Harvard University
Committee on the Study of Religion

HANDBOOK
FOR
Ph.D. STUDENTS

September 2015
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The Ph.D. in the Study of Religion

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COMMITTEE ON THE STUDY OF RELIGION
Guidelines for Advising and Mentoring Doctoral Students

Introduction

The advising of doctoral students is one of the most important aspects of our work as teachers and scholars. This document is meant to establish some general guidelines or best practices for the advisor-doctoral student relationship as a set of mutual or shared responsibilities. “Guidelines for Advising and Mentoring Doctoral Students” was developed in conversations among members of the Doctoral Subcommittee (which includes student representatives from both the PhD and ThD programs) and more broadly with students currently enrolled in the program.

Entering doctoral students are free to request a specific advisor; should they choose not to, the Doctoral Subcommittee assigns a relevant advisor. Doctoral students can and should request a change of advisor if the need arises, and all students are encouraged to work with as many faculty in their field as possible.

Academic Advising

Advisors meet with their doctoral students—especially those at the pre-dissertation stage—a minimum of three times per semester, for at least an hour each meeting: at the beginning, mid-point, and end of the semester. For students who are working elsewhere and easily accessible via phone and/or email, the same general guidelines for contact hours apply.

Advisors remain in contact with doctoral students as above during periods of leave.

In advising first- and second-year doctoral students, special attention is paid to the work of choosing classes. Coursework selections are meant to be general enough to provide context for the student’s special area(s) of interest and specific enough to guide the student toward both general examination fields and a workable dissertation topic. Advisors also help ensure that students meet their language requirements and their general course requirements in a timely fashion.

In advising third-year students, special attention is paid to helping the student assemble a committee for general examinations.

For students who are post-generals, advisors provide timely reading (within four weeks of submission) and substantial commenting on drafts of the dissertation prospectus and all subsequent chapters. Advisors also counsel students on seeking employment, from reading drafts of letters of application and commenting on writing samples and job talks to introducing students to scholars in the field at conferences and seminars.

Requests for recommendation letters are to be made by the student at least three weeks in advance of the deadline; recommendation letters are written and submitted by the advisor in a timely fashion.
Mentoring about Teaching

Mentoring doctoral students in teaching constitutes an extremely important part of the advisor’s (and other faculty members’) role.

Faculty meet with all Teaching Fellows for at least one hour per week to discuss the course materials and provide instruction and feedback on matters pertaining to good pedagogy. Ideally such meetings are run as small seminars, allowing student-teachers to think through the intellectual issues raised by the course with the instructor, to read beyond the syllabus as necessary, and to reflect upon the best means of engaging students in class discussion of the material.

Currently, the CSR has a Departmental TF appointed jointly by the CSR and the Bok Center; for 2014-15, it is Eleanor Craig. The Dept. TF maintains a website with basic information, works with the CSR staff to coordinate several workshops during the year on topics of interest to doctoral students, and holds office hours in Barker 408. That office is also available for working TFs to meet with students during the term; it may be reserved through the CSR office.
PH.D. PROGRAM
SUMMARY OF REQUIREMENTS
(full descriptions in pages following)

The First Two Years

Coursework
• courses required for specialization
• Religion 2001 (first term)
• Religion 2002 (fourth term)
• two additional courses outside the area of specialization

Languages
• two modern languages of secondary scholarship
• other languages as required for specialization

Second Year Review
• to occur by the end of the fourth term

Year Three

General Examinations
• to be completed by the end of the sixth term
• teaching

Year Four

Dissertation Prospectus
• to be completed within 12 months of taking of the general exams

Year Five and Following

The Dissertation
• to be completed, normally, by the end of the seventh year
  after approval of the prospectus, at least one chapter per year must be
  submitted to the advisor
The First Two Years

Advising
Upon entry into the program, each student chooses or is assigned a faculty advisor based on the area of specialization. The primary responsibilities of the advisor are a) to counsel the student on how best to lay the foundations, through course work and seminars, for more independent work in the area of specialization; and b) to help ensure that these specialized studies are set within the general context of the study of religion. At any point a student may change advisors should another faculty member prove more suitable for their program. Occasionally students will have two co-advisors. The faculty advisor participates in a student’s second year review, ordinarily chairs the examining committee for the general examinations, works with the student in formulating a prospectus, and directs the writing of the dissertation.

Coursework
Full-time study during the first two years, i.e., four half-courses during each term, for a total of 16 half-courses, with a minimum average grade of B, is required. Included in these first two years are:

Specialization Studies -- It is expected that students will complete satisfactorily all basic courses, including those classical languages within their area of specialization, needed to lay the foundation for advanced work. These will vary from person to person and field to field. Students are asked to participate in the activities of their fields, particularly the colloquia.

Coursework outside Specialization:

If, in the estimation of the faculty instructor of instructors of Religion 2001/4599 or Religion 2002, academic problems arise in any enrolled student’s performance during the course of a semester, it is expected that instructors will follow the sequence below:

1) Give the student both written and oral warning about unsatisfactory academic performance in a timely way, i.e., as soon as there are serious concerns;
2) Contact the student’s primary program advisor to discuss the problem;
3) In consultation with the student and the advisor, and the appropriate program director if necessary (Ph.D. or Th.D.), general concrete guidelines in writing to address the perceived issue and improve performance in the seminar. These written guidelines must be made available to all concerned.
If, within a reasonable time frame agreed on by the discussants in 3), the student fails to improve his or her performance, to the degree that the instructors feel that the student should not continue as an enrolled member of the seminar, but should consider alternatives (such as taking the seminar a different year, or more drastically, reconsider continuation in the doctoral program), there must be:

4) Independent review of this assessment by the Doctoral Sub-Committee before the student is compelled, or effectively feels compelled, to withdraw from the seminar.

- **Other Courses Outside the Specialization** – Satisfactory completion of a minimum of two additional courses outside the specialization is also required. These are normally in another tradition, geographical-historical complex, or methodology than the student’s primary focus, and the two should be in the same area. They must be completed before the general examinations are taken.

This expected "distribution" of courses in the student's first two years constitutes the minimum amount of course work required, and is designed to assure that a degree of balance between the specialized and general components of a student's program of study is maintained. At the same time it will serve to help the student prepare for the Theory and Methods General Examination that is required at a later stage.

**Plan of Study**
In order to gain Committee approval of work to be done outside the specialization, the student must, in consultation with the advisor, submit a Plan of Study during their first term by early November. The Plan of Study form will be sent out by the Program Administrator; it is also included in this handbook. The Director of Ph.D. Studies will then review and act upon the proposals received. Any later alterations in plans should be duly reported.

**Languages**
A high standard of reading proficiency in two modern languages of secondary scholarship is required. For more detail, see “Language Requirements for Doctoral Study in Religion” in this handbook.

**Second Year Review**
A second year review is to occur normally in the third or fourth semester of studies. Guidelines for this review follow.

When the student is ready, she or he should submit to the Ph.D. Program Administrator an "Intent to Take Second Year Review" form (included in this handbook). On this form, the review committee is proposed by the student and the advisor. It will normally consist of the student's advisor and one other faculty member outside the student's specialization.

Two term papers (also to be listed on the form) will serve as the basis of the review; one is to be in the specialization, and one outside it. Copies of these papers should be given to the two faculty members on the review committee. A statement of academic purpose should also be submitted with the form and copies given to the two reviewers as well. The review normally is one to one-and-a-half hours. See more detailed guidelines following.
The Committee on the Study of Religion

PH.D. PLAN OF STUDY

Student: ______________________________          Year Entered: ______________

Field of Study: _______________________________________________

Advisor: _____________________________________

Required Courses:  (indicate semester to be taken)

Religion 2001: The Cultural History of the Study of Religion    ____________

Religion 2002: Contemporary Conversations in the Study of Religion    ____________

Two courses outside your field (normally in another tradition or methodology than the student’s primary focus, and both in the same area: indicate course number, title, and semester to be taken):

1.  _____________________________________________________________________

2.  _____________________________________________________________________

Two Modern Languages of Secondary Scholarship:
(indicate language and how/when the requirement will be fulfilled)

1.  _____________________________________________________________

Means of completion: ___________________ Expected completion date: ____________

2.  ______________________________________________________________

Means of completion: ___________________ Expected completion date: ____________

Second Year Review  (Expected date of):  ______________________

General Examinations  (Expected date of):  _______________________

Approved By:  _____________________________          ____________________

Advisor                                                    Date
Guidelines for Second Year Review

The main purpose of the Second Year Review is to consider and clarify the overall design and progress of a student’s academic program. To this end, a student participating in the Second Year Review must prepare a 2-page statement of academic purpose, to be shared in advance with the faculty who will participate in the review. There are usually two faculty reviewers: one in the student’s field of specialization, normally the advisor, and one outside the student’s field.

A second purpose of the review is to assess the student’s academic progress in general but also in regard to the degree requirements, including foreign language requirements and the requirement of two courses outside the specialization.

A student participating in the Second Year Review must submit two major course papers to their reviewers two weeks in advance of the meeting. One of these papers should be in the student’s major field and the other in a different field or discipline. One paper may be from a course taken with one of the reviewers, but the other paper should be from a course taken with some other faculty member, not a reviewer.

A third purpose of the Second Year Review is to review the fields that the student is proposing to cover on the General Examinations.

The Second Year Review should, as needed, lead to any or some of the following recommendations: clarifying the timetable for completing any remaining requirements, specifying any further coursework to be taken, addressing of any issues in advising, clarifying the fields and timetable for General Examinations. A written summary of all such recommendations should be sent to the student as soon as possible after the review, and noted in the Student’s Record Card, returned to the program administrator.

Procedures for Second Year Review:

The Second Year Review is to occur either in the third or at the latest, in the fourth semester of study. At the end of a student’s second semester, the Program Administrator will send an email to the student and the advisor reminding them of when the Second Year Review should take place.

The student, in consultation with the advisor, should complete the “Intent to Take Second Year Review” form, obtain the advisor’s signature, and submit it to the Ph.D. Program Administrator along with a one-page statement of purpose. The student should schedule a time for the review with the two faculty reviewers (then notifying the Program Administrator of the time), and two weeks in advance of the meeting should submit the two papers and a copy of the one-page statement of purpose to the reviewers. The meeting is usually an hour and a half.
NOTICE OF INTENT TO TAKE SECOND YEAR REVIEW

Student: _________________________________ Year Entered: _________

Field: _________________________________

Advisor(s): ___________________ ___________________

Anticipated Faculty Committee:

1) ____________________________

2) ____________________________

Proposed Papers To Be Submitted:

1) Title: _________________________________________________

   Course: _________________________________________________

   Instructor: ______________________________

2) Title: _________________________________________________

   Course: _________________________________________________

   Instructor: ______________________________

Preferred Time Period Within Which To Have the Review:

Approved By:

___________________ ________ ________________________ ________
Advisor Date 2nd Advisor (if applicable) Date
The A.M. Degree

In the Study of Religion, no one is admitted as a candidate for the A.M., only for the Ph.D. Nevertheless, the requirements for the master’s degree must be satisfied by all students as they move toward the doctorate, and are expected to be completed by the end of the fourth term.

For the A.M. degree a minimum of two full years of coursework (16 half-courses with a minimum average grade of B) is required; the modern language of secondary scholarship requirements must be met; the course requirements outside the specialization fulfilled; and a satisfactory second year review completed. For students who take a terminal A.M., a second year review is not required.

The A.M. degree may be granted when these requirements are fulfilled. In order to receive the degree, the student must submit an “Application for Degree,” available from the Program Administrator.
Committee on the Study of Religion

Ph.D. Guidelines on “Time” Half-Courses, Religion 3000, and Religion 3001

1. During the first two years of residence, Ph.D. students will be expected to take a full load of regular course-work. When a student has already done substantial advanced work, this course-work may include one half-course per semester of Religion 3001: Reading and Research, if the necessary approval of an appropriate faculty member is secured.

2. TIME-C (i.e., time for course-related reasons) is to be used only for preparation for general examinations, normally during the one or two terms leading up to the anticipated time of generals, but not before the fifth term. The only exception to this is in the case of a student who takes the generals in the fourth or fifth term (in which case, TIME-C may be appropriate in the fourth or even third term.)

3. Post-generals students engaged in dissertation work will normally register for one, two, three or four half-courses of Religion 3000: Direction of Doctoral Dissertation (in addition to whatever other regular course-work they may elect to take in a given semester.)

4. All Ph.D. Teaching Fellows will be expected to register for one half-course of TIME-T (time for Teaching) per 1/5 teaching time equivalent per semester, irrespective of their stage of progress or year of study in the program. Note that 1/5 is one section in a course.

5. Any Ph.D. student hired as a Research Assistant will be expected to register for one half-course of TIME-R (time for Research Assistant reasons) per 1/5 research time equivalent per semester, normally 7 to 10 hours a week. Note that the Time-R work is research for someone else (i.e. a faculty member), not for the student’s own research.

6. While any number of Religion 3000 and Religion 3001 half-courses may serve to fulfill in part the Graduate School of Arts and Sciences’ eight half-course requirement for the A.M. degree and sixteen half-course requirement for the Ph.D. degree, TIME half-courses (whether TIME-C, TIME-R, or TIME-T) will not.
1. All doctoral students—in consultation with their advisors—achieve at least intermediate reading competence in two modern languages of secondary scholarship relevant to their course of study (such as French, German, Japanese), in addition to whatever primary source languages are required in their field. (Note that languages needed for ethnographic or other research, requiring verbal competence, are for primary scholarship and thus cannot be used as one of the modern languages of secondary scholarship.)

2. The requirement in modern languages of scholarship commonly taught and examined at Harvard University (French, German, Spanish, etc.) can be met either by achieving a grade of B+ or better in two semesters of a second-year language course (in either HDS or FAS); by receiving a grade of A- or better in the Harvard Divinity School one-semester advanced intermediate language courses in French and German; or by achieving a “high pass” on an HDS qualifying exam. (Note: receiving A- or better in the HDS Summer Language Program does not meet the requirement – the exam must still be taken.) Students whose first language is not English may meet the requirement with a “pass” on the language exam.

3. In the case of modern languages of scholarship for which there is not an intermediate two-semester course at Harvard or a qualifying exam at HDS, the number of years required to achieve “intermediate reading competence” and the equivalent of “high pass” on language examinations will be determined by faculty in the relevant field. This involves an exam comparable to the HDS qualifying exam: translating a text of moderate difficulty in a one-hour exam with one dictionary, using a text of religious or historical significance or a scriptural text. The student should consult the Ph.D. Administrator or Director of Graduate Studies to arrange the administration of the exam.

4. All language requirements must be met before General Exams are taken.

Additional information about languages:

Students having extraordinary difficulty in passing language requirements are encouraged to contact both their program administrator and the Director of Language Testing.

Language exams taken while a doctoral student was in a Masters program at HDS may be used to fulfill the language requirement if the required grade of High Pass has been achieved. However, final exam results for the language courses in the Summer Language Program or the full-year German tutorial are not acceptable: doctoral students must take the official language exam.
Language Exams: Language competency exams are given three times a year in early September, late January and late April. A High Pass level on a language exam attests that a student has sufficient knowledge and skill to use the language in scholarship. Some mistakes in recognizing grammar or vocabulary are allowed if they do not seriously undermine the student's ability to understand and translate the text. During the one-hour exam, students are asked to translate a one to two page text of intermediate difficulty. Students may use a dictionary.

Language exams are normally given for Hebrew, Greek, Latin, German, French, Arabic and Spanish. Students who need to be tested in another language should consult the Director of Language Studies at HDS.

If you have any preparation in the required languages, you are strongly urged to sign up for and take one (or more) of the language qualifying exams given in early September of your first year. You may find that you pass the exam, but even if you do not, you will be much better prepared to choose an appropriate course or study on your own before trying again. A failure is recorded on your internal record sheet, but is never released on a transcript.

Ph.D. students may qualify for tuition waivers for summer language courses given in FAS during the summers immediately preceding and following their first year. These waivers do not apply to the HDS Summer Language Program, but it is advisable to take an FAS course and then the HDS qualifying exam. Copies of prior exams are available from the HDS Registrar.
Guidelines for the Foreign Language Certification Course  
(Religion 3002)

1. Eligibility
Ph.D. students who apply to do the course, Religion 3002: Foreign Language Certification, to fulfill the language requirement should first have:

   a. attempted the language qualifying exam (administered by Harvard Divinity School) and been unsuccessful
   and
   b. prepared to re-take the language qualifying exam by completing course work at Harvard.

2. Procedure for applying
To apply to take Religion 3002, a student first must consult with and have permission of:

   a. her/his advisor;
   and
   b. the Director of Language Studies at the Divinity School;
   and
   c. the proposed instructor of the course.

After this initial approval, and before registering for the course, the student should submit a list of readings to the instructor of the course and to the Director of Language Studies for their approval. It is the student's responsibility to collect the readings, in consultation with the instructor and the Director of Language Studies if necessary, and to provide copies of the approved list to both these faculty members.

3. Procedure for certification of course work
After completion of the readings, the instructor will evaluate and report on the student's performance. The certification process entails these steps:

   a. The instructor administers an exam (preferably written but oral with permission) evaluating the student's ability to translate. The instructor submits the results to the Director of Language Studies for certification. The results may take one of two forms: corrected translations or a brief letter describing the translation and the testing method.

   b. After receiving the material described above, the Director of Language Studies informs the Ph.D. administrator as to whether the student has completed the requirement successfully.

   c. The instructor reports a grade of “SAT” to the Registrar for recording on the student’s transcript.
**Teaching**

While teaching is not required* for the degree, doctoral students are encouraged to take advantage of the many opportunities for teaching at Harvard. These opportunities include teaching in Religion courses, in Divinity School courses, in Core or Gen Ed courses, in courses in other FAS departments, and in junior and senior tutorials in the undergraduate concentration. Generally students who wish to teach are able to secure positions. In addition to its financial benefits, teaching is considered integral to the program of doctoral studies in religion at Harvard.

Students may begin teaching in the third year. Normally first-year and second-year students are not allowed to teach. Students should seek out teaching fellow positions by approaching faculty with whom they would like to work. It is helpful to give them a resume with a cover letter indicating experience and subject matter preferences. To serve as a tutor in the undergraduate program, contact the Director of Undergraduate Studies in the Study of Religion. In addition, you may apply for teaching fellow opportunities at the Divinity School through Kathryn Kunkel, ThD Administrator, Barker 413, or speak with Barbara Boles, PhD Administrator.

Teaching fellow training and workshops are held throughout the year at the Bok Center for Teaching and Learning. First time teaching fellows are required to participate in the Bok Center orientation week training sessions.

In the Fall semester of their first priority-year as Teaching Fellows (Year 3 for PhDs; Year 3 or 4 for ThDs), all students are required to attend three sessions offering support and training in teaching:
(1) Day 1 of the Fall Teaching Conference at the Derek Bok Center for Teaching and Learning, a Harvard-wide conference held the week before classes begin.
(2) A workshop on Diversity in the Classroom such as the one on day two of the Bok Ctr Conf.
(3) A departmental workshop on leading discussions, to be held in the second or third week of the semester.
(4) A departmental workshop on grading and responding to student writing, to be held early in mid-term. These workshops are organized each year by the Departmental Teaching Fellows in Religion; for 2015-16, Eleanor Craig.

* Please note: In most cases, Ph.D. and Th.D. students are guaranteed teaching in the third and fourth year as part of their admissions packages, and funding for years 3 and 4 is dependent on and comes primarily from teaching. Students are still expected to follow the above measures to secure teaching positions in the third and fourth year.
Year Three

General Examinations

After the satisfactory completion of two years of full-time study, the modern language requirements, the coursework outside the specialization, and the second year review, a student prepares for the General Examinations. Ph.D. students usually take these exams at the end of the third year. Note that all INC’s should be cleared before Generals.

Written examinations take place in October during fall term and in April during spring term. The Committee announces the exact dates six months ahead of time, (for 2014-15: Oct 7, 10, 14, 17; April 7, 10, 13, 16) and students are asked to submit a "Notice of Intent To Take Generals" (included in this handbook), signed by their advisor, by late September for spring term generals, or by late March for fall term generals.

The overall pattern of the written general examinations required of all Ph.D. students follows. The student should consult with his or her advisor in formulating the plan for the exams and deciding upon examiner(s) for each exam.

1. Theory and Method in the Study of Religion
2. Context of Study Exam (Religious Tradition or Historical Complex)
3. Specialization within Context of Study
4. Specialization within Context of Study

Exam 1: Theory and Methods Exam
The description of this General Examination follows as a separate document.

Exam 2: Context of Study Exam
This is a general examination on the religious tradition or historical complex chosen for the context of study (Buddhist, Christian, Hindu, Ancient Near East, Modern West, India, etc.)

Exams 3 & 4: Fields of Specialization within Context of Study
Students should consult with their advisor(s) and chosen examiners on both the topics and bibliographies for these examinations.

Each examination is taken in a three-hour period, and each exam or part of an exam offers a choice of 2-3 questions. A two-hour oral examination will be held within one to two weeks' time following the written general exams. The examining committee for the oral normally consists of the three or four of the faculty members who prepared written exams for a given student.

*Please note: Papers may be substituted for general exams, as follows.
**SUBSTITUTING A PAPER FOR ONE OF THE GENERAL EXAMS:**
Addition to the General Examination Guidelines
Approved at the Doctoral Sub-committee meeting
December 7, 2007

“In lieu of a third or fourth exam, namely the special field exam, a doctoral candidate for either the PhD or ThD may submit a paper between 20 and 30 pages in length. Intent to write such a paper, with a bibliography and brief description, should be submitted together with other General Exam bibliographies six months prior to the exam period. An updated bibliography should be submitted with the paper. The chosen topic should anticipate the expected focus of the dissertation. This option may only be exercised with the approval of the student’s academic advisor, and the paper should be developed in consultation with the advisor. It must be original work prepared for this purpose; work previously submitted for any other purpose (including a course, colloquium, or presentation) is not acceptable.

The paper must be submitted by 5:00 p.m. to the program administrator at the Study of Religion offices in the Barker Center, not later than one month prior to the first exam date (e.g., if the first exam would have been given on April 21, the paper would be due by March 21, or the nearest day to that date on which the office is open.) This is a non-negotiable deadline. If a paper is not submitted by the deadline, the student must sit for the exam based on the original bibliography. The submitted paper will be copied and distributed to the general examination readers and discussed at the oral examination along with the other three exams.

This option has been approved in the past on an ad hoc basis for a number of students. Most have found it to be an excellent way to begin work on their dissertation topic, receive meaningful feedback from a number of faculty at an early stage in this process, and often to curtail the ‘lag’ time after generals and before submitting the prospectus by providing a strong intellectual link between these stages in the program.”
The Theory and Method Exam
Committee on the Study of Religion
Adopted May 22, 2009

Goals of the Exam:

Building on work done in Religion 2001 and 2002, the Theory and Method doctoral exam invites students to consider both the history of religious studies as a discipline and contemporary theoretical discussions about religion in relation to their own particular subfields. In replacing the old generic exam with this new, more theoretically driven and individually tailored exam, the Committee acts on the belief that students preparing themselves for professional lives in the study of religion need to have a clear sense of issues of current moment in the discipline; students must be able to frame the particulars of their research interests in the wider context of religious studies more generally, to enter the details of their own disciplines into broader conversations that cross particular subfields. Through this exam, we also seek to help students develop an understanding of the history of the study of religion, of the making of “religion” and “the religions” as categories of various sorts of inquiry from the early modern period to the present, in the context of wider intellectual, social and cultural history. In preparing for this exam, students are also encouraged to think about major historical and contemporary theorists of religion in the broader context of the social, cultural, and political history of knowledge from the Enlightenment to the present, and in particular in relation to the place of the construction of “religions” and “religion” in this history.

Structure of the Exam:

The Theory and Method examination consists of three parts:

(1) a section on the History of the study of “religion” and the “religions” and/or of other concepts central to the study of religion from the enlightenment to the present.

(2) a section on contemporary conversations in the study of religion that focuses on issues and problems of current intellectual urgency across the study of religion.

(3) a final section on two theorists of religion or of theorists particularly useful for the study of religion. This bibliography should include both primary source material representing the major works of each theorist, as well as secondary literature on the work and contributions of each.

Preparing for the Exam:

Each student must chose a Theory and Method examiner and submit a reading list according to the Committee schedule. The student will work out in advance with the TM examiner particular problems or concerns for the student to concentrate on in his or her preparation. Examiners will be responsible for writing individually tailored examination questions, in consultation with the student.
Working with an individual faculty member serves to make room for students to bring their own interests and concerns into current conversations in the discipline and to learn to view their own areas of specialization within the wider frame of the history of the study of religion. The Committee intends that students make their substantive areas of academic concern (the development of a particular ritual in Tibetan Buddhism, a problem of interpretation in Deuteronomy, a figure in American Catholic history, or an issue in Karl Barth’s theology, to cite some examples) the pivot of the theoretical learning and engagement that characterizes the new Theory and Method examination.

Questions to pose in the task of working out specific foci for each part of the exam might include: how does a particular student’s research contribute to, participate in, or change the terms and orientations of contemporary conversations across the field? What is the specific history of their area of specialization (the intellectual history of the making of “Buddhism,” for instance) in its relationship to the broader cultural history of the study of religions? How do the theorists they have chosen to work on help them sharpen questions of religious analysis in their work?
Recommendations and Rules for the PhD and ThD General Examinations

1). PhD and ThD students are each enrolled in an area or field with its own intellectual tradition and organization at Harvard University. Students are asked to participate in the activities of those areas and fields, particularly the colloquia, to fulfill their language requirements and to respect, when they exist, the inherent and written rules of that field or area.

2). PhD and ThD students are expected to develop their own thinking and to find their own topics of interest. With their advisor’s help, each student will test his or her ideas and methods enriched by relevant bibliographies. Interdisciplinary enterprise will be welcome, and the advisor, as well as the doctoral subcommittee, will facilitate its implementation.

3). For their General Examinations, PhD and ThD students will each submit a list of the members of their General Examinations Committee (normally three faculty members from the relevant fields). They will also prepare a list of topics for the General Examinations according to their interests, the fields chosen, and the usual requirements when they exist in an explicit way.

These topics must be accepted by the General Examinations Committee of the student.

a) PhD and ThD students will generate bibliographies of relevant literature for each of their examinations (total 10-15 pages). The bibliography must be international and include titles in languages other than English whenever relevant. Each bibliography must begin with a paragraph explaining the nature of the topics chosen and the rationale for selecting the materials listed. The bibliography is presented to the candidate’s General Examinations Committee for acceptance and signature, then checked and signed by the PhD or ThD director.

b) A student may submit a paper in lieu of the special field exam. For guidelines on this option, please see the following page.

c) The student’s primary academic advisor chairs the General Examination Committee. It is the advisor’s responsibility to confer with each examiner in the writing of examination questions and to insure that topics are covered appropriately and that there is no obvious repetition among questions.

d) The General Examinations are taken in four days for PhD students (the first day being the Theory and Method examination) and three days for the ThD (for whom the Theory and Method examination is optional).

e) The Theory and Method examinations have their own requirements.

f) The last day of the General Examinations is devoted to the special field of interest of the candidate, usually a field in which the dissertation will be written.
g) The two other days of the General Examinations are devoted to the general field and area in which the candidate is enrolled.

h) Each examination is taken in a three-hour period.

i) Each examination or part of an examination offers a choice of 2-3 questions.

François Bovon and Anne Monius
28 April 2005, revised 7 December, 2007
Student's Name ____________________________

Generals To Be Taken in _________________ Semester, 20____

Area of Specialization___________________________________________

Advisor(s) ___________________________________________________

NOTE: Please include a bibliography for each exam, signed by the examiner of that exam. Please remember that each bibliography must begin with a paragraph explaining the nature of the topics chosen and the rationale for selecting the materials listed.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Anticipated Examination</th>
<th>Anticipated Examiner</th>
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<tr>
<td>1) Theory and Method in the Study of Religion</td>
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<td>2) Tradition or Complex:</td>
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<td>3) Special Field or Minor Tradition:</td>
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<td>4) Special Field:</td>
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All requirements must be completed and INC’s cleared prior to taking exams. Please list here any course incomPLETES, unfulfilled language or other requirements, and how and when you will take care of them:

______________________________________   ___________
Student's Signature                                                     Date

______________________________________   ___________
Advisor Approval                                                    Date
General Examinations may be handwritten or word processed. All students must sign an honor pledge before taking their exams, stating that, if using a computer, they will access their hard drive for word processing software only.

If you word process your General Exams, it is your responsibility to insure that the computer you are using is in good working condition. In the event of a malfunction, the administrators, in consultation with the student's faculty advisor, will make all possible efforts for you to retake the exam in a timely fashion. To prevent such a scenario, however, please note the following:

• Check your computer, battery pack, and disks before use. Do a dry run if necessary.

• During the writing of the exams, SAVE OFTEN!

PRINTING OUT EXAMS:

• At the end of each exam period, you may email your exam to the administrator who will then print it out in the Study of Religion office. The email address to be used will be given out at the time of the exam, and a confirming email will be sent in response once the exam has been successfully printed out.

• Students using unusual software which cannot be accommodated by the Study of Religion computer must make arrangements in advance to print out their exams elsewhere. Please consult with one of the administrators well before the exam about such arrangements.

• If you plan on doing a spell check, it must be done during the exam time. A spell check may not be done just prior to print out.

WORD PROCESSING OR TYPING FROM HANDWRITTEN EXAMS:

• If you plan to type or word process a handwritten exam after the end of the exam, you must first return the original to the Study of Religion office where a copy will be made for you. You may then make arrangements to type or word process the exam either at the office or at home.

• Exams word processed at home must be returned to the Study of Religion office within 24 hours unless other arrangements have been made.

• You may make no changes in the handwritten exam, including spelling, grammar, capitalization, and content. The typed copy will be checked against the original.
Policy on Failure of General Examinations

Should a student fail any part or all of his or her General Examinations, the student would normally be required to re-take all the exams unless exemptions from certain areas were recommended by the examining committee and approved by the Doctoral Subcommittee. Should the examiners wish to exempt certain areas, they must provide a rationale for their decision in writing to the Doctoral Subcommittee. Likewise, an examining committee must provide a written rationale to the Subcommittee for any recommendation that a student re-take an exam in a different form (e.g., writing a paper in lieu of re-taking an exam). A student may re-take General Examinations once and must re-take a failed exam in the next exam period. A student must also keep the same examiners (where possible) and the same bibliographies.

This written report must be produced as soon as possible after the decision in order to provide clear and timely information to the student and to the Doctoral Subcommittee. If the Doctoral Subcommittee denies the exemption or the request that a student re-take an exam in a different form, the examining committee may appeal to the Standing Committee.

Any recommendation to exempt a student from re-taking one or more of the General Examinations, or to have the student re-take an exam in a different form, must be made by the examining committee as a whole.

The categories of ‘bar’ and ‘no bar’ shall no longer be used. No student will be barred from re-taking failed General Examinations once. Should members of an examining committee feel a student would be best served by not re-taking the exams, they should communicate this to the student and explore options with him or her.
Within, at most, twelve months of passing generals, every doctoral candidate is expected to submit a Dissertation Prospectus. The prospectus is a proposal formulated by the student about the doctoral dissertation that he or she intends to write. Acceptance of the prospectus by the Standing Committee constitutes a kind of contract by which the full Committee agrees that if the student completes a successful dissertation that is in accord with, or a reasonable development from, what the prospectus delineates, it will recommend the degree.

**Student Responsibilities** – It is the responsibility of the student to formulate, with as much advice and consultation as seem appropriate, a dissertation project that seems to him or her significant and worthwhile, and that others will recognize as a solid contribution both to his or her subfield and to the study of religion more generally. In this regard please refer to the enclosed statement "On Drafting a Dissertation Topic Proposal," and keep well in mind the following statement in the Supplement: "Each dissertation, in making a contribution to knowledge, should also illuminate our understanding of religion."

Each student must choose a member of the Harvard faculty to supervise the writing of the prospectus. Such a faculty member will most likely, but not necessarily, be the advisor who has been supervising the student’s program to that point. The student must also propose two or three other faculty members to serve on his or her prospectus committee. It is important that these professors have also READ the draft and conveyed their thoughts to the student and main advisor before it is submitted to the CSR.

In composing the prospectus the student should be mindful that he or she is writing it for The Standing Committee on the Study of Religion as a whole, to whom it must be intelligible and cogent. Most Committee members will not be experts in the student's particular specialty.

The prospectus should be brief (not more than 3000 words, excluding bibliography and notes; a model title page is enclosed), and must be double-spaced. It is to be submitted electronically to the Ph.D. Program Administrator 2 weeks in advance of the Standing Committee meeting at which it will be considered. CSR members should alert the advisor to any substantive concerns one week in advance of the meeting. The advisor may suggest changes with the student before the prospectus comes before the committee; although it is rarely necessary, the student may opt to withdraw the draft for later submission. The student should submit 25 hard copies of the prospectus (which may be made in the CSR for $5) to the CSR one or two days before the meeting at which it will be considered for approval.

The CSR will accept prospectuses at all of its meetings up to and including the April meeting. If a larger number of prospectuses is received at the April meeting, some may be tabled and discussed at the May CSR meeting. NO NEW PROSPECTUSES WILL BE ACCEPTED FOR THE MAY MEETING.

**Advisor Responsibilities** – Advisors are expected to be involved actively in the development of the prospectus—especially with regard to its scope and purpose—and to guide the student through early drafts.
When the prospectus is ready to be submitted to the Standing Committee, the student’s advisor should confirm that all of the formal guidelines for the prospectus have been met, by signing the "Prospectus Checklist", which is attached. If the student's advisor will not be able to attend the Standing Committee meeting in which the prospectus is being discussed, he or she should write a covering letter to the Chair of the Committee, indicating an evaluation of the project and a willingness to supervise the work. This letter also proposes two or three faculty members, in addition to the advisor, to serve as members of a prospectus committee. While the majority of the prospectus committee will be scholars in the student's particular specialty, others outside his or her field might be included as well. The advisor should ascertain that these other scholars have read the draft of the prospectus, and be prepared to represent their views at the CSR meeting.

**Standing Committee Responsibilities** – The DGS or other appropriate faculty meets with doctoral students at the beginning of each academic year to discuss the prospectus process in detail.

There will also be a discussion of the entire prospectus process among faculty at the beginning of each academic year in a CSR meeting. This discussion will review the ethos and culture of the process, including the responsibility of all CSR faculty to read each prospectus carefully in advance, with the larger expectation that all theses address issues in the Study of Religion. It can be helpful if CSR members address serious concerns with the advisor one week in advance of the CSR meeting in which the prospectus will be considered.

Once the prospectus is submitted it will be considered, along with comments of the advisor, by the Standing Committee at its earliest scheduled meeting. When the CSR approves the prospectus, it also approves the thesis committee, on occasion making recommendations for additions or adjustments. In every case, the advisor is a member of the prospectus committee.

Please note that additional substantive questions may be raised during the discussion of the prospectus at the CSR meeting; there is no obligation on the part of the Standing Committee to pass a prospectus.

If a prospectus is turned back to the student for revisions, it will be resubmitted to the doctoral subcommittee for approval and approval of the thesis committee.

Once the Standing Committee approves a prospectus, it will then refer it to the prospectus committee who will meet with the student to discuss the project in depth. Normally this is a two-hour meeting. The prospectus committee then reports back to the Standing Committee, recommending final approval of the proposal. In some cases the prospectus committee may indicate that it has asked the student to make some revisions and that it will delay its formal recommendation until they have been received. The prospectus committee, once its recommendation has been approved by the Standing Committee, is disbanded.
On Drafting a Dissertation Prospectus

The purpose of a prospectus is to enable students: (1) to clarify what they conceive to be the nature and significance of their prospective dissertation work, and (2) to receive constructive criticism, advice and approval from both the full Committee on the Study of Religion and members of a prospectus committee. Formulating a prospectus for the faculty represents a significant stage in the course of dissertation work, and its importance should not be underestimated. Not only does it allow students to come to a fuller and more adequate understanding of their own project; it also enlists the active support of the faculty who are expected to provide significant advice and criticism at this crucial stage in its development.

While there are no well-established formulas or models for writing a prospectus, every prospectus should attend to the following issues:

1. **Topic and thesis**

There is an important distinction between a topic and a thesis. A topic represents the issue which the dissertation addresses. A thesis constitutes the position which the student takes in relation to the topic; i.e., the central hypothesis which is to be examined. For example:

   **Topic**: Barth’s theological method

   **Thesis**: Barth's theological method results from his interpretation of the Word of God as an act which is not subject to human manipulation.

   In the prospectus, students should carefully circumscribe the topic of their dissertation, including historical and conceptual analyses of the topic (to the extent that such analyses clarify what the student takes to be at issue). The aim is not only to show how the dissertation will be done, but that the student is familiar enough with the topic that the project can be done and done within a reasonable amount of time. The CSR strongly recommends that students be thinking about possible dissertation topics as they work on their General exams, with the hope that the exam process will move easily, and fairly expeditiously, into the writing of the prospectus.

2. **Sources, Method, and Theory**

The prospectus must also be clear about the sources upon which the dissertation will depend, the method(s) the student will be using, and where appropriate, the theoretical resources that will be relevant to their work. Consequently, in discussing method, it is especially important to attend to any special problems that might occur in the course of research and to note how these problems might be addressed.

3. **Contribution to scholarship**

Students should specify as carefully as they can what they consider to be the various ways their project will contribute to the field of study in which they work. In particular, it is helpful to a brief statement of the current status of their topic within their larger field of study.
indicate the various problems at issue, and to show how their project will advance the discussion. It is also important to know that prospectuses are read by the full Standing Committee before they are considered by Prospectus Committees and that the concern of the members of the full Committee, with respect to this aspect of the prospectus, is the extent to which dissertation work can be understood to contribute not only to particular fields of study but also to the broader study of religion, continuing the intellectual work begun in Religion 2001 and 2002. Students are encouraged to articulate the contribution of their research to a future horizon of the community concerned with the study of religion in connection to the received heritage of religious studies and on contemporary discussions and debates, as topic and thesis are formulated and developed and as the worth of the project for scholarship is stated.

4. Chapter Outline

The prospectus must also provide an outline of the projected chapter divisions and a brief description of how the argument will be developed from chapter to chapter.

5. Bibliography

In addition the prospectus should include a brief bibliography indicating the principal primary and secondary sources upon which the thesis is expected to be based. This need not be exhaustive, but representative.
Dissertation Prospectus Checklist

Once a student and his or her advisor have determined that the dissertation prospectus is complete, the student must submit one copy of the prospectus, along with a copy of this checklist, signed by the advisor, to the Committee on the Study of Religion office. The Director of Graduate Studies will then confirm that the formal prospectus guidelines on this checklist have been met and contact the student, who will then be asked to submit 25 hard copies of their prospectus to Barbara Boles in the Committee office.

- Document format is 12 pt. font, double-spaced.
- The length of the prospectus (excluding bibliography and notes) must NOT exceed 3000 words (roughly 10-12 pages). Word Count________.
- Bibliography should be representative, but need not be exhaustive.
- A copy of this checklist, signed by the student’s advisor, must accompany the prospectus.
- A list of suggested committee members should be included.
- Once approved by the Director of Graduate Studies, the student must submit 25 hard copies to the Program Administrator; copies may be double-sided.

Proposed Committee Members:

____________________________________

____________________________________

____________________________________

____________________________________

Advisor’s signature
PROSPECTUS

For a Dissertation entitled

Entropy and Education:
Nihilist Hermeneutics for Theological Bureaucracy in the Nineties

to be presented for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

in

The Study of Religion

Modern West/Theology

Harvard University

by

Celia Compiere

Advisor:  Professor Franz Bibfeldt

May 2010
The Dissertation

Upon formal approval of the prospectus, the student commences the writing of the dissertation. Following the approval of the prospectus, one chapter per year of the dissertation must be submitted to the advisor. The length of dissertations is limited to a maximum of approximately 75,000 words or 300 pages, exclusive of bibliography. Permission to exceed this length may be granted by the Doctoral Subcommittee or the Chairman at the request of the dissertation advisor.

Once the dissertation is completed and approved by the advisor, the degree candidate is examined orally by a committee of at least three faculty readers, two of whom must be members of the Faculty of Arts and Sciences.

Current Dissertation Defense rules (spring 2012) from the GSAS Handbook: The Dissertation Acceptance Certificate must be signed by at least three readers approved by the student’s department, two of whom must be members of the Faculty of Arts and Sciences. FAS emeriti (including research professors) and faculty members from other schools at Harvard who hold appointments on GSAS degree committees are authorized to sign Dissertation Acceptance Certificates as FAS Members. GSAS strongly recommends that the chair of the dissertation committee be a member of FAS.

In practice, this paragraph from the GSAS handbook has always been taken to mean the following: Any members of HDS faculty who are eligible to participate in the Committee on the Study of Religion are authorized to sign Dissertation Acceptance Certificates as FAS members. Any faculty members from other schools at Harvard who have held or currently hold appointments in the CSR are authorized to sign Dissertation Acceptance Certificates as FAS members.

Procedures for preparation and submission of the dissertation follow.

The entire Ph.D. program should not exceed seven years. Students who do not complete the degree in seven years must petition the Committee for an extension of time in the program. Petitions may be made only for one year at a time. In such a petition, the student and the dissertation advisor must present evidence of reasonable and substantial progress as well as a timetable for completion of the dissertation. Extensions will not be granted beyond the tenth year. Only in unusual cases can the program be completed in less than four-and-a-half academic years.
For a diploma
for an advanced
degree to be
awarded on

Degree recommendations and dissertations are due at the Registrar’s office on

Degree applications are due at the Registrar’s office on*


March 8, 2016  January 15, 2016  November 24, 2015

May 26, 2016  May 13, 2016  March 25, 2016

*In exceptional circumstances, the registrar will accept late applications during the next week only; there is a late fee of $50.

THE PHD DISSERTATION SUBMISSION AND PUBLICATION:

Online submission of the dissertation through ProQuest is required by the Graduate School. The submission site is located at [www.etdadmin.com/gsas.harvard](http://www.etdadmin.com/gsas.harvard). For a demo of the submission process please visit: [www.proquest.com/assets/media/services/etd1/etd_demo0.html](http://www.proquest.com/assets/media/services/etd1/etd_demo0.html). The following items must be uploaded via the ProQuest site by 11:59 PM on the dissertation deadline date:

* PDF version of the dissertation file, formatted per GSAS requirements, and ready for publication.
* Completion certificate for the Survey of Earned Doctorates
* Completed GSAS Exit Survey
* Completed GSAS Exit Survey of Postgraduate Plans

The following must be submitted to the Registrar’s Office, at the address listed below, by 5:00 PM on the dissertation deadline date:

* Original Dissertation Acceptance Certificate

For additional information on formatting, common errors, and links to the surveys please visit the Registrar’s Office website at: [www.registrar.fas.harvard.edu/registration-enrollment-degrees/graduation-diplomas/phd-dissertationsubmission](http://www.registrar.fas.harvard.edu/registration-enrollment-degrees/graduation-diplomas/phd-dissertationsubmission)
REGISTRATION AND TUITION REQUIREMENTS:

For **March degree candidates** the last official term of enrollment is the fall term. Do not register for the spring.

For **May degree candidates** the last official term of enrollment is the spring term, unless a dissertation is deposited by February 6, 2015. If so, your registration for spring will be cancelled.

For **November degree candidates** the last official term of enrollment is the previous spring term. However, students who do not deposit a dissertation by August 27th, must register for the fall term. Please see the November Degree Timeline available on the GSAS website for details and important health coverage information: [www.gsas.harvard.edu/current_students/november_degree_timeline.php](http://www.gsas.harvard.edu/current_students/november_degree_timeline.php)

In addition to academic requirements, students are required to meet the financial requirements for the degree. For details please see Chapter VIII of the GSAS Handbook: [http://www.gsas.harvard.edu/handbook/financial_requirements.php](http://www.gsas.harvard.edu/handbook/financial_requirements.php).

DIPLOMAS:

Once conferred, diplomas may be obtained at the Registrar's Office. Alternately, students may request mailing of the diploma on the degree application or submit the Diploma Mailing Request form. [www.registrar.fas.harvard.edu/sites/default/files/media/DiplomaMailingRequestForm.pdf](http://www.registrar.fas.harvard.edu/sites/default/files/media/DiplomaMailingRequestForm.pdf)

Payment must be received before the diploma is shipped. Checks and Money Orders are accepted. Diplomas are sent via Fed Ex and require a signature upon receipt.

COMMENCEMENT:

All students who receive degrees in November, March and May of the academic year 2014-15 may participate in the Commencement celebration on May 28, 2015. In April, the GSAS Office of Publications and Alumni Relations will distribute information about the Commencement Day schedule, tickets, and academic regalia to all recipients of November and March degrees and all applicants for May degrees. They can be reached at (617) 495-5591.
Committee on the Study of Religion  
Satisfactory Progress Requirements  
(as excerpted from the GSAS Handbook)

All students in the Graduate School of Arts and Sciences must be making satisfactory progress in order to be eligible for any type of financial aid. The following five provisions define satisfactory progress.

1. During the first two years of graduate study any student who is permitted to register is considered to be making satisfactory progress.

2. In each of the first two years a student must have achieved the minimum grade-point average required by this faculty, a “B” average.

3. Students must meet the requirements for the A.M. degree (even if they do not wish to obtain this degree) by the end of the fifth term.

4. By the end of the third year a student must have passed general examinations except in cases where deferment has been formally granted.

5. By the end of the fourth year a student must have obtained approval of a dissertation prospectus except in cases where deferment has been formally granted.

6. By the end of the fifth year and each subsequent year during which a student is allowed to register, s/he must have produced at least one acceptable chapter of the dissertation. It is expected that students will complete their degree by the end of the seventh year unless a formal extension is granted.

**Petitions for Extensions** -- If for any reason a doctoral candidate anticipates being unable to fulfill any of these steps within the specified or expected time period, he or she must submit a written petition for an extension -- countersigned by the advisor -- to the Director of Ph.D. Studies. In particular, once a student is beyond the seventh year, he or she must petition (annually) for more time in the program. Extensions will not be granted past the tenth year.

After their seventh year in the program, students who are unable to present evidence of progress on their dissertation, or who assume professional commitments out of residence that prevent them from sustaining it, may be asked either to apply for a leave of absence, or, if the limitations on leave time have been reached, to withdraw from the program. (In the latter instance, if a student subsequently completes the dissertation out of residence or is able to return to full-time resident study, he or she may be re-admitted to the program at the discretion of the student's advisor and the Doctoral Subcommittee.)

Failure to maintain satisfactory progress in the program may result in being placed on “grace” (equivalent to a warning) or unsatisfactory status (equivalent of probation). If deficiencies are not rectified, a student may be required to withdraw from the program. These determinations will be made in consultation with the advisor and the Doctoral Subcommittee, which routinely reviews student progress.
Non-Resident Status

Students needing to spend significant periods of time away from campus may apply for non-resident status. If you are not registering for a particular semester or for a year, you must file for non-resident status. Forms pertaining to non-residency can be obtained from the Ph.D. Program Administrator, from the GSAS offices, or online at http://www.gsas.harvard.edu/gsas_forms/gsas_forms.php under “Student Affairs” or http://www.gsas.harvard.edu/current_students/non-resident_status.php.

As a non-resident student, you should apply to be a Traveling Scholar (or an Exchange Scholar – see below) if your time away will be primarily devoted to work towards your degree. Apart from limits on time-to-degree, there is no limit on the number of terms you may be a Traveling Scholar.

If your time will be primarily devoted to activities other than degree work, you should apply for a Leave of Absence. Students will normally be permitted to spend a maximum of four semesters on leave of absence status prior to completion of the degree program. A maximum of two semesters on leave of absence is allowed prior to passing the general examinations. The total number of semesters spent on leave need not be taken consecutively.

It is also possible to spend time studying at another university as an Exchange Scholar. Please consult the GSAS Handbook for further information.

Time spent out of residence as a Traveling Scholar, on a Leave of Absence, or as an Exchange Scholar will normally constitute time accrued in the program, i.e., will count as part of the ten year time-to-degree limit. For exceptions to this, please consult the Ph.D. Program Administrator.