



**Arizona State University
Religious Studies PhD
Student Handbook**

2017-2018

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1. Introduction: Handbook Purpose and Student Responsibility

This handbook provides information on degree requirements for students enrolled in the Religious Studies PhD graduate program to ensure consistency in program objectives, maintain the quality of the degree to be awarded, and enable students to progress through their program in a timely manner. It also provides important web links for students concerning various policies and procedures set by Arizona State University, the Graduate College, the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences (CLAS), and the School of Historical, Philosophical, and Religious Studies (SHPRS) on academic standards expected from all students. The handbook and all program policies are reviewed annually and are subject to change.

It is the responsibility of each student to be familiar with policies and regulations of the Graduate College and Arizona State University and meet deadlines for registration and payment of fees. The resources for this information are the [ASU Graduate College Website](http://graduate.asu.edu/), the [ASU Catalog](https://catalog.asu.edu/), and the [Graduate Policies and Procedures Manual](#). Students should discuss questions concerning progress toward their degree with their Supervisory Committee Chair, the Director of Graduate Studies, and/or the Graduate Coordinator. Enrolled SHPRS graduate students can also find program procedures, forms, and references on the SHPRS PhD Graduate Blackboard: Blackboard > My Organizations > SHPRS PhD Graduate.

All university related e-mails are sent to the Student's ASU e-mail address. Students are required to have an active ASU e-mail account and check it frequently. A guide for establishing and maintaining an ASU e-mail account is found on this [website](#).

Resource	Email or Web Address	Location	Phone
Graduate College	http://graduate.asu.edu/	Interdisciplinary Bldg, B Wing, Room 170	(480) 965-6113
ASU Reference for Policies and Academic Schedules	https://catalog.asu.edu/		
SHPRS Director: Matthew Delmont	matthew.delmont@asu.edu	Coor Hall, 4 th Floor, Room 4482	
Associate Director of Graduate Studies, SHPRS & Director of Graduate Studies, Religious Studies: Miguel Aguilera	miguel.aguilera@asu.edu	Coor Hall, 6 th Floor, Room 4544	(480) 965-8576
PhD Graduate Programs Coordinator: Lindsey Plait Jones	lindseyplaitjones@asu.edu	Coor Hall, 4th Floor, Room 4587	(480) 727-3778
Student Health & Counseling Services	https://eoss.asu.edu/health	Health Services Bldg (by footbridge crossing University Drive)	(480) 965-3349 Crisis Hotline: (480) 921-1006
University Registrar	https://students.asu.edu/registration	Student Services Bldg, Suite 140	(480) 965-3124
International Student and Scholars Center	https://students.asu.edu/international/issc	Student Services Bldg, Suite 170	(480) 727-4776
Disability Resource Center	https://eoss.asu.edu/drc	Mathews Center Building, 1 st floor	(480) 965-1234

2. SHPRS Organization

The School of Historical, Philosophical, and Religious Studies (SHPRS) is housed in the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences (CLAS) and comprises the following discipline faculties: History, Philosophy, Religious Studies, and American Studies. The Director of SHPRS is the School's chief administrative officer responsible for the overall operation of the School (i.e. faculty, budget, facilities, university policies, school standards and procedures). The Director establishes an Executive Committee made up of the Associate Directors (Graduate Studies, Undergraduate Studies, and Research) and Heads of Faculty for each faculty to advise him on the needs and resources of their academic groups.

The School Director, in collaboration with the Associate Director of Graduate Studies (ADGS), selects a faculty member from each academic discipline to serve as Director of Graduate Studies (DGS) in their discipline. The DGS works with the discipline's faculty to develop new programs, assign Graduate Teaching Assistantships, monitor and ensure program integrity, determine program requirements, and resolve student issues. The Graduate Coordinator works with the ADGS and the DGS to monitor student progress and serve as a liaison between the University, ADGS, DGS, and the students.

3. Religious Studies PhD Program

The focus of the Religious Studies Doctoral program is to promote scholarly excellence and understanding about the ways in which religion has been a vital feature of the human condition and remains an important force in the world. Scholarly excellence is achieved through the ability to understand at least one foreign language, critically analyze primary and secondary sources, and the inculcation of strong writing skills needed for a professional career.

The PhD program enables the degree recipient to seek professional employment as a faculty member in higher education, a researcher, or a teacher. Students may enter the PhD program either directly from a bachelor's degree program or with a master's degree.

4. Affiliated Centers and Programs

[African American Studies Program](#)

[Arizona Center for Medieval and Renaissance Studies](#)

[Asian Pacific American Studies Program](#)

[Center for Asian Research](#)

[Center for the Study of Religion and Conflict](#)

[Hispanic Research Center](#)

[Jewish Studies](#)

[School of Human Evolution and Social Change](#)

[School of Social Transformation](#)

[School of Transborder Studies](#)

5. Religious Studies Graduate Faculty

Graduate Faculty in Religious Studies consists of [Religious Studies faculty internal to SHPRS](#) and Graduate Faculty from other ASU academic programs approved by the SHPRS Religious Studies Internal Unit Graduate Faculty to serve as Supervisory Committee members. A complete list of the Religious Studies Internal Unit Graduate Faculty can be found on the SHPRS [website](#). SHPRS Religious Studies Graduate Faculty including their possible Supervisory Committee roles (Chair/Member), dependent on RS DGS guidance and approval, can be found on this Graduate College [webpage](#).

6. Academic Integrity

The School of Historical, Philosophical, and Religious Studies strongly supports the high standard of academic integrity set by [Arizona State University](#). Failure of any graduate student to meet these standards, either in academic coursework or related research activities, may result in serious consequences including suspension or expulsion from the university or, if discovered after a degree is awarded, may result in the university revoking that degree.

Violations of academic integrity include the obvious offenses of cheating, fabricating information or results, falsifying academic records, tampering, and plagiarism, but also include aiding and/or facilitating such activities and, in some cases, failing to reference one's own work. It is extremely important that students become familiar with what academic integrity entails so they do not inadvertently violate University policy. The Graduate College recommends several websites to help students with academic integrity:

- [Acadia University Library's Plagiarism Tutorial](#)
- [ASU Graduate College: Be in The Know](#)
- [ASU Student Academic Integrity Resources](#)
- [CLAS Academic Integrity Webpage](#)

7. Research Integrity and Assurance

The Office of Research Integrity and Assurance's Institutional Review Board (IRB) oversees all research at ASU that involves living human or animal subjects. The IRB reviews all investigations that use questionnaires and/or interviews as part of the data to be included in the research project.

Students are required to contact the IRB in the planning stages of their research to obtain approval prior to initiating any investigations. The Office of Research Integrity and Assurance requires that the student's faculty committee member supervising the research also has IRB approval. When a dissertation document is submitted to Graduate College for format review, the document is also checked by IRB. Failure to follow the procedures set by the IRB may result in the student not being able to include the data collected for that particular research.

Further information can be found on the [Institutional Review Board](#) website.

8. Safety, Discrimination, and Harassment

All ASU students and student organizations are bound by the University's [Code of Conduct](#), which promotes an educational environment that encourages respect, honesty, safety, and collegiality. The Code of Conduct and directions for filing a report can be found on the [Dean of Students webpage](#). Students are encouraged to report any breach of the Code of Conduct or any concerns about other students or members of the ASU community to the Graduate Coordinator or DGS. Anonymous reports of misconduct may be filed with the Dean of Students using the [Campus Community Incident Report form](#). Additionally, ASU takes sexual violence seriously and aims to prevent sexual violence. More information and directions for handling incidents of sexual violence can be found on the [Sexual Violence Prevention website](#).

Institutions of higher education have a large community of people with a variety of backgrounds and beliefs and a large international presence. Arizona State University welcomes diversity among students, staff, faculty, and visitors. ASU has strict policies against discrimination based on race, color, religion,

national origin, citizenship, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, age, disability, and qualified veteran status. Providing a safe environment, free from harassment (sexual, religious, racial, etc.), is a priority concern for ASU and should be reported immediately when it occurs or is witnessed.

There are different types and levels of discrimination and harassment. Students should become aware of them so they are careful not to cause an offense and to recognize when they have become a victim. Descriptions can be found in the [Academic Affairs Manual](#). Students who witness offensive behavior or experience inappropriate and unwelcome responses should contact the [Office of Equity and Inclusion](#) (Phone: 480-965-5057). All information is kept confidential and it is the responsibility of everyone to report instances when observed. Retaliation against those who report such behavior is not tolerated and every effort will be made to protect those involved.

9. Enrollment and Tuition

A. Registration and Tuition

Graduate students register for courses through MyASU according to their enrollment appointment dates. Details regarding registration and course drop/add procedures are provided in the [Registration and Tuition Payment Guide](#).

A guide to tuition, tuition estimator, tax forms, and information about payment plans can be found on the [Student Business Services website](#).

B. Continuous Enrollment

Once admitted, students must enroll continuously, each fall and spring semester, until all requirements for the degree have been met. Students who have completed all course requirements should enroll in REL 795 Continuing Registration credits. Continuing Registration meets the continuous enrollment requirement but is not graded. A “Z” is assigned as the final grade.

The Graduate College will remove students from the program who fail to maintain continuous enrollment without obtaining an official leave approval from the Graduate College from the graduate program. The student may reapply for admission; however, the student must pay reapplication fees and re-admission is not guaranteed.

C. Full-Time Status

The Religious Studies PhD Graduate Program requires full-time study in the first two semesters after admission to their program, excluding summer semester, and encourages full-time enrollment each fall and spring until coursework is completed. Nine hours each semester is considered full-time for students who are not on TA or RA funding; six hours is considered full-time for students with TA or RA appointments. Audited courses do not count toward full-time enrollment. Students are strongly encouraged to enroll in nine hours each semester throughout the program (regardless of funding status) to achieve good progress through the curriculum and meet program expectations. More information is available on the Graduate College website under [“Registration and Enrollment”](#).

International F-1 and J-1 Visa students must maintain full-time enrollment status. Full-time enrollment exceptions must be approved by the International Student and Scholars Center. More information can be found in the [Graduate Policies and Procedures Manual](#), published by the Graduate College.

D. Enrollment Verification Requests

Students who have completed coursework and are enrolled in REL 795: Continuing Registration, but who wish to be considered half- or full-time for insurance or loan deferral purposes can submit an Enrollment Verification Request to the Graduate Coordinator, who will obtain the SHPRS Director's signature and submit the form to the Registrar on the student's behalf.

E. Withdrawal Requests

Before considering complete withdrawal, students should explore the possibility of "Incomplete" grades, which allow a student additional time to complete coursework based upon a documented agreement signed by the professor, student, and DGS. More information can be found in section 18 of this handbook. Questions should be directed to the Graduate Coordinator.

A student may apply for a leave status with the Graduate College in an extraordinary case in which serious illness or injury (medical leave), significant personal situation (compassionate leave) prevents a student from continuing classes, or in the case of military activation. This leave status cannot exceed a maximum of two semesters during the student's enrollment in their program. A student on leave is not required to pay fees but is not permitted to place demands on university faculty or use any university facilities including the library.

More information on withdrawals can be found on the [Graduate College Registration webpage](#). The [CLAS Medical/Compassionate Withdrawal webpage](#) is also an excellent resource. The [Doctoral Request to Maintain Continuous Enrollment form](#) can be found on the [Graduate College website](#). Students requesting leave who are on financial aid are strongly encouraged to consult [Financial Aid and Scholarship Services](#) prior to requesting the leave. International students with an F1/J1 visa must consult with the [International Students and Scholars Center](#) to discuss the immigration consequences that may result from their withdrawal from ASU.

10. Residency

Doctoral students in SHPRS must live in Tempe and maintain a presence in the department in their first years in the program as they complete coursework. Students sometimes wish to move elsewhere for research later in the program; this is permitted, though graduate students are encouraged to maintain regular contact and be an active and visible part of SHPRS. Living in state provides many benefits, including lower tuition with in-state residency classification. Students must live in Arizona for at least 12 months and file a petition with the ASU Registrar in order to qualify for in-state residency status. To gather more information and apply, please visit <https://students.asu.edu/residency>.

11. Program Progression

The doctoral program has two main goals: 1) To train graduate students for careers as scholars and teachers in the academic study of religion and 2) To provide supplementary training for graduate students in a range of related programs (including history, anthropology, political science, journalism, secondary education, and justice studies) who would benefit from greater expertise regarding the nature and role of religion around the world.

A. Phase I – Meet Requirements of MA Degree:

The student entering the PhD Program with a previously earned master's degree may request 30 credit hours be applied toward the total credit hours required for the PhD degree and begin their program in Phase II. The 30 credit hours are applied toward the 84 required hours for the program.

Students who have not earned a previous master's degree that has been approved for use in the program by the DGS will focus in the first phase on earning a Master's in Passing (MIP). Students who do not have an MA before entering the doctoral program do not receive an MA unless they fulfill all the requirements of the MA program while completing Phase I (including course work, language exams, and either a thesis or portfolio culminating event). Mastery of the Phase I course material is demonstrated by successful completion and oral defense of the thesis or the portfolio. For additional information on the MIP, please consult the PhD Program Coordinator and/or the DGS.

By the end of Phase I, students must complete the foreign language requirement.

B. Phase II – Coursework & Examinations

Students advance to Phase II of the program when the MIP degree is attained. Thirty to thirty-six hours of graduate level coursework related to the student's research area is taken to bring the total number of course hours to 60. Students who receive credit for a previous MA or the MIP will have 30 credit hours and must take an additional 30+ credit hours during Phase II.

During Phase II, students must pass written and oral comprehensive exams and successfully defend a dissertation prospectus.

C. Phase III – Candidacy

During Phase III, students complete all research and dissertation requirements (12 credit hours of 792 and 799 courses) and prepare to defend and submit their dissertations.

Students enrolled full-time in Phase II-III of the Religious Studies PhD program are able to complete program requirements and receive their degree within six years. The Graduate College requires degree completion within five years after passing the Comprehensive Examination or a maximum of ten consecutive years from the time of initial enrollment – whichever is shortest.

12. Doctoral Research Tracks

Students are required to select an area of study from one of five tracks: Global Christianity, Anthropology of Religion, Religions in the Americas, Religions in Asia, or Islam in a Global Context. Study in our tracks is complemented by faculty in Jewish Studies, Eastern Orthodoxy, and Religions of Russia.

In order to select a research track, students should submit a Research Track Selection Form along with their Interactive Plan of Study (iPOS), by April 1 of their first year in the program. This form is signed by the Supervisory Committee and approved by the Director of Graduate Studies for Religious Studies.

A. Global Christianity

Students in the Global Christianity track will critically examine Christianity as a global religion, both in its long historical context and in the contemporary world. Students will also consider the academic, intellectual, theological, and missiological dimensions of Christianity and its global extension. They will explore how political, economic, racial, and social factors have, in turn, shaped the face of Christianity across the world. Using a variety of tools, from ancient languages to post-colonial and race theory, students will be encouraged to investigate important questions about Christianity and its history, from considering the complex relationships between Christianity, modernity, and colonialism, to examining Christian ethics and conceptions of international relations and human rights. Faculty in the Global Christianity track will coordinate course offerings with the other Religious Studies PhD tracks.

B. Anthropology of Religion

The Anthropology of Religion track trains students to account for and engage in research and teaching about the complex and dynamic roles of religion in the world today. Students develop mastery of social theory and ethnographic methods in order to understand the religious idioms and cultural practices that underline many contemporary human behaviors and political ideologies. The Anthro of Religion track formalizes new directions in the field that reflect the dramatic changes religion is undergoing in contemporary cultures and includes debates in cultural identities, post-colonialism, modernity, globalization, gender, traditional values, public discourses in multi-cultural milieus, and media practices. Students in this track are required to take our ethnographic theory and methods seminar and conduct ethnographic fieldwork for their dissertation in the target populations' pertinent language(s).

C. Religions in the Americas

Students in the Religions of the Americas track focus on a religious tradition or traditions within one of the regions of the Americas, such as North America, Central America, or South America, as appropriate to the focus of the dissertation project. Expertise acquired will include an understanding of religious traditions and practices in their cultural and historical contexts, the study of the relevant language(s), and related course work in history, literature, anthropology, art history, or other fields. Our thematic and/or theoretical research focus trains students in the professional mastery of a body of literature, traditions, and religious practices within the academic study of religion. Topics can include, but are not limited to, both indigenous and immigrant religions and their expressions in Canada, the United States, Mexico, and the nations within Central and South America.

D. Religions in Asia

Students in the Religions in Asia track focus on a religious tradition or traditions within one of the regions of Asia, such as South Asia, Southeast Asia, or East Asia, as appropriate to the dissertation project. Expertise acquired will include an understanding of religious traditions and practices in their cultural and historical contexts, the study of the relevant language(s), and related course work in history, literature, anthropology, art history, media studies, global studies, or other fields. Topics can include, but are not limited to, the concepts, histories, and practices of any of the religious traditions in the regions of Asia including their transnational expansion to and interaction with other regions of the world.

E. Islam in a Global Context

Students in the Islam in a Global Context track develop a transdisciplinary approach drawing on anthropology, sociology, history, and religious studies. We provide students with theoretical tools, conceptual sophistication, and historical and cultural background for studying Islam in various contexts. Students situate their work within particular cultural formations and utilize the language(s) relevant to their project. They draw and expand on projects that are globally or thematically defined or geographically grounded in the Arab Middle East and North Africa, Iran, South and Southeast Asia, Africa, Russia, or beyond. Students engage issues such as ethics, peace and violence, memory and traumatic histories, power, performative embodied practices, state formations, political modalities, social movements, gender, sexuality, race, modernity, urbanism, postcoloniality, globalization, and migration.

F. Religion and Conflict

Within each Religious Studies track of study, students may choose to focus on issues in Religion and Conflict, including religious discourse in the public sphere, religious violence and nation states, religious conflict and the secular, debates over religion and science, and comparative ethics and theories of religious or just war. Students interested in these topics may be interested in contacting faculty affiliated with the [Center for the Study of Religion and Conflict](#).

13. Supervisory Committee

The Graduate College requires all graduate students to establish a Supervisory Committee to direct their graduate study. A Supervisory Committee has three basic charges:

- Recommend and approve the student's plan of study.
- Advise a student regarding the topic and for a dissertation.
- Administer the final oral examination in defense of the dissertation.

The Supervisory Committee must be comprised of at least three committee members: a Chair and two other members. An additional one to two members may be added, one of which can be external to ASU, up to a maximum of five committee members.

A. Chair and Member Selection

Each graduate student is responsible for choosing a Chair as primary dissertation director and advisor. In making this important choice, students should consider several qualities of a potential Chair: expertise in a particular religious tradition, geographical area, theory and/or methodology, availability, scholarly reputation, and the possibilities for developing a good working relationship.

In most cases, students will choose a Chair because of that professor's expertise in a religious tradition or geographical area. Students interested in Buddhism, for example, will normally work with one of our Buddhologists; those working in the Americas will study with one of our Americanists. Supporting members of the student's Supervisory Committee should complement the methodological and/or theoretical strengths of the Chair and bring historical and/or geographical expertise.

The student's Chair must be a tenured or tenure-track member of the Religious Studies Internal Unit Graduate Faculty endorsed to Chair. The student and the Supervisory Committee Chair work together to develop a plan of study, dissertation topic, and research plan.

Students have the option of having two faculty members serve as Co-Chairs (Co-Directors and Co-Advisors). Co-Chairs must be tenured or tenure track faculty members in the Religious Studies Internal Unit Graduate Faculty. The student's choices of Chair, or Co-Chairs, and other members of their Supervisory Committee are subject to DGS approval and should therefore be consulted beforehand.

All Supervisory Committee members need to be approved by the Director of Graduate Studies and the Graduate College and at least two members, including the Chair(s), must be Religious Studies Internal Unit Graduate Faculty. The Supervisory Committee's Chair(s) and members should be selected by April 1 of the student's first year.

B. Supervisory Committee Selection Form

Supervisory Committee members must be selected by April 1 of each student's first year in the academic program. Once a Chair has been selected, the student prints and completes the Committee Selection Form from the SHPRS Graduate Blackboard page, obtains the signature of the Chair and additional members, and submits the form to the Graduate Coordinator, who will obtain a signature from the DGS. The student can then enter the Supervisory Committee members on their iPOS.

C. External Supervisory Committee Members

Religious Studies students may select one university faculty member not affiliated with ASU or the Religious Studies Graduate Faculty to serve on their Supervisory Committee. To get approval to appoint an external member, students need to submit the [Committee Approval Request – Individual Student Committee form](#) to the Graduate Coordinator, along with the external member's current CV. Students

who wish to appoint an external member are to add him or her as fourth or fifth committee member in addition to at least three faculty members from within the SHPRS Religious Studies Graduate Faculty.

D. Supervisory Committee Member Changes

Faculty listed on the student's Plan of Study serve as his or her Supervisory Committee. Supervisory Committee member changes, including that of Chair, must first be approved by the DGS with his or her consultation and advice, and then submitted through the online iPOS system for final approval by the Graduate College. A student may not change the Chair of their committee more than once, except in the case of the Chair leaving the department during a student's time in the program.

The student completes the Supervisory Committee Member Change Request form to request a change and submits it to the PhD Graduate Coordinator. The form is found on the SHPRS PhD Graduate Blackboard page (MyASU>Blackboard>My Organizations>SHPRS PhD Graduate> Forms). Students must obtain the actual signatures from the Chair, outgoing member(s), new member(s), the remaining Supervisory Committee, and finally the DGS. The student then submits the original form with signatures to the PhD Graduate Coordinator.

14. Interactive Plan of Study (iPOS)

Students enrolled in graduate programs at ASU are required to file an online Plan of Study with Graduate College. The online Plan is referred to as the iPOS – Interactive Plan of Study – and is accessed through the student's MyASU, under the "My Programs and Degree" section. The Plan of Study serves as an agreement between the student, academic unit, and the Graduate College in identifying the selected Supervisory Committee to verify the quality and acceptability of the culminating document, what the culminating document will be, and coursework required for the degree. **Students must submit the iPOS by April 1st of their first year.** The iPOS must be approved by the student's Chair, the Director of Graduate Studies, and Graduate College.

iPOS "hard copy" worksheets can be found on the SHPRS PhD Graduate Blackboard. Students complete the worksheet in consultation with their Chair and list the courses they agree to take in order to meet program requirements. Students need to follow the steps below to complete the iPOS process:

1. Complete the iPOS hard copy worksheet with their Chair and then work through the iPOS process in MyASU.
2. Submit a screenshot of courses to their Chair before final submission.
3. Obtain Chair approval of iPOS (through e-mail or in writing, using the screenshot) and submit this approval to the Graduate Coordinator who will obtain DGS approval.
4. Submit final iPOS through MyASU.

Note: Graduate Coordinators cannot approve an iPOS without receiving Chair and DGS approval first.

Since students are required to identify courses for future semesters on the iPOS, they should enter courses that best match program requirements and their area of interest. Students should enter course changes as they progress through the program. Before taking courses not listed on the iPOS, students must obtain approval from their Chairs to add those classes to the iPOS. Changes are easily requested through the iPOS system, though students should also receive written permission (through e-mail) from their Chairs, which they should forward to the PhD Graduate Coordinator, who approves such requests.

15. Transfer Credits

Students entering the PhD Program with a previously earned master's degree in Religious Studies or a related field may request 30 credit hours be applied toward the total credit hours required for the degree, reducing the total hours to 54.

Students may request that graduate credit earned at ASU, or while attending another accredited university, be used toward program requirements if the coursework was completed within three years of the first semester of admission to the Religious Studies program. Courses must be related to the student's research and not have been used toward a previous degree. A total of 12 hours can be used, contingent upon the approval of the student's Chair and the DGS.

An original transcript showing an MA degree was awarded or, in the case of transfer course, coursework showing a final grade for the courses, needs to be on file with the Office of Graduate Admissions. The student submits a written request with a copy of the syllabus and a statement or support from his or her Chair in support of the request to the PhD Graduate Coordinator. The PhD Graduate Coordinator will present the request to the DGS and notify the student with the decision.

16. GPA and Grade Requirements

Students enrolled in the Religious Studies PhD program are required to maintain a minimum grade point average of 3.5 on the iPOS GPA, Overall Graduate GPA, and Cumulative GPA. The iPOS GPA is based on all courses that appear on a student's approved iPOS. The Cumulative GPA represents all courses completed at ASU during the graduate career. The Overall Graduate GPA is calculated based on all courses numbered 500 or higher that appear on the transcript after admission to the program. These GPAs are all visible through MyASU. If a student's GPA falls below 3.5, the student is automatically placed on academic probation for one semester with the expectation that the GPA will improve and meet the requirement by the end of the following semester. Failure to raise the GPA and meet other terms set in the academic probation letter may result in dismissal from the program. The DGS may also recommend a student for dismissal from the program if the following situations occur:

- Student receives three C or lower grades in courses taken after admission to the program.
- Student's Cumulative GPA, iPOS GPA, or Overall Graduate GPA falls below 3.5 for two consecutive semesters.
- It becomes impossible for a student to graduate with a 3.5 iPOS GPA.

17. Satisfactory Academic Progress

Graduate students are expected to make steady progress towards completion of their degrees. Students must meet the standards and deadlines of the Graduate College as well as the requirements established by the Religious Studies graduate program, as stated in this handbook, to maintain satisfactory progress in their respective degree program. Students who fail to meet requirements will receive written notice from the DGS identifying the deficiency and be given the opportunity to meet with the DGS to discuss difficulties the student may be having in reaching goals of the program. The student's Chair may be included in this meeting. A written plan will be set in place by the DGS, giving the student specific steps to remedy the deficiency and a time period to complete the plan, during which the student will be placed on academic probation for a specific period identified in the letter. Students placed on probation may be restricted from teaching courses or being otherwise employed in the department and may lose funding.

When the student remedies the deficiency satisfactorily, the probation will be lifted and a new letter issued stating that the student is back in good standing. Failure to resolve the issue as directed will result in one or more of the following options:

- Termination of funding, if any.
- Recommendation from the Director of the School of Historical, Philosophical, and Religious Studies to the Graduate College to dismiss the student from the degree program.

A recommendation of immediate dismissal may occur under certain circumstances, such as:

- Failure to follow proper procedure set by the office of Research Integrity and Assurance.
- Violation of the University's academic integrity policies.
- Unprofessional or threatening behavior in a classroom, internship, or any public setting in which the student is representing their degree program, the School of Historical, Philosophical, and Religious Studies, or Arizona State University.
- Student's GPA falls below a 3.5.

The student will be notified in writing that he or she is recommended for dismissal and will be given ten business days to appeal the dismissal decision or complete a voluntary withdrawal. Voluntary withdrawal from the program will avoid the notation of a dismissal on the student's record. To appeal a dismissal recommendation, the student should follow guidelines set out in the dismissal letter and contact the Director of the School of Historical, Philosophical, and Religious Studies in writing by the specified date. All mail and email will be sent to the addresses on file for the student. The student is responsible for checking mail regularly. A student may appeal any action concerning dismissal through the Graduate Council Appeals Board (GCAB).

18. Grades

A. Overview

Graduate students need to maintain high grades in all courses in order to show mastery of course material and skills. ASU's grading scale can be found on the [Grades and Grading Policies webpage](#). Translations of numerical grades (1-100) into letter grades ("A" through "E") can be acquired from instructors. In rare cases, graduate courses are offered on a Pass/Fail basis, in which case a student will earn either a "Y" to indicate passage or an "E" to indicate failure. A grade of "Y" contributes to a student's earned hours but does not affect GPA. A failing grade of "E" is calculated into a student's GPA. Courses with grades of "D", "E", or "W" and audited courses (graded as "X") cannot be included on an iPOS.

Students who wish to dispute a grade should refer to the [CLAS Academic \(Grade\) Grievance webpage](#).

B. Auditing Courses

In some cases, students may choose to audit a class, allowing them to attend but not earn credit. Students must obtain approval from the instructor and their supervisory committee chair prior to enrollment. Auditing is not an option for every course; contact the Graduate Coordinator to determine whether auditing is an option. This grading option may not be changed after the drop/add period has ended. Audited courses are given a final grade of "X". Audited courses do not count toward full-time enrollment calculations or the minimum number of credits required for international students with visa restrictions, students employed as TA/RAs, or students receiving financial assistance. Audited courses do not satisfy Graduate College continuous enrollment policies.

C. Incomplete Grades

If a student doing acceptable work in a course needs additional time to complete coursework after the end of a term because of extenuating circumstances (illness or other circumstances beyond a student's control), an "Incomplete Grade Request" form must be completed by the student and professor and filed with the Graduate Coordinator at the end of the term in which the "I" is entered. The form can be found on the on the SHPRS Graduate Blackboard and on [ASU's website](#).

Graduate students should avoid taking a grade of "I" (Incomplete) for any graded course work. SHPRS strongly encourages students to finish any coursework for incompletes in a timely manner, within one month of the end of the term. Per university policy, coursework for classes marked "Incomplete" must be completed, and the grade must be changed, within one academic year. The instructor is responsible for entering the student's final grade. If the "I" grade is not replaced with a final grade within one year of the official end of the course, it will remain permanently incomplete.

No student may accumulate more than two incompletes at any one time. Should this situation occur, the Director of Graduate Studies will recommend the student be barred from taking a full load of course work until one or more of the incompletes are removed, which can affect the student's ability to apply for SHPRS and ASU funding. Students accruing two incompletes in one semester will automatically be placed on academic probation. Students with three incompletes on a graduate transcript can register for no more than one course and will lose any graduate assistantship they hold and will be placed on probation. Students violating these conditions or who fail to meet the requirements of probation will be recommended for dismissal from the program.

19. Annual Review of Students

The Religious Studies faculty annually reviews all graduate students. The purpose of this review is to provide students with feedback about their progress through the program and concerns the faculty may have with their work. The annual review provides an opportunity for students to keep the faculty in general, and their committees, specifically informed of their professional activities and accomplishments during the past year and whether or not they are making timely progress towards degree completion. Students are required to submit an annual self-evaluation that their Chair will use to prepare a presentation for the DGS and Graduate Affairs Committee.

Each faculty member reviews each student for whom he or she is a Chair. After each student is reviewed, the student's Chair, in conjunction with the DGS, will prepare a letter reporting to the student their progress, performance, and concerns.

20. Foreign Language Requirement(s)

The foreign language requirement specifies proficiency in the language(s) of both primary sources and scholarly literature in the major field of specialization. The specific foreign language(s) required is determined by the student's Supervisory Committee, who may require two languages or more. At least one foreign language requirement must be met. Proficiency in reading will be required of all students and will be established by passing the language exam(s) administered through the School of International Letters and Cultures (SILC) at ASU. The SILC examination is required for all students with the language requirement and may include students, subject to DGS discretion, who have taken courses or reported proficiency by other methods.

Language exams are offered two times per year by the School of International Letters and Cultures (SILC) at ASU. Exam applications ([obtained from the SILC Placement & Testing webpage](#)), with the selected book, must be submitted to the School of International Letters and Cultures approximately one month before the scheduled exam date. Students must complete the Religious Studies Program Foreign Language Approval form prior to scheduling the exam through the School of International Letters and Cultures. The form requires justification for the selected language, exam book selected, as well as Supervisory Committee and DGS approval. The language exam form can be found on the SHPRS PhD Graduate Blackboard site.

The Foreign Language exam:

- Must be in the foreign language designated by the student's Supervisory Committee;
- Must be a minimum of 200 pages;
- Must be a scholarly work;
- May not be fiction or poetry;
- Must relate to the student's closest relevant field of study or research (language learning books from foreign language courses *may not* be used);
- The chosen foreign language and text to be used for the exam *must* be justified by the Supervisory Committee and approved *in advance* by the DGS of Religious Studies. This *includes* re-examinations.

Students will be graded on their ability to translate a short text from the foreign language being tested into coherent English. Translations should include main ideas and important details of the passage. Test results are Pass/Fail. Students obtain a "Pass" grade if:

- Translated text contains main ideas and important details of the foreign language text;
- Vocabulary and grammar contain main ideas and important details of the foreign language text;
- English translation consists of grammatically correct sentences that form a coherent text that stands on its own as an understandable piece of prose.

Students who do not pass the language test on the first try may retake the exam once. If a student fails the exam on the second attempt, he or she must meet with his or her Chair and DGS of Religious Studies to determine probation toward the degree which will likely result in a recommendation to dismiss the student from the program.

Undergraduate language classes taken to obtain proficiency for the foreign language requirement do not count toward the total number of hours needed for the program or used to meet proficiency in a language.

21. Coursework

A. Required Coursework for All Religious Studies Tracks

Students entering the program with an approved MA must complete 54 credits to complete the program. Those entering without an MA must complete 84 credits. All Religious Studies doctoral students, regardless of their track, take the following core courses:

- REL 501 Classical Theories of Religion (3 credits)
- REL 502 Research Methods in Religious Studies (3 credits)
- REL 700 Introduction to College Teaching (3 credits). A three-unit course focused on pedagogical methods and instructional design. Students are required to complete and pass this course before they will be authorized to teach an independent course.
- CDH 501 Digital Humanities: Critical Theory & Methods (3 credits). Course focuses on the histories of digital technologies, their operations, popular conceptions about such tools, and their affordances and limits for humanities scholarship. Students learn how to leverage digital technologies and how to critically read them. Students are encouraged to utilize their final projects to engage specific disciplinary digital tools and methods relevant to their scholarly work.
- REL 792 Research (12 credits)
- REL 799 Dissertation (12 credits)

B. Curriculum for Anthropology of Religion

Anthropology of Religion Track doctoral students take the following core courses in addition to electives:

- REL 501 Classical Theories of Religion (3 credits)
- REL 502 Research Methods in Religious Studies (3 credits)
- REL 700 Introduction to College Teaching (3 credits)
- CDH 501 Digital Humanities (3 credits)
- REL 620 Anthropological Theories of Religion (3 credits) - Basic theories from Levi-Strauss and Victor Turner to the work of Marshall Sahlins, Maurice Bloch, David Scott, etc.
- REL 621 Ethnography of Religion (3 credits) - Ethnographic theory and method approaches to recording and studying lived cultural practice.
- REL 626 Topics in the Anthropology of Religion (3 credits) - Under this rubric, faculty offer seminars on thematic concerns germane to the track, such as the anthropology of ritual, memory, modernity, post-colonialism, conflict and revolution, hybridity, peacemaking and secularism, semiotics, conversion, iconography, embodiment, material culture, etc.
- REL 792 Research (12 credits)
- REL 799 Dissertation (12 credits)

Electives, which may not replace the courses listed above, may include:

- REL 625 Topics in Anthropology of Religious Cultures or REL 626 Topics in the Anthropology of Religion
- REL 598 Special Topics
- REL 591 or 691 Seminars
- Courses from a related discipline – 500 level or above –which support student’s research (up to 6 credits) (For example, seminars from SHESC relating to Anthropology)
- REL 690 Reading & Conference Course (up to 3 credits)

C. Curriculum for Global Christianity Track

Global Christianity track doctoral students take the following core courses in addition to electives:

- REL 501 Classical Theories of Religion (3 credits)
- REL 502 Research Methods in Religious Studies (3 credits)

- REL 700 Introduction to College Teaching (3 credits)
- CDH 501 Digital Humanities (3 credits)
- REL 510 Religion and Globalization (3 credits)
- REL 570 Global Christianity (3 credits)
- Minimum of 12 hours of graduate courses that have Christianity as a primary focus. Examples of such courses include: Missionary Encounter, Mission and Indigenous Christianity in Latin America, and Eastern Christianity.
- REL 792 Research (12 credits)
- REL 799 Dissertation (12 credits)

Electives, which may not replace the courses listed above, may include:

- REL 598 Special Topics
- REL 591 or 691 Seminars
- Courses from a related discipline – 500 level or above – which support student’s research (up to 6 credits)
- REL 690 Reading & Conference Course (up to 3 credits)

D. Curriculum for Religions in the Americas

Religions in the Americas track doctoral students take the following core courses in addition to electives:

- REL 501 Classical Theories of Religion (3 credits)
- REL 502 Research Methods in Religious Studies (3 credits)
- REL 700 Introduction to College Teaching (3 credits)
- CDH 501 Digital Humanities (3 credits)
- REL 792 Research (12 credits)
- REL 799 Dissertation (12 credits)

Electives, which may not replace the courses listed above, may include:

- REL 598 Special Topics
- REL 591 or 691 Seminars
- Courses from a related discipline – 500 level or above –which support student’s research (up to 6 credits) (For example, seminars from SHESC relating to Anthropology)
- REL 690 Reading & Conference Course (up to 3 credits)

E. Curriculum for Islam in a Global Context

Islam in a Global Context track doctoral students take the following core courses in addition to electives:

- REL 501 Classical Theories of Religion (3 credits)
- REL 502 Research Methods in Religious Studies (3 credits)
- REL 700 Introduction to College Teaching (3 credits)
- CDH 501 Digital Humanities (3 credits)
- REL 792 Research (12 credits)
- REL 799 Dissertation (12 credits)

Electives, which may not replace the courses listed above, may include:

- REL 598 Special Topics
- REL 591 or 691 Seminars
- Courses from a related discipline – 500 level or above –which support student’s research (up to 6 credits) (For example, seminars from SHESC relating to Anthropology)
- REL 690 Reading & Conference Course (up to 3 credits)

F. Curriculum for Religions in Asia

Religions in Asia track doctoral students take the following core courses in addition to electives:

- REL 501 Classical Theories of Religion (3 credits)
- REL 502 Research Methods in Religious Studies (3 credits)
- REL 700 Introduction to College Teaching (3 credits)
- CDH 501 Digital Humanities (3 credits)
 - REL 792 Research (12 credits)
 - REL 799 Dissertation (12 credits)

Electives, which may not replace the courses listed above, may include:

- REL 598 Special Topics
- REL 591 or 691 Seminars
- Courses from a related discipline – 500 level or above –which support student’s research (up to 6 credits) (For example, seminars from SHESC relating to Anthropology)
- REL 690 Reading & Conference Course (up to 3 credits)

G. 400-Level Courses

Graduate students may, with advisor and DGS approval, take up to 6 credits of 400-level courses as electives (to be included in the iPOS) in the case that appropriate graduate courses are not available. 400-level courses taken prior to admission and 400-level courses graded as “Pass/Fail” are not acceptable. 400-level courses not listed on the iPOS do not satisfy the Graduate College continuous enrollment policy; graduate level courses must be taken concurrently to satisfy this requirement.

H. Reading and Conference Courses

These custom-arranged course with a single professor support student preparation in their research. They allow a student to do intensive reading with the objective of acquiring a sophisticated knowledge of a topic. For 3-credits of Readings and Conference, students are expected to read the equivalent of a book each week during the semester. Reading and Conference courses cannot replace required seminars.

To obtain approval for a Reading and Conference Course, the student must submit a 1-2 page written proposal and the Reading and Conference Request Form (found on the PhD Graduate Blackboard) to their Chair and the DGS that states the reason for the independent study, how it relates to the student’s research plan, the content of the course (syllabus), and how the student’s knowledge will be evaluated. A resource list that provides information on readings and/or other methods that may be used to support the proposed course must also be provided. This must be done and submitted with all signatures to the Graduate Coordinator several weeks before the start of the semester to allow time for the course to be created and the student to register.

22. Teaching Assistantships

Students who receive teaching assistantships (TAs) will be assigned as graders in courses taught by faculty or advanced graduate students. In the first semester of the teaching assistantship, students must be assigned to experienced instructors. In accordance with ABOR regulations, faculty must provide instruction in teaching and written feedback to their teaching assistants. Students will be required to teach one class period, with the faculty member present, in each course to which they are assigned. The faculty member will then provide written feedback to the student.

[The TA/RA Handbook](#), published by Graduate College, clarifies all conditions of TA appointment, benefits (tuition remission, insurance, parental leave), and University policies. The [ASU TA Resource Guide](#) provides clarity on TA roles and responsibilities, designing syllabi, instruction, and addressing concerns or problems. TAs should become familiar with both of these resources before beginning an assistantship. Any problems that cannot be resolved in concert with the assigned faculty member should be addressed to the DGS or the SHPRS Director. Teaching Assistantships and Associateships are extended to students on an annual or semester basis and are renewed based on the availability of funding and the student's satisfactory fulfillment of related duties and progress in the academic program. Continuation of funding should not be assumed, but is confirmed by letter that must be signed and returned to the department. The Director of Graduate Studies has to offer and renew funding. Students who do not adequately fulfill their duties as TAs or make appropriate academic progress while on TA funding may be placed on probation and/or removed from funding in subsequent years.

Newly hired TAs must attend the Teaching Assistant/Associate Development (TAD) Program offered by ASU. Orientation information and professional development activities are listed on the [TAD webpage](#). International Teaching Assistants must [prove English proficiency](#) before they begin teaching by passing the SPEAK Test with a score of 55 or higher or the iBT (Internet-Based TOEFL) with a score of 26 or higher on the oral portion of the test. In the event that an international student required to take the SPEAK Test has not become fully certified to teach, the assigned faculty member must meet regularly with the student to provide guidance in instructional design.

The Religious Studies program offers doctoral students the opportunity to do independent teaching before they graduate. Prior to teaching their first course, students must complete and pass REL 700 Introduction to College Teaching.

23. Doctoral Comprehensive Examination

The Comprehensive Examination is designed to ensure the student's mastery of the field, including its broader issues, theories, and key findings. The exam also tests the student's ability to organize, synthesize, and analyze a substantial corpus of knowledge and reading in response to questions posed by the faculty. The comprehensive consists of two parts: written and oral. The examination committee is composed of at least three tenured or tenure-track faculty members who are usually, but not always, the student's Supervisory Committee. At least two of the three members must be members of the Religious Studies Internal Unit Graduate Faculty. Students entering with a BA are expected to pass comprehensive exams in their fourth or fifth year in the program; students entering with an approved MA are expected to pass comprehensive exams by the end of their third year in the program. Failure to pass exams in a timely manner will result in academic probation, which may lead to dismissal from the program.

Students qualify for comprehensive examination when they have completed Phase II, have an approved Plan of Study, and have completed the language requirement(s). When the Chair decides that the comprehensive stage has been reached by the student, the Chair will e-mail the DGS (copying the PhD Graduate Coordinator) to request the examination, provide the names of the committee members, and inform the date and time of the exam. Comprehensive examinations can be taken in the fall or spring semester. In order to take the comprehensive examination, the student is required to be registered for one of the following:

- At least one semester hour of credit that appears on the Plan of Study.
- At least one semester hour of appropriate graduate-level credit, for example: Research (792) or Continuing Registration (795).
- At least one hour of a graduate-level course.

A. Comprehensive Examination Preparation

Bibliographies, reading lists, and conceptual frames for each of the three examination test areas should begin amongst the student and all examination committee members as early as a year prior to the planned examination time. The student is required to meet with his or her examination committee several months prior to the comprehensive exams in order to begin to form a shared understanding of the student's interests and project as well as the role of each faculty within it.

Each student, in preparation for the comprehensive exams, along with their Chair prepares a reading list covering key sub-areas of the student's research area and includes major works defining those areas (the sub-areas must be approved by the Chair). The reading list needs to be approved by the student's entire Supervisory Committee (no formal meeting is required for such approval).

Reading lists are extensive, open-ended, and position the field of study in relation to the student's research areas. Recognizing that there are important publications in each field, the faculty in Religious Studies does not use standard reading lists for comprehensive exams or standardized exam questions. As no two exams are alike, there are no sample questions on file. Chairs can share past reading lists or exam questions, if available as an illustration or example; however, students should expect their exam questions to be uniquely formulated in relation to their research areas.

Faculty provide each student with a sense of the type of questions they may ask and are explicit about the high level of competence they expect from their student in the exams. A student should have a general sense about what kind of exam questions to expect. Students should have an outline in mind prior to starting the exam and bring their own research interests in conversation with the strengths and weaknesses of the literature in each examination field. Students may want to make reference to different sections of their comps (e.g. "I discussed this in greater detail in Question #1") to avoid repetitive answers.

B. Written Examination

The written portion of the comprehensive examination is presented through the Religious Studies Comprehensive Blackboard. It consists of three written exams – one for each of the following areas:

- Method and theory in the academic study of religion.
- Major world area of study.
- Major religious tradition of study.

Comprehensive examination questions are released to the student one at a time on specified dates and times during a five-day period. One question is given each day, usually Monday, Wednesday, and Friday of one week. The student has four hours to complete and upload each response. Students submit their responses through Safe Assignment that is provided on the Blackboard site.

C. Oral Examination

After the student has completed all parts of the written exam and the examination committee has reviewed their answers, the student will undergo a culminating oral exam. The oral requirement usually takes place between seven to fourteen days after completion of the written portion. The oral examination tests a student's ability to engage in discussion of issues relevant to his or her fields of competence. The focus will be on the student's answers to the written examination questions as well as the student's proposed dissertation topic. In cases where some or all of the written examinations are below the Pass level, a strong oral exam is necessary in order for the student to pass the comprehensive examination. The Student's Chair is charged with convening and administering the oral exam.

Each student is responsible for scheduling the rooms in which the oral examinations take place by filling out a [Room Reservation request](#) or coordinating with the Coor Hall 4th floor front desk staffer, who can be reached at (480) 965-5778.

D. Exam Results

The PhD Graduate Coordinator provides a “Religious Studies Comprehensive Exam Results Form” to the Chair of the examining committee prior to the start of the exam. Examination committee members discuss student responses and record their individual decisions of the outcome on each exam on the results form. The committee Chair submits the completed form to the DGS for approval and then the PhD Graduate Coordinator submits the outcome to the Graduate College.

To pass the comprehensive examination, a student must score a Pass, or Pass with Distinction, on all written examinations and complete the oral examination at a passing level as determined by the examining committee. When the members of an examining committee agree that a student did not successfully complete the comprehensive exam, the Chair of the committee must gather comments from the other members and write a summarized explanation as to why the student failed and a recommendation given as to whether the student should be permitted to re-take the exam if the student decides to petition to do so. The Chair meets with the student to discuss the report.

Students who fail the comprehensive exam may petition the Graduate College for a re-examination by completing the [Petition to the Graduate College form](#). Students need to obtain physical signatures, at the committee member’s individual discretion, for this petition in the following order: each member of the examining committee followed by the Director of Graduate Studies.

Religious Studies does not allow a third retake of the comprehensive examination. Failure of the comprehensive examination will lead to dismissal from the PhD program.

24. Dissertation Prospectus

Students are required to complete a dissertation prospectus that must be approved by their Supervisory Committee within one academic year (two semesters) of the date they passed their comprehensive exam. The student failing to meet the deadline must meet with their Chair and the DGS to discuss their progress.

A. Prospectus Format

The prospectus explains the focus of the research proposed, its relevance, its location within the wider discourse in the field, the contributions the project will make to this conversation, a time line, a discussion of methods, and a general outline of the dissertation chapters. Students need to confer with their Chair before preparing the prospectus for advice concerning its format. The proposal should include:

- Clear statement of the **major research question** addressed in the dissertation.
- Thorough **literature review** of sufficient scope making the problem statement fully comprehensible. The literature review needs to provide the reader with a clear and concise understanding of the current scholarly discourse about the major question and shows how the project contributes in an original way to its broader scholarly discourse.
- Outline the **sources** of data and defend the selection of those sources.
- Detail the **methods** employed in the research project.
- Plans for obtaining IRB approval, if necessary.
- Extensive bibliography of the relevant literature.

Proposals submitted to funding agencies can often be re-worked into a dissertation prospectus.

B. Prospectus Review & Defense

When the student completes the prospectus document, the student submits a copy to each member of the prospectus committee and arranges a date and time for the oral defense. Students reserve a room for the defense by submitting a [Room Reservation](#) request online or coordinating with the Coor Hall 4th floor front desk staffer, who can be reached at (480) 965-5778.

A Prospectus Defense Result Form can be downloaded from the SHPRS PhD Graduate Blackboard and the student takes this form to the defense. The Chair of the committee is responsible for obtaining the signatures of the committee members and submitting the form to the PhD Graduate Coordinator who will submit the form to the DGS for final signature.

C. Defense Results

If the prospectus committee agrees that the defense was not successful, the Chair gathers comments from the other members and writes a summarized explanation as to why the student failed and a recommendation given as to whether the student should be permitted to re-take the defense if the student decides to petition to do so. The Chair meets with the student to discuss the report.

Students who fail the prospectus defense may petition the Graduate College for a re-examination. Petitions are initiated by completing the [Petition to the Graduate College form](#). Students will need to obtain signatures, at the committee member's discretion, for this form in the following order: each member of the examining committee followed by the Director of Graduate Studies.

If the petition is approved, the student must submit the new prospectus by the end of six months (the six months begins from the date that the first doctoral dissertation prospectus defense was held). If the academic unit does not grant the student permission to retake the proposal defense, or if the student fails to pass the retake of the prospectus defense, the Graduate College will withdraw the student from the degree program. Religious Studies does not allow a third retake of the prospectus defense.

25. ABD Status

When the student has completed all course work, passed the comprehensive exam, and defended the prospectus, the student moves to All But Dissertation (ABD) Status and becomes a doctoral candidate.

26. Doctoral Candidacy

Doctoral students achieve Candidacy and enter Phase III of the program upon the successful completion of the comprehensive examination and the successful defense of the dissertation prospectus. Students will receive notification that they have been advanced to Candidacy. Notification will include a list of Graduate College requirements that need to be completed for the degree. The student must complete 24 semester hours of research/dissertation credits (12 hours of each) and must successfully hold the oral defense of the dissertation. The student's Supervisory Committee will direct the research and writing of the dissertation. Doctoral candidates, at their chair's discretion, can begin applying for tenure track Assistant Professor positions.

27. Doctoral Dissertation

Research and writing of the dissertation comprise the third and final stage of the doctoral program in Religious Studies. During this time, students should stay in communication with their Chair and Supervisory Committee members about the status of their progress toward completing the degree by

remaining in the local area unless doing fieldwork. Chairs generally read and comment upon individual chapters of the dissertations. Committee members may elect to read chapters as they are completed and/or the entire dissertation when completed. Feedback, comments, and revisions should be done in a timely manner. The Supervisory Committee must have sufficient time, a minimum of three weeks, to read the doctoral dissertation. Doctoral candidates should expect revisions that must be completed prior to depositing the dissertation and graduating.

A. Dissertation Format and Committee Review

The style of the document is determined by the Committee Chair and is usually based on style manuals, such as *A Manual for Writers* by Kate L. Turabian or *The Chicago Manual of Style*. The format of the document must follow the specifications presented in the Graduate College Format Manual and students need to closely adhere to the requirements for setting margins, spacing, pagination, etc. A good resource for formatting information is the [Graduate College website](#). Students should use the Graduate College's formatting tool to check their document although the formatting tool only checks for formatting issues. Students should review the topic of Academic Integrity presented in this handbook and can submit the document to Safe Assign through the SHPRS PhD Blackboard.

At least one month prior to the date the student plans to defend, the student must submit a copy of the final dissertation draft to the faculty members who officially make up the Supervisory Committee for a critical review of the arguments, narrative, footnotes, and bibliography. The critical review allows the student to make revisions before submitting the document to the Graduate College for format review.

B. Format Review

The final draft of the dissertation document must be e-mailed to the Graduate College for format review – **no later than 10 calendar days prior to the planned defense**. After being submitted, additional links appear that guide students through the formatting process and final submission to ProQuest (the electronic submission of the dissertation). A complete and defensible copy of the dissertation document must also be submitted to the Graduate College (through e-mail) for format review. Before submitting the final document, students are again encouraged to use the Graduate College [format tool](#).

28. Oral Defense of the Dissertation

The oral defense is open to the public and advertised to the school. Defenses include a presentation of the argument of the dissertation by the candidate and questions from each of the committee members. Schedule a defense well in advance. Doctoral defenses take no more than three hours total. At the time of the defense, members may approve the dissertation as is, delay their decision at the orals pending further revisions by the student, or approve leaving the revisions to the supervision of the committee chair.

A. Scheduling a Dissertation Defense

When revisions have been made and all members of the committee agree that the document is ready for a defense, the student arranges a date and time for the defense with all Supervisory Committee members. The student requests a conference room by completing the [Room Request](#) form. (You may need to login as you do for your MyASU).

Scheduling the defense with Graduate College is done through MyASU (MyASU > My Programs and Degree Progress > Defense). The “Defense” tab provides an electronic form to schedule the final defense and must be submitted **no later than 10 business days prior to the planned defense date**.

B. Dissertation Defense Reminder

The student must send an e-mail reminder to all members of their Supervisory Committee at least three days before the exam confirming the time and location of the exam. Any problems with the agreed upon time and date must be reported to the PhD Graduate Coordinator as soon as possible.

C. Dissertation Defense Results

Results of the final defense are recorded on the Graduate College Pass/Fail Form that is generated at the time the defense is scheduled and e-mailed to the Committee Chair and SHPRS Graduate Coordinator. Students may pass, pass with minor revisions, pass with major revisions, or fail. If the student and his or her Chair does not want the dissertation published for a period of time due to ongoing research, publication, or the sensitive information presented in the document, an “embargo” can be requested for approximately two years.

Each Supervisory Committee member signs the defense form indicating his or her decision. If revisions are needed, the Chair must, when revisions are completed, sign the form verifying that revisions have been completed. The completed form is given to the PhD Graduate Coordinator, a copy is placed in the student’s file and the coordinator submits the original to the Graduate College. Once the Pass/Fail form is submitted, the student will see “Defense Status: Pass” in the defense section. Right below the “Defense Status” you will see “Format Review Status.” The “Review Status” will change to “Ready for ETD/ProQuest.” The document can then be submitted by following the instructions found [here](#).

29. Applying for Graduation

Students need to closely follow graduation deadlines and procedures set by the [Graduate College](#). Links to the graduation process are also on the MyASU website under the “My Programs and Degree Progress” section. The iPOS should be reviewed with the SHPRS Graduate Coordinator to be sure courses and exams have been recorded appropriately.

Once the graduation semester has been determined and the iPOS has been reviewed, the first step is to apply for graduation. Clicking the “Graduation” tab will link students to an online graduation application and information on how to apply for the graduation ceremony.

In order to graduate, students must complete the Oral Dissertation Defense and submit the Pass/Fail form, submit a Survey of Earned Doctorates, and complete the dissertation submission process. They must also have their iPOS reviewed by the PhD Graduate Coordinator, Chair, and DGS.

Once the dissertation has been completed, all “Z” or “NR” grades earned for 792 and 799 courses must be changed to “Y” to show successful completion of the dissertation. Students must request these grade changes from instructors via email and may contact the Graduate Coordinator if they need assistance. In order for a graduation application to be processed, students may not have any “NR” grades or any “Z” grades in courses other than REL 795 on their transcripts at the time of degree conferral.

The student should check the progress of their application to graduate periodically on MyASU and refer any questions to the Graduate Coordinator or Graduate College as appropriate.

Appendix 1

Religious Studies PhD Timeline Summary – *Students Entering with BA*

(This timeline will vary according to students’ track, language, and/or fieldwork needs, etc.)

Fall semester, first year	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Begin coursework, including REL 501 • Decide Doctoral Study Track & Foreign Language needs • Approach possible committee members 	Phase I Coursework & Master’s In Passing (MIP)
Spring semester, first year	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue coursework, including REL 502 • Select Supervisory Committee by April 1 • Complete Plan of Study (iPOS) by April 1 	
First summer	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Study required foreign language 	
Second year	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue coursework • Pass foreign language exam • Look into research grants & awards 	
Summer 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Study second foreign language, if required by Supervisory Committee • Begin research and/or fieldwork 	Phase II Coursework, Examinations, and Attaining Candidacy <i>Phase II begins when the student has completed the foreign language requirement and earned an MIP.</i>
Fall semester, third year	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue coursework • Compile reading list for comprehensive exams • Submit funding proposals 	
Spring semester, third year	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue coursework • Pass second foreign language exam, if required by Supervisory Committee • Prepare for Comprehensive Exams 	
Fourth to Fifth year	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Complete coursework • Pass Comprehensive Examination • Prepare Dissertation Prospectus 	
Fifth to Sixth year	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Submit and defend Dissertation Prospectus • Apply for IRB approval, if needed • Research and/or fieldwork • Dissertation research and writing 	
Seventh to Eighth year onward	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Apply for graduation and follow Graduate College timeline and procedures for scheduling final defense and Format Review • Pass final defense of dissertation • Electronically submit dissertation to ProQuest 	Phase III Candidacy and Dissertation <i>Phase III begins once Prospectus Defense is passed and student attains Candidacy.</i>

Appendix 2

Religious Studies PhD Timeline Summary – *Students Entering with MA*

(This timeline will vary according to students’ track, language, and/or fieldwork needs, etc.)

Fall semester, first year	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Begin coursework, including REL 501 • Decide Doctoral Study Track & Foreign Language needs • Approach possible committee members 	<p>Phase II Coursework, Examinations, and Attaining Candidacy</p> <p><i>Students entering with MA begin the program in Phase II, having already met requirements for Phase I.</i></p>
Spring semester, first year	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue coursework, including REL 502 • Select Supervisory Committee by April 1 • Complete Plan of Study (iPOS) by April 1 • Study required foreign language 	
First summer	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Language study and/or archival/library research 	
Second year	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Complete required coursework • Apply for IRB approval, if needed, during second or third year • Pass foreign language exam • Study second foreign language, if required by Supervisory Committee • Look into research grants & awards 	
Summer 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Begin research and/or fieldwork • Prepare for comprehensive exams 	
Fall semester, third year	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pass second foreign language exam, if required • Prepare for and pass comprehensive exams • Write and prepare to defend Dissertation Prospectus 	
Spring semester, third year	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Complete all coursework except 799 credits • Submit and defend Dissertation Prospectus • Attain PhD Candidate status 	
Fourth year	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Begin writing dissertation • Enroll in REL 799 	<p>Phase III Candidacy and Dissertation</p> <p><i>Phase III begins once Prospectus Defense is passed and student attains Candidacy.</i></p>
Fifth year	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Finish writing dissertation and prepare to defend 	
Sixth Year onward	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Follow Graduate College procedures for scheduling final defense and Format Review, apply for graduation if applicable • Pass final defense of dissertation • Electronically submit dissertation to ProQuest 	