

Graduate Student Handbook

**Department of Religious Studies
University of Colorado Boulder**

2018 – 2019

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Introduction

The Graduate Student Handbook has been prepared to provide an easy reference for rules, policies, and procedures governing graduate study in the Department of Religious Studies. The Handbook includes a brief summary of the **rules of the Graduate School** (which should be consulted in full on the Graduate School website). The Handbook also includes specific policies adopted by the faculty of the Department of Religious Studies. Though every effort has been made to accurately present the rules, policies, and procedures which govern graduate study, any statements or information in this Handbook that do not comply fully with the rules, policies, and procedures of the Graduate School either through misrepresentation or change in Graduate School policy are not binding.

Graduate students in Religious Studies must carefully read this Handbook and the Graduate School Rules in the Catalog. It is the responsibility of the student to know and comply with all current rules, deadlines, policies, and procedures. In case of questions or uncertainties, please consult with the department's Associate Chair for Graduate Studies.

(Note: Throughout this Handbook, "the department" refers to the Department of Religious Studies.)

Admission with Remedial Requirements

A student who has not completed at least twelve (12) semester hours, or the equivalent, of undergraduate academic course work directly related to the study of religion will be required to do remedial work to make up this deficit before beginning graduate study or, with the Associate Chair for Graduate Studies' permission, after graduate study begins. This can be done by attaining a grade of "B" or better in an appropriate 2000 or 3000 level course taken within the first year. Remedial courses will not be counted toward the degree.

Provisional Admission

Some students may be granted provisional admission to the graduate program as a provisional admit if the undergraduate GPA was below 2.75. In the case of provisional admission, the conditions of provision are specified by the faculty on the Admission Application for Provisional Degree Student form. These conditions may include remedial course work or a departmental reevaluation at a specified time. The department's decision and reasons are clearly communicated to the applicant by the Associate Chair for Graduate Studies (ACGS). At the end of the specified probationary period, such students are either admitted to regular degree status by submitting a change of status request to the Graduate School or will be dismissed from the program.

DEPARTMENT REQUIREMENTS

RLST MA Degree Requirements

A graduate degree in Religious Studies represents the mastery of a significant body of knowledge and interpretation within the academic discipline. The student is expected to acquire both breadth and depth in religious studies. Listed below are the minimum formal requirements for the MA degree in Religious Studies.

- I. The student must successfully complete thirty (30) semester hours of academic work. At least 27 of these hours must be completed at the 5000 level or above.
- II. No more than six (6) semester hours at any level outside the department may be presented for the degree, including transfer credits, except for candidates for the Dual M.A. with another department, who may count nine (9). Other students may petition the department for exceptions to this rule.
- III. Independent study credit hours shall not exceed six (6) hours.
- IV. RLST 6830, "Introduction to the Academic Study of Religion," is a required course and is offered every Fall term. This course should be taken the first fall term the student enters the MA program.
- V. In the second year of graduate study, students will select either the MA portfolio option or the MA portfolio with thesis option (see separate document about producing a thesis). Those selecting the MA portfolio option will enroll in *RLST 6945*, Directed Readings and Portfolio Preparation, for 3 credit hours generally taken in spring semester, Year 2. See below for description. Those selecting the MA portfolio option with thesis will enroll in *RLST 6950* for 6 credit hours generally done over two semesters.
- VI. A hold will be automatically put on the student's account before each registration period begins.
- VII. Courses for each term must be approved in writing by the student's faculty advisor on the student's "Record of Progress toward the M.A. Degree" form and be in compliance with the requirements of the Graduate School where necessary. After the advisor and student complete the Record of Progress, it will be reviewed by the Graduate Program Assistant, and the hold will be lifted. No changes can be made in registration without the advisor's approval.
- VIII. All students must fulfill the residency requirement (page 9). In general this can be fulfilled by either two (2) full-time semesters or four (4) part-time semesters of study. A full-time* program is defined as either five (5) hours of course work at the 5000 level or higher, eight (8) hours of total course work, or at least one (1) hour of thesis research.

*Financial Aid's full-time and part-time standards are different than those set by the Graduate School, and are established based partly on federal law. If you have any financial aid, you **MUST** make sure you are in compliance with the registration requirements of their office. You can look for information on their website: <http://www.colorado.edu/finaid/>.

Any student planning to pursue a non-standard degree path—including a Dual MA, a Concurrent Bachelor's/Master's Degree program, concurrent graduate degrees in RLST and some other unit on campus, a RLST MA degree involving exceptions to regular degree requirements, a RLST MA degree involving transfer credits, and any other non-standard path—is required to submit a petition requesting approval from the student's faculty advisor, the Director of Graduate Studies, and the Chair; the Graduate Program Assistant should also be involved in the formulation and submission of the petition and receive a copy. Some petitions may require that approval be sought from the Graduate School. Additionally, any student planning to pursue a non-standard degree path is required to attend a meeting, at the beginning of every academic year, that includes the student's faculty advisor, the Director of Graduate Studies, and the Graduate Program Assistant.

Students who are pursuing a standard degree path are also strongly encouraged to arrange a meeting, at the beginning of every academic year, that includes their faculty advisor, the Director of Graduate Studies, and the Graduate Program Assistant.

The MA Portfolio

The MA Portfolio brings together a student's training in Religious Studies and prepares them for their on-going professional development after completion of the degree, whether that be continuing for a PhD or working in the professional world. Each student will have an advisor, who helps the student assemble a three-person portfolio committee, usually composed of faculty who have taught the student or otherwise participated in a student's professional development. The portfolio defense, to be completed in accordance with the deadline set by the graduate school each semester, will involve all three committee members and will be overseen by the advisor and conducted as part of either RLST 6945 or RLST 6950.

The defense will typically involve the student presenting a brief overview of the contents of the portfolio, as well as opportunities for committee members to ask questions, raise issues, and offer feedback. Students should consult with their advisors prior to the defense to finalize the details of the format.

The portfolio will include the following:

- 1) Intellectual/professional biography outlining your professional trajectory and research interests (2-3 pages) in conjunction with your advisor.
- 2) Expertise in Research for Religious Studies as demonstrated by the thesis (**RLST 6950**) or 3 final products from your RLST courses (**RLST 6945**) that should include the following:
 - a. one research-based, article length paper that has been revised to the point that it might be ready for submission to a journal (20-25 pages in length)
 - b. one literature review essay in your research concentration

- c. one other project that can be either a close reading of a primary source text; a second research-based article length paper; an original translation; a digital project; a website; or other project idea, whose presence in the portfolio is explained in the intellectual biography
- 3) Demonstration of foreign language competence for those who need foreign language training to pursue professional goals. That should be demonstrated by completing an original translation, using primary source materials in that language in one of the research papers or the thesis, or by advisor consent.
 - 4) 1 syllabus of a survey course in your area of expertise;
 - 5) 1 grant proposal/cover letter/statement of purpose, depending on your professional path;
 - 6) 1 colloquium presentation or conference paper (which can be one of the above items in the portfolio)

In addition, all MA students will be expected to attend at least three colloquia over the course of their careers and to present their own work at least once.

RLST 6945, Portfolio/Directed Readings (3 credits):

Overseen by your advisor, your work in RLST 6945, taken in the student's final semester, will include the following:

- 1 intellectual/professional biography
- 1 syllabus of a survey course in your area of expertise;
- 1 grant proposal/cover letter/statement of purpose, depending on your professional path;
- 1 colloquium presentation/conference paper (which can be one of the above items in the portfolio)
- Prepare research paper, literature review, and the third piece of work for inclusion in the portfolio. This may include additional reading and/or writing depending on the student's and advisor's goals.
- Improving language skills for those working on languages
- Prepare and defend portfolio by the committee by deadline's set by the graduate school.

RLST 6950, MA Thesis (6 credit hours), to be made up of:

First semester of thesis (3 credit hours) to result in a thesis prospectus defense with the thesis committee.

Second semester of thesis (3 credit hours) to result in the thesis defense itself.

The thesis is expected to be between 50 and 125 pages.

Thesis track students will produce streamlined portfolios as described above, including an intellectual biography, syllabus, cover letter, and conference paper/colloquium presentation.

Record of Progress

The Graduate Program Assistant will work with the student and faculty advisor to track your progress of the MA degree. This form is to be completed by the student and advisor each semester prior to registration. The Graduate Program Assistant will review this form and release

the advising hold each semester. The purpose of the spreadsheet is for the faculty and staff to be aware of all student progress toward completion requirements.

GRADUATE SCHOOL REQUIREMENTS

These Graduate School requirements for degree fulfillment are intended to be used as a supplement to information obtained from the University Catalog, the Schedule of Courses, the major department, and as an aid to preparing degree plans for master students. The major department should be consulted about specific additional requirements.

In brief, to graduate you must:

- Be admitted into candidacy
- Apply to graduate online for the current semester of graduation
- Request approval of final exam committee
- Successfully pass your final exam/portfolio/thesis defense.
- Be registered on the Boulder campus the semester you pass your comprehensive/final exam. International students in F-1 or J-1 status should ask an advisor in International Student and Scholar Services* about immigration requirements for the semester following your comprehensive/final exam
- If doing a thesis, have registered for 6 thesis hours
- Submit electronically and obtain approval of your thesis to the Graduate School, and submit hard copy of signature page to Graduate School, both by thesis submission deadline.
- Have your department submit a final grade card for thesis hours
- Have earned a grade of C or better on all classes applying toward your degree
- Have a minimum cumulative GPA of 3.0
- Have no incomplete coursework
- Stay within the 4 year time limit to complete your degree
- Have at least 2 semesters of full-time registration (two semesters of part-time equals one full semester)
- Meet department requirements
- Meet all deadlines

Graduate Courses

Minimum hours: For Plan I (portfolio option/RLST6945 for 3 credit hours) or Plan II (portfolio with thesis/RLST6950 for 6 credit hours) the minimum number of hours is 30, which can include thesis hours for Plan II students. Students completing a thesis must register for six thesis hours, ideally over two semesters. If a student switches from Plan II to I, thesis hours must be dropped and the Graduate School contacted.

Course level: A maximum of six credit hours may be completed at the 3000 or 4000 level at the discretion of the department. 1000 or 2000 level courses are not applicable toward a master degree. [NOTE: The Department of Religious Studies allows no more than 3 credit hours to be

completed at the 3000 or 4000 level. See the section on “RLST MA Degree Requirements” earlier in this handbook.]

Independent Study

An Independent Study is the equivalent of a graduate seminar conducted under the guidance of an individual member of the Graduate Faculty. It should involve a workload commensurate with a conventional seminar. It will not be approved if a course on the same or a similar topic is being offered, or if the proposed syllabus seems inadequate to graduate-level study or to the amount of credit proposed for the course. An Independent Study for a Religious Studies graduate student will be taken at the 6000 level, and it can fulfill degree requirements. You may take no more than six (6) credits of Independent Study. Internships or work as an instructor or grader may not be used for independent study credit. Independent Studies may be taken in the summer, but only during D term. Due to curriculum management guidelines, no exceptions will be made for Summer Independent Study courses. See the Graduate Program Assistant for an application.

Transfer Credit

The maximum number of semester hours that may be transferred from another accredited institution and applied toward a Master of Arts degree is nine (9). This includes course work taken at the University of Colorado as an undergraduate or as a non-degree seeking student. Only graduate level courses may be presented for transfer credit.

Requests for transfer of credit must be made on the form specified for this purpose (available in the department office) and submitted to the Graduate School after the student has a satisfactory record of at least one semester in residence. Transfer credits are accepted by CU Boulder only after approval from the department chair/program director, and under special conditions outlined on the Request for Transfer of Credit form. An official transcript of credit must accompany the request. Grades of courses accepted for transfer are not calculated in the GPA. Credits that have been applied towards another degree are not eligible for transfer, per Graduate School regulations.

Residency Requirements

Students who have out-of-state residency status are required by the department to have their status changed to in-state following their first year of study in the M.A. program. For information on the petition process, deadlines and requirements for in-state residence classification, contact information, and downloadable forms, see: <http://www.colorado.edu/registrar/state-tuition>

Important: Exceptions will be made only for students who are not United States citizens or permanent residents, and who are thus not eligible for Colorado residency. **Failure to apply for Colorado residency for your second year of study will make you ineligible to hold a GA or TA appointment.**

Dual MA Program

The Department of Religious Studies offers a Dual M.A. degree with either the Department of History (HIST) or the Department of Asian Languages and Civilizations (ALC). Such a degree

serves the scholarly needs of students who seek a truly interdisciplinary experience among intellectually affiliated departments.

The dual M.A. program enables students to receive two distinct M.A. degrees upon the completion of a minimum of 42 credit hours of coursework taken between RLST and either HIST or ALC. Typically, 21 stand alone credits taken in the department awarding the degree and 9 additional credits from the second program may be counted twice, once towards each degree.

Requirements:

- 42 credits minimum
- A “methods” course in each department
- Residency requirements are the same as for a traditional M.A.

Example Degree Programs:

Dual MA RLST and HIST

| RLST Degree | HIST Degree |
|-------------|-------------|
| RLST 5300* | RLST 5300* |
| RLST 5030* | RLST 5030* |
| RLST 5045* | RLST 5045* |
| RLST 5280 | HIST 5000 |
| RLST 5180 | HIST 5106 |
| RLST 5820 | HIST 6950 |
| RLST 6830 | HIST 6950 |
| HIST 6546* | HIST 6546* |
| HIST 6317* | HIST 6317* |
| HIST 6326* | HIST 6326* |

*HIST 6546, HIST 6317, HIST 6326, RLST 5300, RLST 5030, RLST 5045 are each counted twice, once in each department

Dual MA RLST and ALC

| RLST Degree | CHIN Degree |
|-------------|-------------|
| RLST 5300* | RLST 5300* |
| RLST 5820* | RLST 5820* |
| RLST 5250* | RLST 5250* |
| RLST 5180 | CHIN 5010 |
| RLST 6830 | CHIN 5020 |
| RLST 6950 | CHIN 5280 |
| RLST 5030 | CHIN 5260 |
| CHIN 5410* | CHIN 5410* |
| CHIN 4850* | CHIN 4850* |
| CHIN5430* | CHIN5430* |

*CHIN 5410, CHIN 4850, CHIN 5430, RLST 5300, RLST 5820, RLST 5250 are each counted twice, once in each department

Dual MA students will have an Ad Hoc Committee that will consist of an advisor from their primary program, an advisor from their secondary program, and a third faculty member from either department that specializes in an area appropriate to the student's interest. The sequence of courses for both programs will be individually structured by the student's Ad Hoc Graduate Committee, and the committee will meet toward the end of each academic year, assessing the student's progress and making a determination on the student's continuation in the program. Dual MA programs may combine an M.A. Plan 1 (thesis track) with a Plan 2 (non-thesis track) or students may opt for non-thesis tracks in both departments. However, students may not write two theses; rather they are encouraged to select an interdisciplinary thesis topic if they opt for the thesis track. Thesis hours may be credited toward either degree, but not towards both.

Admissions:

Admission to the Dual M.A. program may be accomplished in one of two ways:

- Students can either be first admitted to one of the participating departments as a normal M.A. student, and upon consultation with a primary advisor about whether dual degrees are appropriate and feasible, decide to make formal application to a second M.A. program.
- It is also possible to apply to both programs from the outset by making a separate application to each department and listing one as your primary department. Students considering the Dual MA should consult with their advisor as early as possible in order to complete the dual degree requirements efficiently.

University of Colorado Boulder - Guidelines for Concurrent Degree Program

The Concurrent Bachelor's/Master's degree program offers the opportunity of simultaneously pursuing the Bachelor's and Master's degrees leading towards the awarding of the degrees at the completion of the concurrent program. The program is normally a 5-6 year program designed for currently enrolled CU Boulder students.

Initial admission to the program typically occurs during the junior year. Minimum standards for admission require a cumulative G.P.A. of 3.0 and completion of all MAPS deficiencies. Additional admissions criteria are determined by the individual departments in conjunction with the appropriate school or college deans. Any interested student should contact the relevant department.

Students admitted to the concurrent degree program will be admitted at undergraduate status. To comply with Title IV Higher Education regulations, CU-Boulder students pursuing a concurrent bachelors/master's degree will automatically be changed to graduate status after the completion of 130 credit hours (or 145 credit hours for a student in the College of Engineering and Applied Science). It is important to note that transfer and advanced placement hours are included when determining the total credit hours completed. Students at graduate status are assessed graduate tuition rates and are no longer eligible for COF. In addition, graduate students receiving financial aid are considered "independent" and are no longer eligible for aid requiring undergraduate status.

GRADING AND EXPECTATIONS

GPA

A graduate student must maintain a cumulative GPA of 3.0 on all coursework taken regardless of the level of coursework or the reason it was taken. Any course being applied toward the degree must be taken for a letter grade. Grades earned in transfer courses or courses taken as a non-degree student are not calculated into the graduate GPA. A student cannot be admitted to candidacy or graduate with a cumulative GPA below 3.0. For policies concerning academic probation, refer to the graduate school rules online.

Grades

A student is required to maintain a “B” (3.0) average in all work attempted while enrolled in the program. Courses in which grades below “B-” are received are not accepted for the Master’s degree. Students who receive a grade below “B-” in a course may repeat the course once. No courses presented toward the degree may be taken on a pass/fail basis.

Academic Probation and Dismissal from the University

If your cumulative GPA falls below 3.0, you will be placed on academic probation. You have two semesters in which to raise the cumulative GPA to 3.0 or above. If you have not done so after two semesters, you will be dismissed from the University, unless the Associate Chair for Graduate Studies deems you have extenuating circumstances, in which case he or she will petition the Graduate School for you to be allowed to continue. If your GPA is at or below 2.5 at any point in your career, you may be dismissed immediately from the University, unless the ACGS deems you have extenuating circumstances, in which case she or he will petition the Graduate School for you to be allowed to continue. A student on academic probation may not hold a teaching appointment.

Time Limit for Completion of Degree

Religious Studies MA students are expected to complete all degree requirements within **four (4)** years from the semester in which they are admitted and begin coursework in the MA program. To continue beyond four years, the student must file a petition for an extension of the time limit with the Dean of the Graduate School. The ACGS must endorse such petitions. Extensions may be granted for up to one year. For additional time, you must file another petition for extension.

Leave of Absence (LOA)

The Leave of Absence (LOA) Program lets you take a leave from the university for a semester or a year without losing your place in your degree program. You must be in good academic standing and have the approval of the ACGS and of the Graduate School. Taking a LOA does not extend your allowable time to degree (see above). A nonrefundable \$50 application fee is charged for the LOA. More information is available from the Office of the Registrar's website: <http://www.colorado.edu/registrar/withdrawals/time-program>.

Discontinuation

A student who fails to register for any fall or spring semester between entrance to and completion of the program, and who is not on the LOA, will automatically be listed as "Discontinued" by the University. If the student wishes to re-enter the M.A. program at a later date, this will require a new application and admission procedure.

If you are an international student and plan to participate in a LOA or withdraw from school, please see an advisor at International Student and Scholar Services*.

*International Student and Scholar Services is located in the **Center for Community (C4C) Room S355**

Advisors

Upon admission to the program each student will be assigned a faculty advisor based upon the expressed field of interest of the student and the availability of faculty. The advisor is responsible for coordinating the student's program, insuring that the program provides both breadth and depth, monitoring the student's progress, and overseeing the portfolio/thesis process.

- I. Consulting with one's advisor: students should confer regularly with their advisor (once each month is ideal) to gain evaluation of their progress.
- II. Changing advisors: a student is free to change advisors at any time. A student who wishes to change advisors must inform the current advisor, complete a "Change of Advisor" form, and submit it to the department's ACGS for approval.

Petition Procedure

When a graduate student believes it appropriate and justifiable, given his or her particular needs and circumstances, that an individual exception should be made in graduation requirements, the following procedure should be followed:

- I. The student should consult both the academic advisor and the ACGS regarding the situation. The student should discuss why s/he believes the exception is appropriate and justifiable.

Often the desired goal can be met without an actual change in rules and these advisors may be able to determine ways of accomplishing, under existing rules, the desired goal.

- II. Should the student continue to believe that an exception is appropriate, a letter identified as a “Petition for Exception to Graduate Requirements” should be submitted to the ACGS for departmental consideration.
- III. The department faculty will maintain a history file of such petitions with a statement attached to each describing the faculty’s deliberations and decision. Each petition request will be considered by the faculty as a whole, using the petition history file to assure consistency, impartiality, and fairness in the petitioning process.
- IV. The student will be informed in writing of the faculty’s decision.

CANDIDACY AND GRADUATION APPLICATION DETAILS

Application for Admission to Candidacy

The application is considered a legal document and must be signed by the student and have appropriate departmental signatures. This is considered your degree plan and will be verified against your records to approve your degree. Students will receive written notification when the application for candidacy is approved.

Admission to the graduate program does not imply admission to candidacy for a degree. After all formal course work is completed; a student who wishes to become a candidate for a degree must file an application for admission to candidacy in the Graduate School. The following rules and procedures govern applications for candidacy:

- I. The form “Application for Admission to Candidacy for an Advanced Degree” (provided by the department's Administrative Assistant or the Graduate School) must be completed by the student. An online version can be found here:
http://www.colorado.edu/GraduateSchool/academics/_docs/candap.pdf
- II. The “Application for Admission to Candidacy for an Advanced Degree” must be submitted to the Graduate School the semester the comprehensive/final examination is to be taken, no later than each semester’s posted deadline. The Graduate School website will have updated academic year deadlines posted to their website:
http://www.colorado.edu/GraduateSchool/academics/master_graduation_packet_thesis.html
- III. The “Application for Admission to Candidacy for an Advanced Degree” form must be approved and signed by the Chair of the thesis committee and the Associate Chair for Graduate Studies before being submitted to the Graduate School for final approval.
- IV. The student is responsible for informing the Graduate School of any changes made in the degree plan after the application has been submitted to the Graduate School.

V. Admission to candidacy is not approved by the Graduate School unless requirements related to academic quality of work and graduate level course work are met in the degree plan.

Online Graduation Application

Students must apply online to graduate. To do this, logon to myCUinfo.colorado.edu. On the Student tab, select the Apply for Graduation link under Academic Resources. This notifies the Graduate School and your department that you intend to graduate and it provides necessary information to the Commencement Office for ordering and shipping diplomas. If you do not complete requirements for the graduation you indicate on the online application, you must apply online to graduate for the new graduation date. You must apply to graduate online whether or not you plan to attend the ceremony.

PORTFOLIO PREPARATION

Putting Together The Committee

Committees are constituted by a minimum of three members, one of whom may be from outside of the Department except in the case of a Dual MA student, in which case two committee members must be in the primary unit. No later than upon the completion of 18 hours of course work, the student in consultation with the advisor should nominate to the ACGS a faculty member to act as chairperson for his or her portfolio committee, as well two or more other faculty members to serve on the committee. Those using the thesis to demonstrate research competence in segment 2 of the portfolio should assemble the portfolio committee *the semester prior to submitting the prospectus*.

The Chair of the Committee: In most cases the advisor will become the portfolio committee chair, but the student and advisor may agree that another faculty member should chair the committee. The chairperson of the portfolio committee must hold a regular faculty appointment in the department and a regular or tenured appointment to the Graduate School faculty. Neither temporary faculty in the department nor faculty members from other departments may serve as chairperson of a portfolio committee.

The Committee Members: The committee should represent the fields of study related to the student's special interests. All committee members must be members of the Graduate School faculty and must be approved by the Dean of the Graduate School. A faculty member who is not a member of the graduate faculty may be invited to join the committee in a non-voting capacity, with the approval of the committee chairperson.

The student is responsible for letting the Graduate School know who will be serving on their thesis committee by completing the Master's Examination Form that is available from the Graduate Program Assistant. An online version can be found here:

http://www.colorado.edu/GraduateSchool/academics/_docs/master_examination_report.pdf

Part II of the Portfolio: Demonstrating Research Excellence in Religious Studies

Track 1, Portfolio Only

During the final semester of your program, the student will enroll in RLST 6945 in order to assemble the portfolio. The key section of the portfolio is Part II, demonstrating research excellence in Religious Studies. Student will spend the semester preparing three projects that demonstrate your excellence in research. This section includes:

- A. 1 research-based, article length paper that you have produced for a class. By the time of your portfolio defense, you will revise it to the point that it might be ready for submission to a journal. It should be the length of a standard journal article in your particular area.
- B. 1 literature review essay in your research concentration of about 10-20 pages. A literature review demonstrates that you've mastered the secondary literature in your area of specialization and the essay maps out the key arguments going on in the field.
- C. 1 other project that can be either a close reading of a primary source text; a second research-based article length paper; an original translation; a digital project; a website; or other project idea, whose presence in the portfolio is explained in the intellectual biography and with advisor consent.

Track 2, The Thesis

In lieu of producing three products that demonstrate research excellence in Religious Studies, a student may opt for the thesis. The thesis option requires a student to register for 6 credit hours of 6950 in order to both produce the thesis as well as the streamlined portfolio. The thesis requires two *separate* defenses, one for the prospectus completed in the semester prior to graduation; one for the thesis and overall portfolio itself.

Thesis Prospectus Guidelines (completed the semester before your thesis defense)

For those producing a thesis to demonstrate research competence, a "thesis prospectus" is defended in the semester before submission and defense of the thesis/portfolio. The prospectus should be typed, double-spaced, preferably about 10-15 pages in length, and also include a bibliography.

I. The prospectus is a formal statement about your chosen topic of research. It should contain an explanation of the larger concerns which make your topic worth doing. You will also be able to present questions that you will be asking of your sources. Lastly, it asks you to present some tentative conclusions and perhaps a thesis. It should contain the following components.

- A. **A discussion of the general topic.** Describe your subject briefly, place it in an historical context, and state its significance to the larger issue(s).
- B. **A definition of the "problem" that you are confronting, including a few questions that you will ask in an attempt to solve the problem.**

- C. **A discussion of your sources.** Describe the primary sources that you will use for each part of your work.

II. A preliminary outline should be included with the prospectus.

III. The last part of this prospectus is a more detailed working bibliography (possibly annotated) composed of two parts: sources which you have in your possession, and sources which you have not yet obtained but intend to use.

IV. A tentative timetable. This should include the number of weeks or months you expect each stage of your labors to cover. Most everything takes longer than you expect!

V. A one-paragraph summary.

VI. A cover page with:

- A. proposed title
- B. signature of advisor

Final Thesis Guidelines

Each thesis presented in partial fulfillment of the requirement for the Master's degree must be an independent investigation of a topic related to the major field. The thesis should represent the equivalent of four (4) semester hours of work plus an additional two (2) hours to prepare the remaining aspects of the portfolio.

- A. Length: A thesis demonstrates a student's ability to engage in sustained research and writing and therefore it is expected to be longer than an article-length research paper. Expectations are that the thesis will be between 50 and 125 pages, depending on topic, advisor, and goals.
- B. Process: The thesis will engage a research, review, and writing process supervised by the research committee. Submit a prospectus to your thesis committee using the guidelines above during the first semester you are registered for RLST 6950. The prospectus must be presented to and approved by the committee as soon as possible after course work is completed and **no later than the end of the semester following completion of course work** (27 hours).

Research, argument, and writing will be of the highest quality. Given the quality requirements, **several drafts done under the direction of the thesis committee chair should be expected**, before submission to the full committee, as well as a final revision after the final examination.

Portfolio Timeline to Completion

The candidate should prepare a timeline with their Advisor to establish deadlines for completing sections of the portfolio. If you are doing the thesis track, it is advised to have a complete first draft submitted to your advisor at least 6-8 weeks in advance of the anticipated defense date. In

general, the *entire portfolio* should be sent to the committee no later than two weeks before the scheduled defense unless there are extenuating circumstances.

Final Exam/Portfolio Defense

Each candidate for the Master's degree is required to complete a defense of the portfolio after all the other requirements for the degree have been substantially completed, including completion of all regular course work and substantial completion of the thesis or non-thesis requirement. The following rules must be observed:

A student must be registered either for course work, directed readings/portfolio preparation, thesis research, or "Candidate for Degree" at the time the examination is taken. **(A student registered in a given term is considered to be registered until the last weekday before the beginning of the next term.)**

Every term the Graduate School sets dates by which the final examination must be completed and by which the thesis in its final form must be submitted. It is the responsibility of the candidate to find out (1) the University deadlines for defending a MA thesis in the chosen semester of their graduation and (2) the official procedures for submitting a final version to the University

Important deadlines to remember:

1. The portfolio defense must be passed by the posted deadline for the semester the degree is to be conferred,
2. For students producing a thesis, it must comply in mechanical features with the University of Colorado Graduate School Specifications. These guidelines are available from the Graduate Program Assistant or on the Graduate School website. The thesis must be filed with the Graduate School by the posted deadline for the semester in which you plan to graduate.

Again, it is the student's responsibility to be aware of all guidelines and deadlines for completion of the thesis and other commencement paperwork.

MA candidates should have their Advisor's approval to bring the thesis to defense before they arrange a defense date with other committee members. Contact the Graduate Program Assistant to schedule the conference room in Eaton Humanities (HUMN 230) to hold your defense. Any location outside of Humanities will be the responsibility of the student to arrange. This should be done as soon as possible.

1. The candidate will be required to defend the entire portfolio.
2. Notice of the defense must be given to the Graduate Program Assistant to be filed with the Graduate School office at least two (2) weeks in advance of the defense date.

3. The names of the members of the portfolio defense committee must also be submitted for approval by the Graduate School at this time. Ideally, this information is given to the graduate school at the beginning of the fourth semester in the program.
4. At least 2 of the 3 members of the portfolio committee must vote affirmatively for the student to pass. If there are more than three members, a majority is needed to pass.

The defense will typically involve the student presenting a brief overview of the contents of the portfolio, as well as opportunities for committee members to ask questions, raise issues, and offer feedback. Students should consult with their advisors prior to the defense to finalize the details of the format.

If a student fails the defense, s/he may not attempt it again until 3 months have elapsed. The student may retake the defense only once.

Thesis Submittal

Track 2 students must submit their thesis electronically, and submit a paper copy of their signature page, by the Graduate School's deadline in order to graduate in any given semester. Students should submit the thesis electronically to <http://dissertations.umi.com/colorado/>, and must have an approved submission by 5:00 p.m. on the deadline day. In addition, the signature page (page ii of the thesis) must be submitted in hard copy by 5:00 on the deadline day. The page should be created as part of the thesis, and later printed out. The original signatures of the chair of the committee and one other member must be obtained. Faxed or electronic signatures are not accepted on this document. Formatting specifications for the thesis can be found at <http://www.colorado.edu/GraduateSchool/academics/#thesis>. The Graduate School recommends that a pre-check of your format be done before you submit the final version. You can request that by e-mailing a pdf of your thesis to gradinfo@colorado.edu.

TEACHING ASSISTANT POSITIONS

Student Appointments

- I. The appointments referred to in this section include teaching assistantship (TA) and graduate assistantship (GA) appointments. TA-ships carry a salary, tuition waiver, and a contribution to student health insurance towards the University of Colorado Boulder Student Gold Insurance Plan. All full-time graduate students in good standing are eligible for these awards, regardless of financial need commensurate with the percentage appointment.
- II. Basic qualification factors (Graduate School requirements):
 - A. A student admitted as a provisional degree student, a student on academic probation, or a special student is not permitted to hold an appointment. Concurrent (BA/MA) students are also not eligible to hold a graduate student appointment until they are considered to be at graduate student status as defined by the Graduate School.

B. A student on appointment must demonstrate continued adequate progress toward the degree. Adequate progress requires the completion of five (5) hours graduate work or eight (8) hours of mixed graduate and undergraduate work; any number of directed readings/portfolio preparation or master's thesis hours; or master's candidacy. Master's thesis hours cannot be taken until the semester in which all other course work is completed. No student with an incomplete from a previous term as of June 1st for a Fall appointment and January 1st for a Spring appointment (except for thesis research) may hold an appointment.

III. Additional Departmental criteria for selection:

Awarding of TA/GA appointments in the Department of Religious Studies will be based upon an evaluation of the individual graduate student's academic strength as well as the number of TA positions previously held. Appointments will be made available primarily on the basis of merit evaluation. Standard academic indicators will be used in this process of evaluation. For new students, evaluation will be based upon the strength of their application materials including, but not limited to, GPA, GRE's, letters of recommendation, and the student's statement of purpose. For continuing students' evaluations will be based upon original application materials in addition to adequate progress, advisor recommendation, and previous performance in appointments if applicable. Additional factors that will be considered include the applicant's general background and preparedness for classroom performance in Religious Studies courses and, in particular, the relevance of the student's preparedness to the needs of the department in a given semester. Limited funds for TA/GA positions may dictate a certain number of in-state and out-of-state positions to be assigned.

Workload Limits

Graduate students are eligible to work up to a 50% (20 hours per week) appointment at the university during the academic year. They may work up to 100% (40 hours per week) during the summer. This eligibility includes all university employment, including teaching appointments and hourly positions (e.g., working in the library or elsewhere on campus). Students whose employment totals more than 50% must apply for a special exemption through the Graduate School, and must have the endorsement of the department's Associate Chair for Graduate Studies.

Lead Graduate Teacher

Each year, one graduate student will serve as the Lead Graduate Teacher for the department. Requirements for this position as set forth by the Graduate Teacher Program (GTP) include: serving as a liaison between the GTP and the department, meeting with the lead coordinators, negotiating and writing a plan that is acceptable to the GTP and to the department, presenting on opportunities available in the Graduate Teacher Program to graduate students and faculty, consulting with TAs during office hours and in videotape consultations, developing and presenting at least one discipline-specific workshop, working on a cross-disciplinary team, and turning in a final report. The Lead Graduate Teacher is available to consult with all graduate

students on ways to improve their teaching. Application and more information can be found at: <http://www.colorado.edu/gtp/>

Teaching Issues

If you are having problems with one of your students (e.g., plagiarism or disruptive classroom behavior), first consult with the faculty member teaching the course and the Associate Chair for Undergraduate Studies. The Associate Chair for Graduate Studies and the Lead Graduate Teachers are also happy to provide consultation on teaching matters.

DEPARTMENT SPECIFICS

E-mail – The University and the department consider your university e-mail address an official means of communicating with you, so be sure to check this address daily if you do not have it forwarded.

The RLST-grads Listserv – The Graduate Program Assistant maintains an e-mail listserv for all graduate students in the department: rlst-grads@lists.colorado.edu. This listserv is used to communicate important information about deadlines, fellowships, job openings, events, etc. All students are subscribed with their colorado.edu e-mail addresses.

Department Website – The Religious Studies Department website is <http://colorado.edu/rlst>. Look here for up-to-date information about courses, faculty interests, and upcoming events, as well as for an annually updated version of this handbook. A department calendar of important events will also be listed for planning purposes. Graduate students will be listed on this website and will have information about research interests, contact information, TA/GA position (if applicable), office hours and location, and a photo. If, for any reason, you wish to change any information on the website, please contact the Graduate Program Assistant at religious.studies@colorado.edu

Photocopying and Scanning – The department's photocopy machine is available for graduate students. The access code is the last four digits of your student ID (not the same as the Buff One Card number). Use the photocopy machine for duplicating syllabi, paper assignments, and exams. The machine is also set up to allow for scans to your colorado.edu email address. Instructions for photocopy/scan use can be found in the copy room.

Offices – Graduate student teachers are assigned offices in either Eaton Humanities 260 or 216. Offices are shared, with a desk assigned to each TA/GA for the semester. At the end of each semester, it is your responsibility to remove any items (personal or department-related) so that the desk can be used by another student. It is also the collective students' responsibility to maintain a clean and orderly office environment by collecting and disposing of any garbage and cleaning out the microwave and refrigerator on a regular basis. Failure to maintain a clean office could result in loss of those amenities for graduate students.

Keys & Access – You will be assigned one key that will allow you access to your office as well as the copy room. In an effort to control key check-outs, you will be required to return your office key at the end of each academic year to Access Services. Additionally, students who do not have TA/GA appointments the following semester will also be required to return their office key at the end of the semester. It is the responsibility of the student to return the key to Access Services prior to the deadline set by the Graduate Program Assistant. You also have the ability to access different rooms/buildings on campus using your Buff One card. The Graduate Program Assistant can help you gain access to Eaton Humanities and the third floor Humanities library (HUMN 350) at your request.

Mailboxes – All graduate students will have mailboxes in the Religious Studies TA Office (HUMN 216). The mailboxes are listed alphabetically, and are changed out at the end of each academic year in order to allow for new graduate students. In addition, faculty and staff mailboxes can be found in the main copy/mail room in HUMN 273.

Graduate Student Organizations

The Student Organization for the Study of Religion (SOSR) is an organization of graduate and undergraduate students whose mission is to enrich the intellectual and community life of its members. The graduate students are encouraged to elect one or more members to serve as liaison to the department faculty, although the faculty is always open to the needs and concerns of any student.

United Government of Graduate Students (UGGS)

The United Government of Graduate Students (UGGS) represents the graduate and professional students at the university. UGGS provides a graduate voice in university decision-making, pursuing such issues as student fees, financial aid, graduate student employment, health care, child care, and more. UGGS members work with administrators, faculty, and other student groups, and they serve on university committees. UGGS also organizes events that give graduate and professional students the opportunity to learn about the university and diversify their academic experience by meeting people from other disciplines. These events include a new student orientation, a fall picnic, and a round table dinner. UGGS provides various services to graduate and professional students, such as teaching assistant awards and limited student group funding. The graduate students should elect a representative to the United Government of Graduate Students. <http://www.colorado.edu/uggs/>

Fellowships, Awards, and Grants

- I. Departmental fellowships will be awarded on the basis of the student's academic strength, as described under "Student Appointments" above.
- II. The Beverly Sears Graduate Student Grant provides awards of up to \$1000 to help support graduate students in projects and research activities. Deadlines can be found on the Graduate School's website.

- III. The Graduate Student Travel Fund provides assistance for graduate students presenting papers at a professional conference or convention. Awards are up to \$200 for domestic travel, \$300 for international travel. Application forms are available from the Director of Graduate Studies and must be approved by the department and submitted to the Graduate School at least three (3) weeks prior to the date of the travel period.
- IV. Look out for other announcements about graduate student funding from the Religious Studies Department, the Center for Humanities and the Arts, the Program in Jewish Studies, the Center for Asian Studies, and elsewhere.

CU BOULDER POLICIES

Student Ethics

Graduate students are expected to adhere to the highest standards of intellectual honesty and professional ethics in all areas of class work, research, publication, and teaching. Violations of these standards include cheating, plagiarism, or fabrication of research results. Breaches of academic integrity result in disciplinary measures, which can include any of the following: a failing grade for a particular assignment, a failing grade for a particular course, suspension or permanent expulsion from the university.

CU Boulder Student Honor Code

As a student and as a teacher, you will need to familiarize yourself with the policies and procedures of the CU Boulder Student Honor Code, which was first implemented in Fall 2002. These policies and procedures are too long to enumerate here; see <http://www.colorado.edu/policies/student-honor-code-policy> for information. Graduate students are also specially governed by the Graduate School's statement on Academic Ethics; see below.

Graduate School Statement on Academic Ethics

Graduate students are expected to adhere to the highest standards of intellectual honesty and professional ethics in all areas of class work, research, publication, and teaching. Violations of these standards include cheating, plagiarism, or fabrication of research results. Cheating in any form, such as copying from another person, using unauthorized sources, violating specified time limits for exams, or obtaining class materials without permission, is unacceptable.

Infractions of academic integrity policies come under the jurisdiction of the CU Boulder Honor Code. For information, refer to the honor code web site, at <http://www.colorado.edu/policies/student-honor-code-policy>.

Infractions of research conduct come under the jurisdiction of the Office of the Vice Chancellor for Research/Graduate School. For specific policies, see the Graduate School web site at <http://www.colorado.edu/policies/>.

Infractions of academic integrity policies come under the jurisdiction of the CU Boulder Honor Code. For information, refer to the honor code web site, at <http://honorcode.colorado.edu/>.
Infractions of research conduct come under the jurisdiction of the Office of the Vice Chancellor for Research/Graduate School.

For specific policies, see the Graduate School web site, at http://www.colorado.edu/Academics/research_misconduct_rules.html.

For the Graduate Student Bill of rights, go to: <http://www.colorado.edu/GraduateSchool/policies/billofrights.html>

CU Boulder Policy on Student Classroom and Course-Related Behavior

Students and faculty each have responsibility for maintaining an appropriate learning environment. Students who fail to adhere to behavioral standards may be subject to discipline. Faculty have the professional responsibility to treat students with understanding, dignity, and respect, to guide classroom discussion and to set reasonable limits on the manner in which students express opinions.

Disruptive students in the academic setting hinder the educational process. Although disruptive student conduct is already prohibited by Regent Laws and the Students' Rights and Responsibilities Regarding Standards of Conduct, the purpose of this policy is to clarify what constitutes disruptive behavior in the academic setting; what actions faculty and relevant Assistant/Associate Dean's offices may take in response to disruptive conduct; and the authority of the Office of Judicial Affairs to initiate disciplinary proceedings against students for disruptive conduct. The full policy can be found at: <http://www.colorado.edu/policies/student-classroom-and-course-related-behavior>.

CU Policy on Sexual Harassment

Policy Statement:

The University of Colorado is committed to maintaining a positive learning, working and living environment. The University does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, age, disability, creed, religion, sexual orientation, or veteran status in admission and access to, and treatment and employment in, its educational programs and activities. (Regent Law, Article 10, amended 11/8/2001). In pursuit of these goals, the University will not tolerate acts of sexual harassment or related retaliation against or by any employee or student. This Policy (1) provides a general definition of sexual harassment and related retaliation; (2) prohibits sexual harassment and related retaliation; and (3) sets out procedures to follow when a member of the University community believes a violation of the Policy has occurred. It is also a violation of this Policy for anyone acting knowingly and recklessly either to make a false complaint of sexual

harassment or to provide false information regarding a complaint. For the complete text, see <https://www.cu.edu/policies/aps/hr/5014.html>.

Departmental Grievances

A student who feels that he or she has been treated unfairly or outside of normal departmental policies is encouraged to attempt first to resolve a grievance with the faculty and/or staff member(s) involved. If this proves unsatisfactory, the grievance must be directed to the Chair of the department for formal departmental deliberation and consideration. If the student is dissatisfied at the departmental level, or all appeals have been exhausted, she or he may file a grievance with Graduate School in accordance with published grievance procedures.

Graduate School Academic Grievance Policy

This policy applies only to students enrolled in a graduate program at the University of Colorado at Boulder. Grievances covered by this policy include problems related to academic issues, such as arbitrary, inconsistent, or capricious actions taken against a graduate student; deviations from stated grading and examination policies as they appear on syllabi, on assignments, or in departmental guidelines for graduate study; failure to disclose in writing reasons behind termination or dismissal, either from the program or from employment or other support; coercion or unprofessional conduct on the part of classroom or research faculty; unfair treatment on issues related to graduate student appointments; unfairness in the application of graduate requirements or regulations; retaliation for a complaint or grievance; and generally speaking any actions taken by a program that relate to the rights of graduate students and that impair the student's ability to make normal progress toward the degree. If the issue being grieved is one that has resulted in a student's dismissal, the student retains the right to file a grievance on that issue for up to six months after the dismissal notice. In those instances where a graduate student has a complaint against researchers or staff in a campus research institute, a national laboratory, or in a setting governed by a federal grant whether on or off campus, the student's home academic department (the unit awarding the degree) is responsible for helping to achieve a remedy. The full policy can be found at: <http://www.colorado.edu/GraduateSchool/policies/>.