

GGSR Preliminary Examination guidelines 2019

It is our practice to use this simpler version of the Preliminary Examination. It replaces item 8b1 on p. 9 of the Degree Requirements document (available on the website under Resources <https://religiongradgroup.ucdavis.edu/resources>).

Preliminary Exam Definition

The Preliminary Exam takes place at the end of the PhD student's second year of studies. It is composed of two parts: a roughly 25 page paper and 10 page annotated bibliography. These should survey the student's field and main areas of research interest based on work that the student has done in one or more of the 200 series classes, and an oral discussion with the Preliminary Exam Committee. As its name suggests, the Preliminary Exam is an initial sketch of the student's field of study and a warm-up exercise for PhD work. It differs from the Qualifying Exam, which allows a student to advance to candidacy and is both more rigorous and more official. By contrast, the Preliminary Exam is a chance for students to practice creating a detailed survey of their area of interest and receive a first round of feedback on their proposed area of research so that they know what remains to be accomplished in the quarters leading up to their qualifying exam.

1. Forming a Preliminary Exam Committee (From "Degree Requirements")

The student, in consultation with his/her major professor and graduate advisor, nominates five faculty members, to serve on the Examination Committee. One of the faculty members, preferably one who has already participated in a Preliminary Exam, will serve as committee chair, which involves convening the exam, informing the students and faculty of the exam structure, keeping time, and taking notes. One of the nominated faculty members will be the major professor, who does not serve as committee chair. At least three of the faculty members nominated must be faculty participating in the GGSR; at least one of the faculty members must be from outside the GGSR.

2. What to do in the Quarter before the Exam:

- Contact your GGSR major professor in order for them to assist you in constituting your Preliminary Examination committee. The graduate advisor can help facilitate this process. This committee will serve as the initial basis for the Qualifying Examination committee, but students may wish with the collaboration of their Major Professor and the Graduate Advisor reconfigure the committee by 1 or 2 members.
- Discuss preparation using the following notes to help you. Note that confirmation of committee members can be secured through e-mail and needs not be registered formally with Graduate Studies. Please cc the Graduate Coordinator (Maria Ruby) and the Graduate Group director (Seth Sanders) to ensure that everyone can assist as need be.

3. The Preliminary Exam consists of:

1) Written portion: a roughly 25 page research survey based on work and reading done over the course of the past two years, in addition to a concisely annotated bibliography of key works (approximately 10 pages; both are to be in 12 point font, double spaced, using any common bibliographical format found in the *Chicago Manual of Style*). The survey should cover work the

student considers important to their future research and will be based on a revised version of work written for one or more of the 200 series (200A, 200B, 200C, 200D), agreed on with the student's Major Professor. It will be sent by the student to all members of the committee no less than 72 hours before the exam time.

2) Student Presentation and Discussion (approximately 90 minutes total):

A) Student Presentation (30-40 minutes total). After a roughly ten-minute, closed-door meeting among committee members at the start of the exam to agree on key points for discussion, the student will join the faculty and give a twenty to thirty-minute presentation that outlines what we call the "Area of Specialization Profile," namely: their research, its chief theoretical and methodological contributions, the relation of their work to relevant fields (key scholars, issues, debates, and institutions or journals), and principal research objectives in light of the student's Regional and Thematic areas of specialization, as these have been developed to date.

B) Discussion (50-60 minutes total). Following the student's oral presentation, each faculty member will be given the opportunity to ask several questions and hear responses to each. The exam will conclude with group follow-up and collaborative conversation to agree on directions for the Qualifying Exams and Dissertation. Note that while some of this discussion may happen organically as we move around the table in the initial Q&A session, most should occur after all faculty have had a chance to ask their questions and hear the student's responses.