

MA STUDENT HANDBOOK

Religious Studies Department, New York University

Academic Year 2023-2024

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1 Registration and Coursework

1.1 Coursework Requirements

This multidisciplinary program seeks to prepare students with both knowledge of a religious world and the tools to study that world, including language training where appropriate. The program for each candidate for the Master of Arts degree in religious studies consists of 32 points of course work (eight courses) in addition to either a thesis project or an exam. All students are required to take RELST-GA 1001, Theories and Methods in the Study of Religion (4 points). The other seven courses (28 points) are elective on religious life and practice combining a disciplinary and a cultural focus. Courses often speak to both areas of study (e.g., History of 19th-Century American Christianity uses a historical approach to cover religious life in the United States). Therefore, a student's course trajectory will be worked out with close faculty advice. By graduation, students should have a grasp of the tools of at least one disciplinary focus and a working knowledge of at least one cultural area, for example, anthropology of the USA or history of Early Christianity.

1.2 Advisement

Course selection for registration must be discussed with the Director of Graduate Studies each semester.

1.3 Course Loads and Full-Time Status

- The normal full-time course load is **8 credits per semester**.
- Most courses in Religious Studies count for four credits. This means that Religious Studies students ordinarily take **two courses per semester**.

1.4 Registration for Courses

You can view your registration status on Albert under the "Registration" tab. Please make note of any holds you may have as these will need to be removed before you will be able to register. If you have any holds, you must contact the appropriate office to have the hold removed. If you are uncertain who to contact to have a hold removed, please contact the Department administrator at religious.studies@nyu.edu and you will be directed to the appropriate office.

1.5 Directed Study

- As part of their course loads, students may elect, **beginning in their second semester and with the consent of their advisers**, to study individually or in a small group with a faculty member under the rubric of "Directed Study."
- Ordinarily students will not take more than one Directed Study course per semester.
- Directed Study courses may be taken for between 1-4 credits, depending on the work required by the supervising faculty member.

1.6 Transferring Credit from Other Institutions

- According to GSAS regulations, **all requests for transfer of credit must be submitted and approved within one year of matriculation at NYU**. A transferable course must have been taken at the graduate level, and the student must have received a grade of B or better (see section 5.13 of the GSAS Policy and Procedures Manual).
- Students should consult with their advisers before their first semester in order to determine how a credit transfer will affect their specific course of study.

1.7 Incomplete Work

- The NYU Registrar requires grades to be assigned to students in all courses no more than 72 hours after the stated date of the course final. A student who has not completed all requirements for a course by that time may be assigned a grade of I (Incomplete) if the instructor believes that the student is likely to complete the requirements within one semester and to receive a passing grade.
- If no letter grade or grade of I is entered for a course within 60 days, a grade of “NR” or “No Record” will appear for the course on a student’s record.
- Students who receive an I grade or grade of NR have until the beginning of the semester one year after the semester in which they took the course to complete their work and receive a grade. Students who do not complete their work are given a grade of F (see section 5.6 of the GSAS Policies and Procedures Manual).
- Students who believe they will require more than the time allowed to complete the work for a course in which they have received an I grade must file an **Extension of Incomplete Grade Request Form** for up to one additional year. This petition must be approved by three people:
 - o The instructor of the course
 - o The student’s adviser
 - o The Office of Academic and Student Affairs (OASA)
- Students wishing to complete a course in which they have been assigned an I grade should make certain to submit their work to the professor in question **well in advance of the deadline for completion**, in order to give the professor sufficient time to read the work and file the necessary change of grade form.
- No extensions are granted for grades of NR. NR grades must be changed to a grade of I in order to be extended through the Extension of Incomplete process.

1.8 Good Standing and Academic Probation

- To remain in good academic standing, GSAS requires that students successfully complete 66 percent of credits attempted, maintain a 3.0 GPA and be within time-to-degree limits (for more information on time-to-degree limits, see section 6.10 of the GSAS Policy and Procedures Manual). Courses with grades of I, NR, W, and F are not considered successfully completed. For more information on good academic standing please see section 5.1 of the GSAS Policies and Procedures Manual.
- Students who do not meet the criteria for good academic standing will be placed on academic probation. Students on academic probation are officially notified of their

probationary status by a letter from the DGS. The letter explains how to return to good standing. Students are granted one full semester following the one in which they received a probation letter to correct the situations that have led to their probation.

- Students who remain on academic probation for more than one semester following notification may not receive fellowship support nor be given teaching assignments. They are also subject to termination from their program. For further information on probation and termination please see section 7 of the GSAS Policies and Procedures Manual.

1.9 Maintenance of Matriculation (MM)

- Students must be registered for MM during any semester in which they are not enrolled in courses.
- In order for summer funding to be disbursed (see Section 4.3 below), and to maintain access to the NYU Health Center and gym facilities over the summer, students must be enrolled in MM during the summer. There is no fee for MM over the summer, and the department will register students for summer MM, if not already enrolled in a credit-bearing course.
- GSAS requires that all students maintain continuous enrollment until they are awarded a degree. If more than two semesters of inactivity appear on a student's record, the student will be automatically discontinued from the university.
- If and when a student wishes to return to the university after more than two semesters of inactivity, the student must apply for readmission. **Students whose applications are approved will be responsible for paying all MM fees for inactive terms.**

1.10 Financial Aid

- We are able to allay some of the expense of certain students' degrees by offering a partial tuition scholarship, thus reducing the total tuition paid. This assistance is offered at the time of acceptance to the program. It is based solely on the student's application and the amount varies according to the available funding.
- Other financial aid opportunities are available through the Graduate School of Arts and Science (GSAS). More information on these opportunities can be found by visiting their website at: <http://gsas.nyu.edu/financial-support/fellowships.html>

1.11 Travel Research Fund

The Religious Studies Department encourages its students to travel, visit archives, and attend academic conferences. Graduate students are eligible to receive funding to subvent the cost of travel pertaining to their research or to attend a conference through the Religious Studies Research Travel Fund. Those interested should submit a one-page proposal or information on the conference/event they plan to attend to religious.studies@nyu.edu. Upon return students are expected to submit documentation pertaining to their cost for travel i.e. receipts and/or boarding pass stubs, train ticket, etc. *This fund was established through the support of Cherie Acierno in honor of James P. Carse.*

1.12 Graduation Information

All students must apply for graduation on Albert by the beginning of their final semester. To apply, click the “Apply for graduation” link under Academics in Student Center. It is the student’s responsibility to apply for graduation within the specified graduation application period. Students may officially graduate in September, January, or May. In order to graduate in a specific semester, you must apply for graduation within the application deadline period. If you do not successfully complete all academic requirements by the end of the semester, you must reapply for graduation for the following cycle. Note that if you do not apply for graduation, you will not be able to attend the Commencement ceremony. All deadlines for graduation applications can be found at: <https://www.nyu.edu/students/student-information-and-resources/registration-records-and-graduation/albert-help/training/students/graduation/apply-for-graduation.html>. The term in which you expect to graduate is an important part of your student record, especially if you receive any form of financial aid. Verify or update your expected date of graduation on Albert in the Academics section under Graduation. If you have already applied for graduation, you will not be able to update your expected graduation term.

2 Thesis

2.1 Thesis Advisement

You should work with your religious studies faculty advisor or the Department administrator to identify appropriate individuals to serve as your thesis advisor. Thesis advisors are typically faculty members or other individuals at NYU who have obtained a PhD, and whose research interests match up with the focus of your thesis. Once you have found a thesis advisor, you should work with this individual during your last semester in the MA program to complete an academic work of at least 50 pages. It is, therefore, very important for you to secure an advisor long before your last semester. Your final thesis must be approved by two readers, at least one of which must be a faculty member from the Religious Studies Department. When your thesis is complete, please contact the Department administrator at religious.studies@nyu.edu in order to obtain the thesis reader approval sheets which you must take to each advisor for their signature.

2.2 Thesis Documentation Deadlines

The Religious Studies Department must receive all completed documentation no later than **two weeks** before the registrar’s deadline to receive all materials for graduation. This documentation includes two [reader sheets](#), individually signed by each of your readers, as well as the title page of your thesis, signed by both of your readers. All documentation, as well as your thesis manuscript, must be submitted to the Religious Studies Department Administrator in person or by registered mail two weeks before the registrar’s deadline. It is important to coordinate with your readers so they can build time into their schedules to read your thesis, offer comments, and then review the edits you make based on their comments before the Department’s deadline. An example of the signed title page is provided on the following page of this handbook.

Thesis Title

Your Name

A thesis submitted to the
Religious Studies Department at New York University
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of
Masters of Arts

Jane Doe

Reader 1 Signature _____

John Doe

Reader 2 Signature _____

May 2023

2.3 The Thesis or Examination

In fulfillment of the degree, students can complete a thesis paper OR a final examination as their capstone project. By their final semester, students who have elected to complete a thesis will secure a thesis adviser from among either the Religious Studies faculty or faculty from another department at NYU. Together with this adviser, the student will produce a thesis paper to be reviewed by two faculty members, one of whom must be in the Religious Studies Department. Although the thesis paper is not graded, students may elect to enroll in M.A. Thesis Research, RELST-GA 2901 or 2902, (with departmental permission) for a grade as they work toward completion of the paper. As an alternative to the thesis, students may instead choose to take a written comprehensive exam as their capstone project. This requires securing an examination adviser with whom the student will design a set of questions around their particular field of study. The exam will be administered in the student's final semester, and will receive either a grade of "P" (pass) or "F" (fail). Students will not receive credits for completion of the exam; they must have completed, or be in the process of completing, the required 32 credits at the time of examination. If they choose an examination adviser who is not on the Religious Studies core faculty then the exam must also be read by a member of the RS faculty.

3 Journalism Concentration

3.1 Objectives

As religion appears with growing force in the political, economic, social and cultural life of a globalizing world, its representation in various media, electronic and print, likewise grows in importance. The Religious Studies Department has joined forces with the Arthur L. Carter Journalism Institute to provide a concentration within the graduate program that provides education and preparation for students seeking careers in journalism with an expertise on religion. Students who complete the concentration receive an MA degree in religious studies with a concentration in journalism and religion. Like the regular MA degree in religious studies, students are required to complete 36 credits, however, half of these credits are taken through the Journalism Institute. In addition to a final thesis, students in the concentration are expected to complete a final project in long-form journalism aimed at a sophisticated general readership in expository, explanatory or investigative form on a subject related to religious life.

3.2 Application Requirements

All applicants are required to submit a complete application for admission which can be found on the Graduate Admissions web site. In addition to the application form questions, applicants must submit academic transcripts, GRE test scores, two writing samples (an academic sample no longer than 25 double-spaced pages and a second sample that demonstrates your aptitude for journalism), 3 letters of reference that show you to us in such a way that we can see how you would fit into our program, and an intellectually focused Statement of Academic Purpose that includes a discussion of your aspirations as a journalist, writing and reporting on important matters in the news and religious issues. Foreign students whose primary language is not English

are also required to submit TOEFL scores for admission into the Graduate School.

3.3 Program Coursework

- The area of study draws on courses offered by both the Religious Studies Department and the Journalism Institute. These courses are intended to provide students with the theoretical tools necessary to examine modern religious life and the issues that surround it in conjunction with training in journalistic writing, research, and ethics. Admission to the concentration will be made at the discretion of both the Religious Studies Department and the Journalism Institute.
- 36 total points are required for the M.A. in Religious Studies with a concentration in Journalism. Required courses in religious studies (16 points total) are: (1) Theories and Methods in the Study of Religion, RELST-GA 1001, (2) Religion as Media, RELST-GA 3397, and two elective courses focusing on the study of religion. Required courses in journalism (20 points total) are: (1) Writing, Research, and Reporting Workshop I and II, JOUR-GA 1021, 1022. (2) Introduction to Literary Reportage, JOUR-GA 2048 and (3) Portfolio Workshop I and II, JOUR-GA 1044, 1045.
- In addition to completing a final thesis for the Religious Studies Department, the requirements for this concentration also include a final project in long-form journalism, an article aimed at a sophisticated general readership in expository, explanatory, or investigative form on a subject related to religious life. Accompanying this long-form article in journalism, the student will write an essay that discusses, in terms of the theoretical and empirical work done in religious studies classes, how they conceptualized and researched the original article. It is hoped they will emerge with a sense of how their scholarly and journalistic training worked together.

3.4 Final Project Documentation Deadlines

The Religious Studies Department must receive all completed documentation no later than **two weeks** before the registrar's deadline to receive all materials for graduation. This documentation includes four [reader sheets](#), individually signed by each of your readers. You must have two readers from the Religious Studies Department and two readers from the Journalism Institute. In addition, the title page of your final thesis must be submitted signed by all four of your readers. All documentation, as well as your thesis manuscript, must be submitted to the Religious Studies Department Administrator in person or by registered mail two weeks before the registrar's deadline. It is important to coordinate with your readers so they can build time into their schedules to read your thesis, offer comments, and then review the edits you make based on their comments before the Department's deadline. An example of the signed title page is provided on page 6 of this handbook.

4 Dual Degree (MA/MSLS) in Religious Studies and Library and Information Science

4.1 Component 1: MSLS in Library and Information Science

- The Palmer School of Library and Information Science offers the full Master of Science in Library Science (M.S.L.S.) program in Library and Information Science in Manhattan. It is housed in the renowned Bobst Library of New York University, an outstanding research facility in the heart of Greenwich Village, overlooking Washington Square.
- The dual degree allows student to graduate with an MSLS from the Palmer School, accredited by the American Library Association, and Master's degree from NYU. The Palmer School has elective courses in information technology, subject reference and organization of information, web architecture, digital libraries, information retrieval, metadata, collaborative technologies, rare books, archives and management.

4.2 Component 2: MA in Religious Studies

- A student's course trajectory will be worked out with close faculty advice. By graduation, students should have a grasp of the tools of at least one disciplinary focus and a working knowledge of at least one cultural area.
- In fulfillment of the dual degree, students also complete the MA in Religious Studies requirements.

4.3 MSLS Mentorship

- Students enrolled in the dual degree program participate in a mentorship program with NYU Libraries' library subject specialists (LIS 785).

5 Leave of Absence

- GSAS grants leaves of absence to students only in cases of medical illness, military service, maternal or paternal leave, or compelling personal need (see section 6.6 of the GSAS Policy and Procedures Manual).
- Students on leave are not entitled to use University facilities, but they need not apply for readmission once the leave ends.
- The period of an approved academic leave of absence **does not** count towards a student's time to degree limit.
- Starting in Fall 2017, students on an approved academic leave of absence are eligible to enroll for up to one year of health insurance coverage through an NYU sponsored insurance plan, for the same cost as when they are actively enrolled students.
 - Students are responsible for paying the cost of student health insurance during the leave of absence period. GSAS financial aid awards that include health insurance require full-time enrollment and do NOT cover health insurance during a leave of absence.

- Students who are **denied** a leave of absence are required to maintain matriculation (MM) and pay all associated fees if they are not enrolled in coursework. GSAS requires all students to maintain continuous enrollment.

6 General Advice

- The primary key to success in graduate school is a good student-adviser relationship. Support of advisers is crucial for beginning graduate students seeking consideration of special requests, for advanced students requesting letters of recommendation or funds to present papers at academic conferences etc. **Students should meet regularly with their advisers during each semester to discuss their progress, and they should keep their advisers well informed of any problems encountered along the way.**