

M.A. Judaic Studies

Rules and Regulations

The aim of this program is to train students to study Judaism at a graduate level. It is expected that students will gain a general overview of the literary, cultural, and social history of Jews and Judaism. They will be expected to become familiar enough with at least two historical periods and they will learn to see religious phenomena and Jewish history in a broad perspective. The expectation is that students will acquire a sophisticated understanding of the variety of approaches to the comparative study of Judaism, developing an appreciation for text and context, diversity and continuity, social adaptation and innovation. This broad background should prepare students to approach any new manifestation of religious life and thought that they might wish to study further.

Knowledge of Hebrew is a requirement of this program. All students are required to pass a Hebrew test. Students who wish to go on to do advanced study are advised to begin further language study as soon as possible. Language credits are not considered as part of the M.A. Knowledge of Hebrew is a requirement of this program.

Program Requirements

Students take two required courses, RELI 610 - Methodological Problems in the Study of Religion **and** RELI 609 – Theories of Religion **or** RELI 611 Concepts in the Historical Study of Judaism, as well as elective courses which give them background in two different time periods in the history of Judaism. In addition, students are encouraged to take at least one course that is comparative or one course in another religious tradition. Students are also required to write a guided research paper or a thesis, depending, on the option they choose.

Course Intensive Option

All students enter the program in the Course Intensive Option. In addition to the core courses RELI 609 **or** RELI 611 **and** 610, this stream requires ten three-credit elective courses. Electives are selected in consultation with the Graduate Program Director (GPD) to ensure that students have a good grounding in at least two time periods. The course work must also afford them familiarity with a variety of methodological approaches to the study of religious phenomena.

Guided Research Paper

When students **IN THE COURSE INTENSIVE OPTION** are ready to write their research papers, they should meet with the GPD to determine which faculty member would be best suited to oversee their project. It is the students' responsibility to contact the professor designated for the assignment. When meeting with the professor a student

should be prepared with a subject, a brief outline and proposed bibliography in order to seek their approval.

The guided research paper should be at least 30 pages in length. The student will be expected to demonstrate a sophisticated understanding of methodological issues in religious studies, as well as an ability to synthesize material with clarity and good judgment.

Once all the required course work is completed, the Hebrew test is passed and the guided research paper has been satisfactorily completed the student is ready to graduate.

Thesis Option

Students wishing to enter the Thesis Option must follow the established procedures for doing so (see below). The Thesis Option requires, in addition to the core courses RELI 609 or RELI 611 and 610, five three-credit elective courses are required in the Thesis Option. These electives are selected in consultation with the Graduate Program Director (GPD) to ensure that students have a good grounding in at least two time periods. The course work must also afford them familiarity with a variety of methodological approaches to the study of religious phenomena.

1. THE FIRST STEP

In order to transfer from the course intensive/non-thesis option to the thesis track, a student must discuss her/his intention with the Graduate Program Director (GPD) for that program.

Normally students who wish to transfer to the thesis option should have a **3.7 GPA** or higher. The student should be prepared to discuss their thesis research topic with their GPD to determine whether or not it is a feasible option for the student. If it is, the GPD will review with the student which faculty member is best suited to supervise the project. The student then contacts the potential supervisor to see if s/he is interested in working with the student on the proposed thesis.

2. PRELIMINARY THESIS PROPOSAL

Having secured a tentative agreement from and having had a single initial meeting with the potential supervisor, the student must formulate a preliminary thesis proposal, following the guidelines below. The preliminary proposal will be prepared independently by the student (without help from the potential supervisor) and submitted to the potential supervisor. The potential supervisor will provide comments on the student's proposal and forward it to the Department of Religion Graduate Studies Committee for their approval.

Two components are required for an acceptable preliminary thesis proposal:

- 1) A brief (500 word) statement of the thesis project, including key issues or questions to be developed and methodology.
- 2) A sample bibliography (between 15 and 30 items).

3. FULL THESIS PROPOSAL – RELI 655 (3 credits)

If the preliminary proposal is approved by the Department of Religion Graduate Studies Committee, the student may move forward to prepare a full thesis proposal. The proposal may range from 1,500 to 3,000 words and should be undertaken in consultation with the supervisor. This proposal will have the same two components as the preliminary proposal -- with modifications as desired or necessary and further elaboration, especially with regard to methodology -- and will in addition include an outline of the chapters of the thesis. Once the full proposal is approved by the supervisor, it is forwarded to the Department of Religion Graduate Studies Committee for their feedback and final approval. Transfer from the course-intensive to thesis option takes place after approval of the full thesis proposal by the Department of Religion Graduate Studies Committee.

Note:

M.A. students must present a full thesis proposal within 6 months after completing their last course; otherwise, they will remain in and complete the non-thesis/course intensive programme.

Once all the required course work is completed, and the final submission of the thesis has been deposited with the School of Graduate Studies Thesis Office, the student is ready to graduate.