, such as “Shi’i Thought” or “Islamic Hagiography,” for example. A Minor Field may also cover a theoretically relevant area on inquiry such as “Post-Colonial Theory,” “Gender Studies,” “Mysticism,” etc.

#### DISSERTATION

##### PROSPECTUS

Upon successful completion of all courses, language requirement, and preliminary exams a student shall develop his or her dissertation prospectus and present it to the department according to the standard departmental procedure (see Dissertation Prospectus, pp

##### RESEARCH

Students are generally expected to conduct research using original sources, whether critical editions, primary texts in archives and libraries, works of art in museums, interviews with subjects, or other materials. For research conducted abroad, ordinarily students will apply for fellowships in the fall of the year preceding the academic year in which they plan to live in the country of their choosing.

#### RELIGION AND CRITICAL THOUGHT (RCT)

##### DESCRIPTION

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

- 1) Philosophy and religion

- 2) Religious ethics (that is, the interrelation among religion, ethics, and politics)
- 3) Theory of religion

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

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

#### AFFILIATED FACULTY

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

#### ADMISSION

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

#### COURSEWORK

Students with a masters degree in a relevant field will normally take two years of coursework; students entering with a bachelors degree will normally take three years. During this course work stage, students are expected to enroll in 4 courses each semester the first year, and three in subsequent years. Students in their coursework phase of the program are normally expected to participate in at least three RCT graduate seminars. After the third year, students should consult with the RCT advisor about whether they are expected to take a particular RCT seminar. Generally speaking, students will draw on resources throughout the humanities and social sciences, for example, in the departments of Philosophy, Political Science, Comparative Literature, Africana Studies, Judaic Studies, Classics, Anthropology, and Sociology. In consultation with the core RCT faculty, students will develop a schedule that will satisfy the requirement for competence in a religious tradition through course work. Additionally, students must demonstrate familiarity with a second religious tradition; this religious diversity requirement, depending on the judgment of the RCT Faculty, may be satisfied by coursework done prior to attendance at Brown or by one or two additional courses at Brown.

#### ANNUAL MEETING WITH FACULTY

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

## LANGUAGE REQUIREMENTS

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

## PRELIMINARY EXAMINATION

The Preliminary Exams should be concluded within a year of completing the coursework. Normally, then, the Preliminary Exams would be concluded at the end of May of the student's third or fourth year (depending on whether the student entered the program with a bachelors or masters degree). Three of the four Preliminary Exams may be satisfied by papers of not more than 10k words, including notes, or else (in the case of up to two of the three) by the more traditional format of a "take-home exam" on an extended reading list. These three exams are defined as proficient treatment of:

- A comparison of two historically significant figures or texts;
- A conceptual issue pertaining to the philosophy and theory of religion, religious ethics, political theory, or some combination of these;
- A topic that is pertinent to the student's dissertation.

The fourth Preliminary Exam is a 10-page review essay of a noteworthy book published within the last 10 years or so.

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

Following the completion of the exams, the dissertation prospectus should be defended in the early fall, preferably by the end of September. For students who enter with a masters, this will be September of the fourth year; for students entering without a masters, this will be September of the fifth year.

## RELIGIONS OF THE ANCIENT MEDITERRANEAN (RAM)

### DESCRIPTION

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

- Israelite religion
- Judean religion (Judaism) from the fifth century BCE to first century CE
- Judean religion (Judaism) from the first century CE to the seventh century CE (including rabbinics and/or the Greco-Roman Diaspora)
- Greek religion
- Roman religion
- Early Christianity (first-fourth centuries CE)
- Christianity in Late Antiquity (fourth-seventh centuries CE)
- Early Islam

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

- Egyptian religion;
- Mesopotamian religion

### ADMISSIONS

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

## COURSEWORK

During the first year, students, in consultation with the RAM advisor and other appropriate faculty, design a curriculum that allows for exploration while remaining appropriately focused towards the student's primary interests. RELS 2000, which is taught every other year, should be taken as soon as possible. At the end of the first year, students choose both a major and minor field and will be assigned an advisory committee in accordance with their focus. This advisory committee may or may not be identical to the student's eventual dissertation committee.

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

## QUALIFYING REQUIREMENTS FOR THE PRELIMINARY EXAMINATION

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

## LANGUAGE REQUIREMENTS

### ANCIENT LANGUAGES

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

### MODERN SCHOLARLY LANGUAGES

In addition to demonstrating competence in two modern languages, ordinarily French and German, those students who major or minor in some fields must also demonstrate competency in modern scholarly Hebrew. Depending on the student's area of interest, additional modern languages may be desirable, such as Italian, Spanish, and others.

Competency in these languages can be demonstrated in one of three ways:

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

## PRELIMINARY EXAMINATION

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

- **The major field examination** is administered by the major field advisor, in consultation with the advisory committee. Its purpose is to assess teaching and research competency, and to assure broad competency in the scholarly discussions and major debates in the major areas of the student's primary field.
- **The minor field examination** is administered by the minor field advisor, also in consultation with the advisory committee. The purpose of this exam is to assure teaching competency, as well as competency in the salient issues relevant to the dissertation area.
- **The ancillary exam** is determined in consultation with the advisory committee and may, as appropriate, involve the participation of additional faculty. The ancillary area may address varying types of primary source data (e.g., archaeological or documentary, in addition to textual material), or the use of varying methodologies (e.g., anthropology).

The format of each exam will be determined by consultation between the student and the advisory committee. Possible formats may include, but are not limited to: a one-week take-home exam, with option of writing on one big question (approx. 20-25pp.) or a choice of more specific questions (for example, 5 out of 7 questions, four essays of 5pp. each); a 24-hour take home exam; a four-hour-sit-down exam, writing on 2 out of 4 questions; or two papers on proposed thematic topics (10 pages each).

## TEACHING

### GUIDELINES FOR TEACHING ASSISTANTSHIPS

Doctoral students serve as Teaching Assistants (TAs) for pedagogical reasons, to train in classroom instruction with the anticipation of their future placement as college and university faculty. Our commitment to the pedagogical concern is underscored by the fact that service as a Teaching Assistant for at least two semesters is a requirement of our doctoral programs, even for students who may have an outside fellowship that prohibits them from teaching (such students are funded by Brown, if necessary, during their teaching service). Graduate students begin serving as teaching assistants in their third semester and ordinarily complete six semester of teaching at Brown. TAs have a serious professional responsibility to both their students and faculty supervisor. TAs are expected to be familiar with their responsibilities, professional obligations, and rights.

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

#### ENGLISH FOR INTERNATIONAL TEACHING ASSISTANTS

The English for International Teaching Assistants program evaluates the spoken English proficiency of international teaching assistants prior to their assuming teaching duties at Brown. It also provides English language courses for international graduate students who need to improve their spoken English before they begin teaching. International graduate students who have been awarded teaching assistant positions and whose native language is not English will be tested upon their arrival for English proficiency.

According to University policy, if a student's English language skills do not meet the minimum standards for certification, provisional approval of the teaching assistantship appointment may be made on the condition that the student enroll in an English-language course during the first semester of their appointment and be assigned to other duties that will prepare him or her for teaching. Students who have not been certified at the appropriate level for the classroom or laboratory will not be supported as teaching assistants past the first year.

For instructions on scheduling an English proficiency evaluation, test dates, course descriptions, and related information see the website of the [English for International Teaching Assistants Program](#) (EINT).

#### THE APPRENTICESHIP MODEL



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

#### THE PROFESSOR'S RESPONSIBILITIES

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

#### THE TA'S RESPONSIBILITIES

According to the [Graduate School's website](#), TAs assist instructors "on all work related to instruction of a particular course." The precise duties of a TA depend upon the structure of the particular course. In Religious Studies, TAs are ordinarily responsible for running one or two discussion sections of a course and for grading the written assignments and examinations of the students in those sections. The departmental policy is that a TA shall have no more than two sections in their responsibility. In general, the maximum number of students per section should be fifteen. In exceptional situations (e.g., early in the semester while students are shopping classes or if one of a TA's section is larger and the other smaller but the average is fifteen or fewer students) sections may be larger, but in no case more than twenty students per section. To enable effective handling of these responsibilities, TAs normally attend all class lectures, hold regular office hours for their students, and meet regularly with the professor concerning the content and progress of the course as well as content of section meetings. In accordance with University policy, a TAship will normally require 15-18 hours per week (with a limit of an average of 20 hours per week). It is understood that the time requirements will vary throughout the semester: the heaviest periods will be when grading. A preliminary meeting between professors and TAs prior to the start of their courses, to go over the syllabus and check on assignment dates, should allow TAs sufficient notice for adjustments in their own academic schedules to accommodate the fluctuations in workload.

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

Teaching Assistants receive feedback on their teaching from the students through course evaluation and (as applicable) in conversation and writing from the faculty member who directs the course.

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

monitoring attendance, etc.

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

For additional information on TAing, please consult the [Department's Best Practices for Teaching Assistantships document](#).

## COURSE ASSIGNMENTS

### IN THE STUDENT'S AREAS OF TRAINING

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

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

### OUTSIDE A STUDENT'S AREA

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

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

## ADVANCE PLANNING

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

### OPPORTUNITIES FOR ADDITIONAL TEACHING EXPERIENCE

Students interested in further pedagogical training and independent teaching experiences are encouraged to explore the following resources and programs:

- Sheridan Center workshops and certificate programs.
- Summer@Brown teaching opportunities in the School of Professional Studies.
- Deans' Faculty Fellows Program
- Brown/Wheaton Faculty Fellows Program
- Brown/Tougaloo Faculty Fellows Program
- Departmental opportunities for independent teaching.

## FINANCIAL MATTER (FUNDING & FEES)

### UNIVERSITY FUNDING SOURCES

#### FELLOWSHIPS

Currently, all admitted Ph.D. students are promised five years of funding, provided they make satisfactory progress and otherwise remain in good standing. Students are strongly advised not to plan on additional support, and to be prepared to support themselves after the fifth year.

In 2010-2011, the Graduate School instituted a competitive process for dissertation completion support [DCP], for which rising 6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> year doctoral students may apply, with the support of the DGS. Students who have exhausted their five years of funding, who have advanced to candidacy within the last five years, and who do not presently have dissertation completion support are eligible for Advanced Status. Such students are responsible for an enrollment fee (currently 15/16ths of tuition) and the student activity fee, and must have health insurance from Brown or provide proof of comparable coverage under another plan. For full information, see the [Graduate School website](#) (Academics: Rules and Regulations: Student Status Issues: Advanced Student Status; see also Support: Tuition, Fees and Billing for current costs).

## SUMMER SUPPORT

Students entering in the fall of 2011 and after ordinarily receive four years of summer support, as specified in the offer of admission from the Graduate School.

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

## LOANS

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

## TRAVEL FUNDS

### CONFERENCE TRAVEL

In order to help defray the costs associated with travel to professional conferences, the Graduate School provides grants of up to \$650 to students who are presenting papers at recognized professional conferences. Students in years 2 through 5 are eligible for such funds for one paper per year. Sixth-year students may be eligible if sufficient funds are available. For details, please see the [Graduate School web page](#) on this topic.

Students who need assistance to travel to an international conference to present a paper should also apply to the [Graduate School's International Travel Fund](#). To apply, visit the [Grad School's Ufund site](#). See also the [Office of Global Engagement](#) for a list of grant opportunities.

In addition, students presenting conference papers must consult with a faculty member in their area about the suitability of the proposed paper, and with the DGS, since the department must certify that there are no further departmental funds available for these purposes.

### RESEARCH TRAVEL

In certain cases, the University also subsidizes graduate student research travel (up to \$1800) for students who already have other travel grants and require supplemental funding. For details, deadlines, and forms, see the [Graduate School web page](#).

## PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT FUNDS

In the past, the Graduate School awarded limited funding to help with professional development, such as funds to help with unexpected publication costs for a student's article to appear in a professional journal. Such funding may no longer be available.

In recent years, the Department has also made available very modest funds for such expenses. If you have such a need, consult the DGS.

## EXTERNAL FUNDING

Some graduate students receive funding for one or more years from foundations and organizations external to Brown. Such funds allow students to defer their University funding and also entitle students to various incentives from the Graduate School.

Consult the [Graduate School website](#) for details (Support: External Funding: Incentives Policy). In Religious Studies, outside fellowships are often for the dissertation year, but in recent years, students in the Department have been awarded fellowships for course work and exam years as well. Students are strongly encouraged to seek outside funding at all levels. Consult the [Graduate School website](#) for information. Students who plan to apply for outside funding should be in contact with the appropriate deans at the Graduate School, as well as the DGS. The DGS will also circulate information that the Department receives on grants and fellowships relevant to Religious Studies, such as the Newcombe, Jacob Javits, and Ford fellowships.

## EMPLOYMENT

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

## UNIVERSITY FEES

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

### STUDENT ACTIVITY & HEALTH INSURANCE FEES

Students are required to pay a small "Student Activities Fee" each semester.

All graduate students on fellowship support receive health insurance through the University. Students should not receive any bills regarding health insurance. However, there is a separate fee for University Health Services. Students on full

support generally receive this fee as part of their support. All students, however, are responsible for the summer coverage fee if they plan to use University Health Services over the summer.

#### REGISTRATION FEES

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

#### DISSERTATION FEES

##### FILING

Students who are inactive and returning from an approved leave of absence solely for the purpose defending and filing the dissertation, and who meet the conditions established by the Graduate School are charged a moderate filing fee for the semester in which the dissertation is submitted. For specific amounts, consult the [Graduate School website](#).

##### HANDLING

There is a small fee for processing the dissertation. For specific amounts, consult the [Graduate School website](#).

#### READMISSION FEE

There is also a readmission fee for students returning from most leaves: consult the Graduate School website (Support: Tuition and Fees) for the formula. Students on medical and parental leaves are exempt.

## STUDENT STATUS

### STUDY ELSEWHERE

#### CROSS-REGISTRATION WITH HARVARD

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

#### EXCHANGE SCHOLAR PROGRAM

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



## STUDY AND RESEARCH ABROAD

Students who are studying abroad are strongly encouraged to register the trip with the Brown University Global Assistance Program. This program provides 24-hour worldwide medical, security, and travel assistance, including emergency evacuation. Please visit the website for more information and the access code to Brown's International SOS portal: <https://www.brown.edu/campus-life/safety/resources/international-sos>.

## LEAVES OF ABSENCE

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

### OBTAINING A LEAVE

Students considering such leave should consult as early as possible with their advisors, the DGS, and the Graduate School, as appropriate. The procedures for obtaining such leaves are spelled out on the Graduate School website, where the necessary forms are also available (Academics: Rules and Regulations: Student Status Issues: Leaves of Absence). Leaves are granted for one semester or one year and may be extended to two years, if necessary.

When the Department approves a leave, it ordinarily implies a willingness to re-admit the student, although such readmission may depend on the student satisfying various conditions, ordinarily laid out in writing at the time the leave is granted.

### RE-ADMISSION FROM LEAVE OF ABSENCE

Students returning from Leave of Absence do not ordinarily need to apply formally for re-admission, unless the Department requests such an application. However, students whose return is conditional must satisfy those conditions before being returned to active status. Students seeking re-admission after medical leave must have their physician write to the appropriate person in Health Services or Psychological Services and confirm the student's ability to resume their studies. Financial aid issues and remaining degree requirements are best discussed with the DGS. Students wishing to return from leave must ordinarily indicate their intention to return by May 1 for the following fall or November 1 for the following spring.

## PART-TIME STUDY

Graduate students are ordinarily expected to be enrolled full-time, and students are not admitted for part-time study. However, it is sometimes possible to study on a part-time status, with the approval of the DGS. Simply enrolling in fewer than four courses, however, does not automatically confer part-time status. The DGS must officially inform the Dean of the Graduate School of the student's intentions. Without such notice students will continue to be billed for four courses, even if they are formally enrolled in less than four. Students should also be aware of the financial consequences of adopting this status. They may lose some or all financial

assistance and become liable for at least partial repayment of existing student loans. Students should check the fine print on any student loan agreements. Requests for changes in status must be submitted in writing to the Graduate School, but there is no official form.

## SECOND MASTER'S DEGREE

Doctoral students may earn a second Master's degree from Brown, in a related field, without an additional charge for tuition. No courses or theses, however, will count toward more than one degree. The form for obtaining a second Master's degree is available on the Graduate School home page, under Forms (Second Master's). RAM doctoral students may do an M.A. in Classics (and vice versa). In addition, as of 2011-2012, doctoral students in one department may apply to do an M.A. in a second area at Brown, under the Open Graduate Education program. Students admitted to OGE receive an additional year of fellowship support: for details, see the Graduate School OGE website, and consult with the DGS.

## INTEGRATIVE STUDIES OPTION

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

# PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

## PROFESSIONAL ORGANIZATIONS

### OVERVIEW

As students progress in their studies it is a good idea to become a member of the American Academy of Religion (AAR), the Society of Biblical Literature (SBL), or other professional organizations, such as the Association for Asian Studies (AAS) or the Middle East Studies Association (MESA), depending on one's interests. These organizations publish newsletters and other publications of interest to scholars of religion. Currently, the AAR and SBL sponsor a concurrent annual meeting in November at which scholars from all fields in Religious Studies gather to share information and present papers. Each society has a website with various useful resources, including student membership information. Also, the Department has a student liaison to the AAR who is responsible for providing students with information about joining the Academy and attending the annual meeting.

Overall, annual meetings are a good place to get a sense of the larger field of religious studies and to meet people, both established scholars and graduate student peers, from other institutions. Many preliminary job interviews also take



place at the annual meetings. Students are general encouraged to attend the meetings by the time they begin work on their dissertations, if not before.

#### GIVING PAPERS AT PROFESSIONAL MEETINGS

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

## JOB SEARCHES

#### WHEN TO START A SEARCH

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

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

#### HOW TO START A SEARCH

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

#### JOB LISTINGS

Both the AAR and the SBL currently list available positions on their websites. The AAR site seems to be more comprehensive. Other professional societies may also list appropriate position advertisements, for instance the AAS or MESA. Often schools indicate whether they will be interviewing at an annual meeting.

Students may also find it helpful to consult publications as *The Chronicle of Higher Education* or the *Affirmative Action Register*, which occasionally advertise positions before they appear on AAR and SBL websites (and may also advertise positions in other related areas that do not show up on these sites). Throughout the year, faculty in the Department also receive announcements of job openings that they circulate, again sometimes before they are posted elsewhere.

#### DOSSIERS

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

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

#### LETTERS OF RECOMMENDATION

Well before you actually apply for particular positions, solicit letters of recommendation from your dissertation committee and other referees, as appropriate. Make sure that you give your recommenders ample time to write these letters: no less than a month, and ideally several months. Provide them with updated copies of your resume (see below), a draft of any job application letters you plan to send, and make sure they have the most recent drafts of your dissertation. Discuss with them well in advance what other materials they may wish to see (such as position advertisements, earlier seminar papers, teaching materials), as well as whether they are willing to write you letters for specific positions (as opposed to a single letter on file with Interfolio).

#### RESUME (CURRICULUM VITAE)

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

#### RESEARCH DOSSIER

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

#### TEACHING DOSSIER

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

## GRIEVANCE PROCEDURE (TAKEN FROM THE GRADUATE SCHOOL REGULATIONS)

Our expectation is that you will have the best possible relationship with colleagues and faculty during the course of your graduate work at Brown. It is possible,

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

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

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

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

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