

Graduate Group in THE STUDY OF RELIGION Bylaws

Administrative Home: Religious Studies Program

Approved by Graduate Council: January 11, 2010

ARTICLE I. OBJECTIVE

The Graduate Group in THE STUDY OF RELIGION is organized primarily to establish and administer graduate education leading to the PhD degree in Religious Studies, in conformance with the rules of the Graduate Council and the Office of Graduate Studies of the Davis Campus of the University of California.

Discipline: The academic study of religion is a multidisciplinary, non-theological field of study that promotes research on and critical engagement with the religious traditions, beliefs, and practices.

Mission: The Graduate Group in the Study of Religion (**GGSR**) is organized to administer the graduate program in the Study of Religion. The GGSR functions as a mechanism for curricular structure in training students and fosters interactions and collaborations among faculty across disciplinary and divisional boundaries.

ARTICLE II. MEMBERSHIP

A. Criteria for Membership in the Graduate Group

1. Disciplinary expertise, research area, and accomplishments.

The GGSR consists of those faculty members of the Davis campus qualified to guide candidates for the Ph.D. degrees in the Study of Religion. Members of the Academic Senate or Academic Federation, including Adjunct Faculty having strong interest and expertise in Religion whose appointment authorizes the direction of graduate work, may be elected to membership in the Group by the Executive Committee.

Per Graduate Council policy, each member must hold an appropriate academic title as (a) a member of the Academic Senate of the University of California (includes Professors, Lecturers with Security of Employment, Professors in Residence, Professors of Clinical “ “, Professors Emeritus/a, and Research Professors), (b) Adjunct Professor, (c) Lecturer (without Security of Employment), or (d) Lecturer Without Salary. Academic staff with primary appointments as Cooperative Extension Specialists or in the Professional Research series are not eligible to be members of graduate programs unless they also hold an appropriate instructional title (normally Lecturer Without Salary).

2. Active research-appropriate to the discipline(s) encompassed by the group.

Members must have doctoral-level degrees in fields related to the study of religion, broadly defined. They must also demonstrate an active research agenda germane to the academic study of religion.

3. Voting rights, per Graduate Council policy and Academic Senate Rule 55.

All active members are eligible to vote on graduate matters, except emeriti as defined below.

B. Application Process

Applications for membership may be by self nomination or nomination by an existing member of the Group. Final approval of membership rests with the Chair of the Graduate Group. Those interested in membership should submit the following to the Executive Committee for consideration:

1. Letter of interest stating the nominee’s willingness to contribute to the Group as defined above.
2. CV

C. Anticipated Contributions by Members

1. Active role in the administration of the graduate group by serving on administrative committees; as a graduate adviser (not to be confused with a major professor); or as an administrative officer of the group.
2. Providing graduate level instruction, as appropriate, in addition to research instruction.
3. Committee service: dissertations, qualifying examinations, comprehensive examinations, etc.

D. Emeritus

Emeritus faculty who are active members of the Group are afforded full rights. Emeritus faculty who are no longer active members of the Group may attend and participate in Group activities, including meetings, but are not afforded the right to vote.

E. Verification of Continued Membership.

Each faculty member's contributions to the GGSR shall be reviewed once every three years for the purpose of identifying faculty members who are not providing a minimal level of service to the Group. This review will be conducted by the GGSR Executive Committee. The review will focus on the anticipated contributions defined above in section II. B, C.

Faculty whose record reflects poor performance in any of these areas will be subject to non-renewal or to a probationary period in which greater involvement must be demonstrated as a condition of continuing membership.

E. Membership Appeal Process

If membership or renewal of membership is denied, the denied applicant can request consideration by members of the Group, by submitting an appeal to the Executive Committee justifying membership. When the appeal is submitted to the Group for a vote, a 50+% positive majority vote of the total Group membership is required for admission. Applicants denied membership or renewal of membership may make a final appeal to the Dean of Graduate Studies.

ARTICLE III. ADMINISTRATION

The academic leadership and management of the Group shall be vested in the Group Chair. The Chair is the chief officer and spokesperson for the Group and for the Executive Committee. Management of the Group shall be open and democratic.

ARTICLE IV. GROUP CHAIR

A. Appointment of the Chair.

The graduate group chair nomination process will be conducted in accordance with current Graduate Council and Academic Personnel Manual policies, APM Section UCD-245B. <http://manuals.ucdavis.edu/apm/245b.htm>.

A "Nominating Committee" will be named by the Executive Committee or Chair to solicit the names of nominees for Graduate Group Chair from the faculty and graduate students of the Group. The names of the nominees indicating a willingness to serve will then be submitted to the Group's faculty and graduate students for comments. All comments will be kept confidential by the Nominating Committee and the Dean of Graduate Studies.

The Nominating Committee will forward a minimum of 1, but preferably 2 names to the Dean of Graduate Studies along with all commentary received on the nominees. The Group may express a preference and, if it does, should indicate the basis for determining that preference. After interviewing the nominees the Dean of Graduate Studies will forward his/her recommendation to the Chancellor. The normal term of the Chair's appointment is 3 years; however, shorter terms are possible, based on the nominee's willingness to serve.

B. Duties of the Chair.

The Chair of the Group has duties that include: a) providing overall academic leadership for the program; b) developing and implementing policies for the program; c) representing the interests of the program to the campus and University administrators; d) calling and presiding at meetings of the Executive Committee; e) calling and presiding at meetings of the program; f) being responsible for coordinating all administrative matters with the Office of Graduate Studies; g) managing program budgets; h) nominating graduate advisers for appointment.

ARTICLE V. COMMITTEES

A. Committees.

The Executive Committee will consist of the Chair of the Group, who acts as Chair of the Executive Committee, plus four faculty members elected by members of the Group, and one student representative elected as stated in Article VI. All faculty members have voting rights, and the student representative is non-voting.

Nominations for the Executive Committee shall be made by the members of the Graduate Group by email during the third year of the tenure of the Executive Committee members. Elections shall be conducted by email ballot and completed at least two weeks prior to the end of the Spring Quarter. The elected members shall assume their duties on July 1. Any vacancies will be filled by the faculty member(s) selected by the Executive Committee. Members of the Executive Committee may serve multiple terms provided they are re-elected.

Three of the four faculty members of the Executive Committee shall be elected for three-year terms. Replacement members shall be elected for full three-year terms. The fourth faculty member will be elected for a two-year term and will be replaced after two years, at the first election, by a faculty member elected for three years. This is to ensure continuity between committees.

Duties of the Executive Committee

The Executive Committee will coordinate with the Chair in administering the program and oversee the modification of the program's mentoring guidelines and application within the program. It names and approves the members of the other committees.

Admissions Committee

The Committee consists of four Group members and a non-voting, ex officio Graduate Adviser. Service on the Committee will generally be for 3 years with an option of a 1-term renewal, but may be for shorter periods to allow for individual member needs. Terms of service may be staggered. The Chair of the Admissions Committee will be elected by, and from among, the four Group members on the Committee.

Duties of the Admissions Committee

The Committee shall develop and regularly update criteria for admission of students and screen applications accordingly as approved by the Executive Committee, and ultimately the membership. The Committee shall make decisions concerning admissions, Fellowships, Scholarships, and Block Grant funds to new and continuing students as appropriate.

ARTICLE VI. STUDENT REPRESENTATIVES

All graduate students will meet once a year. At that meeting the students will vote a member to represent them on the Executive Committee for a term of one year. Call for nominees will be distributed two weeks before the meeting. The voting and determination of the vote shall take place at the meeting.

The student representative will not be a voting member of the Executive Committee. The Chair of the Executive Committee must excuse the student representatives from meetings during discussion about other students, personnel actions or disciplinary issues relating to faculty, during rankings of existing students for funding, and for disciplinary issues related to students.

ARTICLE VII. GRADUATE ADVISERS

Graduate Advisers are appointed in compliance with the policies and procedures of the Graduate Council and the Office of Graduate Studies. Advisers, will serve a term of three years, with the possibility of a 1-term reappointment to a consecutive term. If possible, a student's thesis/dissertation adviser should not serve as their Graduate Adviser. There must be at least one Graduate Adviser for every 15 graduate students.

The principal duties of the Adviser are: advising with regard to the program of study and advising students regarding the group member on their qualifying exam and dissertation committee.

ARTICLE VIII. MEETINGS

The Group Chair shall call an annual meeting Spring term for the purpose of electing officers and conducting other business. The Chair shall be privileged to call other meetings in the interest of the Group and shall be required to do so at the written request of three or more members. Notification will be emailed at least two weeks before the meeting. Members not on campus may participate by telephone.

ARTICLE IX. QUORUM

All issues that require a vote must be:

- Voted on by 50+% of the membership
- On graduate program matters other than amendment/revision of bylaws: passage requires a 50+% supporting vote of the members voting.
- On amendments and revision of bylaws: passage requires a 2/3rds supporting vote of the members voting.

If balloting is conducted via e-mail or web-based technology, 10 days must be provided for expression of opinions about the proposal prior to the acceptance of votes; the program must allow 14 days for votes to be returned or before the "polls are closed."

ARTICLE X. ORDER OF BUSINESS

1. Chair's Business
2. Acceptance of previous minutes
3. Business arising from previous minutes
4. New Items
5. Any other business

ARTICLE XI. AMENDMENTS

Any member of the faculty may propose an amendment to the bylaws by submitting the proposal in writing to the Executive Committee. Proposals for amendment(s) will be circulated to the membership by email. Voting on amendments will take place within two weeks after distribution of email ballots. A 50+% quorum is required for the amendment to pass. All amendments and revisions must be submitted to the Graduate Council for review and approval.