

**Harvard University
Committee on the Study of Religion**

**HANDBOOK
FOR
Ph.D. STUDENTS**

September 2008

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COMMITTEE ON THE STUDY OF RELIGION

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

Year Four

Dissertation Prospectus

- to be completed by the end of one year following the 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

COMMITTEE ON THE STUDY OF RELIGION
PH.D. PROGRAM REQUIREMENTS
(in detail)

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.

Coursework outside Specialization:

- **Common Seminars** -- Satisfactory completion of **Religion 2001**, "The Cultural History of the Study of Religion," in the first year, and **Religion 2002**, "Contemporary Conversations in the Study of Religion," in the second year, is required.
- **Other Courses Outside the Specialization** -- Satisfactory completion of a minimum of two additional courses outside the specialization is also required (normally in another tradition or geographical-historical complex). These two courses *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.

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—for 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 2008-09, it is Elon Goldstein. 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.

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 the committee two weeks in advance. One of these papers should be in the student's major field and the other in a different field or discipline. Both papers should not be from courses taken with both of the reviewers; however, one paper may be from a course taken with one of the reviewers.

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. (A copy of the statement of academic purpose should also be submitted to the Ph.D. Program Administrator with this form). Once the form is approved (the Program Administrator will notify the student of this), the student should schedule a time for the review with the two faculty reviewers (then notifying the Program Administrator of the time). The meeting is usually an hour and a half.

The A.M. Degree

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.

Committee on the Study of Religion

Language Requirements

All doctoral students—in consultation with their advisors – are required to 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 fields.

The requirement in modern languages of scholarship commonly taught and examined at Harvard Divinity School (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 (taken either at Harvard Divinity School or in FAS); by achieving an 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 a language examination. Students whose first language is not English may meet the requirement with a “pass” on the language exam. Please consult the Divinity School Director of Language Studies for the schedule of exams and for samples of previous exams.

There is also an option to do a private reading course (see following, “Guidelines for Foreign Language Certification Course.”)

In the case of modern languages of scholarship not commonly offered or examined at Harvard Divinity School (Pali, Japanese, Korean, etc.), 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.

The modern language requirements must be fulfilled before taking general examinations.

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 (Beverly Kienzle);
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 (written or oral) evaluating the student's ability to translate;
- b. 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.
- c. 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.
- d. 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 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 courses you are interested in teaching. 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 411, 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. For those teaching at the Divinity School, there is a mandatory workshop at the start of each term on course websites and other IT issues.

In addition, teaching fellow workshops focusing on the study of religion are held throughout the year; the Director of Undergraduate Studies coordinates these, with the Dept. TF and the Program Administrator; any of them may be contacted about the schedule.

* Please note: In most cases, Ph.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 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 their "generals" at the end of the third year.

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, and students are asked to submit a "Notice of Intent To Take Generals" (included in this handbook), signed by their advisor, by late October 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 is available 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.

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 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.

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.”

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. It is then checked and signed by the PhD or ThD director.
 - b) 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.
 - c) 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).
 - d) The Theory and Method examinations have their own requirements.
 - e) 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.
 - f) The two other days of the General Examinations are devoted to the general field and area in which the candidate is enrolled.
 - g) Each examination is taken in a three-hour period.
 - h) Each examination or part of an examination offers a choice of 2-3 questions.

François Bovon and Anne Monius
28 April 2005
revised 16 May 2005

**HARVARD UNIVERSITY
COMMITTEE ON THE STUDY OF RELIGION**

Guidelines For the Use of Computers During the General Examinations

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.
- You may also save your exam onto a blank diskette and bring it directly to the Study of Religion office where you may use their computer for printing out your exam. This computer will accommodate both IBM and Mac formats.
- 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.

Year Four

The Dissertation Prospectus

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.

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: a checklist of formal requirements is appended, to be submitted with one copy of the prospectus. Once the checklist has been approved, 25 copies of the prospectus should be submitted to the Ph.D. Program Administrator two weeks in advance of the Standing Committee meeting at which it will be considered. A model title page is enclosed.

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 must 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 must 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.

Standing Committee Responsibilities -- Once the prospectus is submitted, it will be considered, along with comments of the advisor, by the Standing Committee at its earliest scheduled meeting. In some instances, the Standing Committee may vote to postpone approval of a prospectus, asking that it be revised or significantly re-written and then re-submitted. In some cases where concerns about a prospectus are expressed, someone to represent these may be named to the prospectus committee, either in place of or in addition to those suggested by the advisor. In every case, the advisor is a member of the prospectus 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 three 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 claim which is to be defended. 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). They should also state, in a preliminary way, the thesis which they wish to defend, explicating it in whatever way they find helpful.

2. **Method.** The aim of this aspect of the prospectus 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. Consequently, in discussing method, it is especially important to attend to any special theoretical

problems that might occur in the course of research and to note how these problems might be addressed. 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.

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 include a brief statement of the current status of their topic within their larger field of study, to 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 (and to theological reflection, broadly construed, for Th. D. projects.) Students should keep this in mind as topic and thesis are formulated and developed and as the worth of the project for scholarship is stated.

It is not unusual that there be a period of letdown and even listlessness following general exams, for the successful conclusion of exams marks the end of an intense and highly structured program of study. Students are now expected to initiate and structure their own study, and it often takes some time to learn how to do this. Also, students usually take on various teaching responsibilities after generals. As a result, work on the prospectus is sometimes postponed until shortly before the due date one year after the exams. When this happens, there is a sharp and unfortunate break between preparation for the generals and work on the prospectus. This break could be easily avoided if the student's "special topic" general exam, and study for the exam, is explicitly conceived as *preparation for the prospectus*. Indeed, it might be helpful preparation for this exam to attempt to write at least the first draft of the prospectus *before* the exam itself is taken. This would allow students to present their prospectuses soon after generals and to move on to the main business at hand, the writing of the dissertation.

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.

Advisor's signature

[sample]

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

Option II: Modern West/Theology

Harvard University

by

Celia Compiere

Advisor: Professor Franz Bibfeldt

May 2000

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. [Note: A Divinity School faculty member on the Standing Committee on the Study of Religion is considered *de facto* a member of the Faculty of Arts and Sciences for the duration of his or her tenure on the Committee.] Procedures for preparation and submission of the dissertation follow.

The entire Ph.D. program may 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.

Harvard University
Committee on The Study of Religion

Information on Submission of the Dissertation for Ph.D. Candidates

I. Resource Guides and Paperwork

The following documents are sent to you after your prospectus has been approved:

The Form of the Doctoral Dissertation -- This is the official Faculty of Arts & Sciences' style guide for preparation of the dissertation, and hence is an indispensable document and source of information for all post-prospectus doctoral students. It may now be found on-line at :
<http://www.gsas.harvard.edu/academic/thesis.html>

Harvard Theological Studies Series Guidelines -- If you wish your dissertation to be considered for publication in the Harvard Theological Studies Series, please read the memorandum included in this handbook.

Information for Degree Applicants -- While the dates on this summary sheet will be updated every year, the basic timetable of Faculty of Arts & Sciences' degree deadlines remains perennially the same. A copy of this is included in this handbook.

Application for Degree -- This form (available on-line at <http://www.gsas.harvard.edu/academic>) needs to be completed and submitted by April 1 for June degrees, August 15 for November degrees, or December 1 for March degrees.

Standing Committee Meeting Dates -- Please check with the Program Administrator for the schedule of meeting dates as you and your advisor gauge the timing of the dissertation's submission and for proposing your dissertation examiners.

II. The Timing of Submission

When you think that you are within reach of completing your dissertation draft, your dissertation advisor should write a letter to the Standing Committee proposing an examining committee. The examining committee should include the advisor and two (or sometimes three) additional faculty members, at least two of whom must be from the Faculty of Arts & Sciences. [Note: A Divinity School faculty member on the Standing Committee on the Study of Religion is considered *de facto* a member of the Faculty of Arts and Sciences for the duration of his or her tenure on the Committee.] The advisor's letter should be delivered at least a week before the Standing Committee meeting at which you wish it to be considered. Please keep informed of the schedule of Standing Committee meetings so that your examiners can be approved in advance of your defense.

The requisite number of copies of the final draft of the thesis should be submitted directly to the readers. Do not submit a copy to the Study of Religion office. Once the examining committee is in place, a date for the dissertation defense will be set. In anticipating a defense date, keep in mind that your readers may need up to six weeks' reading time.

Thesis Acceptance Certificate -- The Program Administrator will prepare and deliver to the Chair of your thesis examining committee your Thesis Acceptance Certificate immediately prior to the defense. If no revisions are required, or as soon as any and all revisions are completed, and all examiners have signed the Certificate, it should be returned to the Study of Religion office so that copies of it can be made. The original will then be sent to the Registrar's Office, at which point you will be ready to proceed to make final arrangements for binding your finished dissertation.

Final Delivery -- Two copies of the approved dissertation, one bound and one boxed, together with the Thesis Acceptance Certificate, should be submitted to the Registrar's Office by the date specified. The bound dissertation and one microfilm copy are kept in the Harvard University Archives; another microfilm copy is kept in the Harvard-Andover Theological Library.

III. Related Matters

Dissertation Abstract -- You will need to prepare a dissertation abstract, not to exceed 350 words, prior to the dissertation defense (see "The Form of the Doctoral Thesis"). This document is required for publication in Dissertation Abstracts International.

University Microfilms Form -- Upon delivery of the bound and unbound copies of the dissertation, you will be required to submit a signed University Microfilms International form (available from the Registrar's Office).

Harvard University
Committee on THE STUDY OF RELIGION

To: Ph.D. and Th.D. Students and Dissertation Advisors

From: Francis Schussler Fiorenza, Peter Machinist, François Bovon

Re: HARVARD THEOLOGICAL STUDIES Series

As co-editors of the HARVARD THEOLOGICAL STUDIES Series, we thought it might be helpful for doctoral students anticipating or in the process of writing dissertations to be informed of our present policies and guidelines. Those dissertations will be considered for publication which are: 1) recommended by the examining committee, and 2) submitted by the author. Dissertations will be published in the form in which they are accepted for the degree or as minimally revised following suggestions emerging from the final thesis committee meeting. While in the writing stage, you may wish to keep the following guidelines in mind:

1. Ordinarily manuscripts over 300 pages in length cannot be considered.
2. Since the Series hopes to appeal to educated readers in general in addition to specialists in your discipline, we urge that you include in your introduction a paragraph or two describing the significance, within the field and to religious studies in general, of your topic, sources, and interpretation.
3. Write clearly. Avoid using unnecessary foreign terms, overly technical phrases and academic jargon. Define technical terms where appropriate. Remember that the language of theology or philosophy can be as opaque as foreign terms in another field.
4. Translate all foreign-language material. The format of the Hermeneia commentary series is a good model in this respect.
5. Doctoral students can improve both the content and presentation of each other's dissertations by reading them and making constructive suggestions.
6. The world is teeming with error. This applies especially to footnotes, which need to be checked more than once. Ask another student to spot check for you.
7. The primary criterion for selection is the dissertation's contribution to the field. Following the guidelines 1-6 can help one to contribute to the field more effectively by making the dissertation's intellectual content more accessible. Note that the process is very competitive: HTS can publish only the best of a group of very good submissions. NOTE that HTS is not currently accepting new MS for publication, but will assess promising submissions for possible future action.
8. Three copies of the dissertation should be submitted to Margaret Studier, in Andover G-28, either before March 31 or **September 30**; she will distribute copies to the editors. A selection will be made within two to three months.

HARVARD UNIVERSITY
GRADUATE SCHOOL OF ARTS AND SCIENCES
REGISTRAR'S OFFICE
20 Garden St., Rm. 109

INFORMATION FOR 2008-2009 GSAS DEGREE APPLICANTS

Degree Application due:	Dissertation and Acceptance Certificate due:	Diplomas available:
August 11, 2008	October 1, 2008	November 4, 2008
December 1, 2008	January 23, 2009	March 10, 2009
March 30, 2009	May 22, 2009	June 4, 2009

APPLICATION FOR THE DEGREE:

Degree applications are available from academic departments and the Registrar's Office, 20 Garden St. They must be completed by the student, signed by the department Chair and filed with the Registrar's Office by the appropriate due date. In unusual circumstances late applications may be accepted for the next two weeks only; there is a \$50 fee for late applications.

REACTIVATION:

If a student does not receive the degree on the date it was applied for, the student must reactivate the degree application for conferral at a later date. Reactivation forms are available at the above offices; they also need the signature of the department Chair, and must be filed by the appropriate due date for degree applications: Students may reactivate a degree application once without a fee; for any subsequent reactivation there is a \$50 fee.

REQUIREMENTS WHEN SUBMITTING THE PHD DISSERTATION:

When PhD applicants obtain a degree application or reactivation form, they should also receive three questionnaires: *The Survey of Earned Doctorates*, conducted by the National Research Council, the *Student Exit Interview* from the GSAS Dean's Office, and the *Survey of Postgraduate Plans* from the Office of Career Services. Students must complete these forms and return them to the Registrar's Office, 20 Garden St., when they are turning in their dissertation.

THE PHD DISSERTATION:

Detailed information about the preparation, submission and microfilming of the dissertation is contained in the booklet *The Form of the PhD Dissertation*, which is available at the Registrar's Office, 20 Garden St., and at http://www.gsas.harvard.edu/images/stories/pdfs/form_of_dissertation.pdf

The following must be submitted to the Registrar's Office, 20 Garden St., Rm. 109, Cambridge, MA 02138 (495-1489) by the appropriate due date:

- ___ One bound copy of dissertation
- ___ One unbound copy of dissertation, neatly boxed
- ___ A dissertation acceptance certificate (filed separately; *not* bound in.
(The registrar's office will glue the certificate into the bound copy.). **This certificate must be typed and must match the dissertation title page exactly.**
- ___ A copy of the dissertation acceptance certificate, centered on a page, for the unbound copy
(If dept. is submitting the certificate, the registrar's office will make this copy)
- ___ A signed UMI *Doctoral Dissertation Agreement Form*, with a copy of the title page and abstract
- ___ Survey forms

The abstract, *not* more than a page and a half double-spaced, should be included in both copies of the dissertation immediately following the page containing notice of copyright. Dissertation title, student's name, and dissertation advisor's name should appear on the abstract.

The dissertation acceptance certificate must be signed by three readers, two of whom must be members of the Faculty of Arts and Sciences. This form will be prepared by the PhD Administrator for the Advisor to collect signatures at the oral defense; the original and copy will be brought by the Phd Administrator to the GSAS Registrar to be bound into the Thesis.

The bound copy of the dissertation will be stored in the Harvard University Archives. The unbound copy is sent to University Microfilms International (UMI) for microfilming; a microform copy will be placed in the University Archives.

Microfilming of the dissertation by UMI is required by the Graduate School. A student may authorize UMI to register for a copyright. When filing the dissertation at the Registrar's Office, students must submit a signed UMI *Doctoral Dissertation Agreement Form*, available at academic departments, the Registrar's Office, 20 Garden St. and at http://www.gsas.harvard.edu/images/stories/pdfs/form_of_dissertation.pdf

DISSERTATION PROCESSING FEE:

A fee of \$115 will be charged to cover the cost of dissertation processing. This fee will go on the term bill when a student applies for the PhD degree; it will be cancelled if the degree is not received at that time.

REGISTRATION AND TUITION REQUIREMENTS:

All degree candidates must register continuously until completion of the requirements for the degree. PhD candidates must have paid two years of full tuition and two years of reduced tuition before receipt of the degree, unless they have completed the PhD in less than four years from initial registration. All PhD candidates must pay the facilities fee in their last term of registration (unless a higher tuition has been paid). Resident students automatically will have paid at least the facilities fee for the term. Non-resident students who paid the active file fee for the term will be charged the facilities fee and given credit for the active file fee already charged. This final charge for the PhD is billed when a student applies for the degree; it is cancelled if the degree is not received at that time.

For students receiving degrees in November, the last term of registration is the previous spring term; for degrees in March the last term is the previous fall; and for degrees in June the last term is the spring term (except that June degree candidates filing dissertations by **February 6, 2009** do not register or pay tuition for the spring term). Students who are uncertain whether they will finish in time for degrees in November or March are encouraged to register for the fall or spring terms respectively, either in residence or on leave of absence, to avoid late registration fees if they miss the degree deadlines. If they then do finish in time their registration for the term will be cancelled. Students should see the *GSAS Handbook* section on Medical Fees regarding health fees coverage.

DIPLOMAS:

Diplomas may be obtained with identification at the Registrar's Office, 20 Garden St. Students may also indicate a mailing address on the degree application; the mailing fee is payable when the application is filed. Diplomas are sent by Fed Ex; the fee is **\$10** for the United States, Canada and Mexico, and **\$20** for mailing abroad. This fee is due at the time the degree application is submitted.

Once the dissertation, dissertation acceptance certificate and departmental recommendation for the degree are on file in the Registrar's Office, a student may request, in person or in writing, certification of the expected degree. Requests should be addressed to the Requirements Office, 20 Garden Street, Room 109. The first three certifications are free; there is a \$1 charge for each additional certification.

COMMENCEMENT:

All students who receive degrees in November, March and June of the academic year **2008-2009** may participate in the Commencement celebration on **June 4, 2009**. In April, the GSAS Office of Publications and Alumni Relations (495-5591) sends information about the Commencement Day schedule, tickets, and academic regalia to all recipients of November and March degrees and all applicants for June degrees.

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. Applications for non-resident status may be obtained from the Ph.D. Program Administrator, from the GSAS offices, or on-line at <http://www.gsas.harvard.edu/academic/nonres.html>.

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.