HANDBOOK

FOR

STUDENTS AND FACULTY

OF THE

GRADUATE PROGRAM IN RELIGIOUS STUDIES

SOUTHERN METHODIST UNIVERSITY

2011

Table of Contents

Goals, Courses, Fields of Study 3

Principles of Governance 9

Degree Programs 12

Time Limits 15

Languages and Language Examinations 18

Comprehensive field examinations 20

Practice Teaching Requirement 22

Guidelines for Preparing the Plan of Study 23

Guidelines for Preparing the Dissertation Proposal 26

Procedures for Preparing and Securing the Approval of the
Dissertation and for the Oral Examination 27

Policy on the Limits of Faculty Responsibility 29

Evaluations, Grades, and Necessary Conditions for
Continuing in Study 30

Policy on Student Academic Responsibility 32

Constitution of GPRS Student Organization 36

Note: This edition of the Handbook is for the use of students entering the Graduate Program in Religious Studies in the fall of 2011 and in subsequent years. Students who matriculated during the years 2008-2010, should consult the 2008 edition of the Handbook. Students who matriculated prior to fall 2008 should consult instead the document entitled "Policies, Procedures, and Requirements of the Graduate Program in Religious Studies."

Goals, Courses, Fields of Study

Goals: The Graduate Program in Religious Studies comprises programs of study leading to the M.A. and Ph.D. degrees. The primary goal of both degree programs is to prepare persons for academic leadership in the field, and hence for professional careers as teacher-scholars in colleges, universities, and schools of theology. The M.A. degree program also aims to accommodate the qualified nonprofessional student interested in advanced work in religious studies within the context of the liberal arts and sciences.

Courses: All students in the Graduate Program in Religious Studies take four courses in common over a two-year period (one course each semester) which together constitute an ongoing Core Seminar in Religious Studies. The individual components are:

- RELI 6301, The Philosophical Study of Religion
- RELI 6302, Approaches to Asian Religions
- RELI 6303, History, Theory, and Method in Religious Studies
- RELI 6304, Contemporary Approaches to the Study of Religion

Beyond these four courses, students in the M.A. program take an additional eighteen credit hours of course work, for a total of thirty credit hours. Students in the Ph.D. program take an additional thirty-six credit hours, for a total of forty-eight credit hours.

This additional course work, primarily in the student's intended field of specialization, may include courses of three different types:

(1) *Regular courses* in the curricula of Dedman College and/or Perkins School of Theology that are approved for graduate study in the student's field. (Undergraduate courses will be approved only if they have a particular relevance to the student's course of study, and only if the student has reached a prior agreement with the instructor on additional work to be done to raise the requirements of the course to the graduate level.)

(2) *Directed study courses* in which one or more students and a faculty member agree to meet not less than six times during the term to discuss the material under study, and which require the submission of substantial written work to which the faculty member assigns grades as well as assigning an overall letter grade for the course as a whole.

(3) *Independent study courses* in which the student and a faculty member agree on a bibliography for study that the student will pursue independently, and which do not require either the submission of written work or the assignment of letter grades.

Directed study and independent study courses are arranged individually by the student or students with an appropriate member of the faculty who is willing to undertake such a course.

Students are encouraged to take as much of their course work as possible in the form of regular courses. M.A. students may take as much as six credit hours of work (two courses) in independent study, and Ph.D. students may take as much as twelve credit hours of work in independent study. (If any credit has been waived in recognition of pertinent graduate work completed elsewhere, the amount of independent study credit permitted will be reduced accordingly.)

Fields of Study: Each student in the Ph.D. program specializes in one of the following six fields of study:

1. Hebrew Bible/Old Testament
2. New Testament
3. The Christian Tradition
4. Systematic Theology
5. Religious Ethics [Christian Ethics]
6. Religion and Culture

These six fields of specialization require comprehensive field examinations as follows:

Hebrew Bible/Old Testament

1. Ancient Near Eastern, Hellenistic, and Greco-Roman Texts and Contexts
   This examination covers the historical background and literary milieu of the Hebrew Bible and their possible influence upon formation of the biblical texts and canon in 1) pre-exilic and exilic (pre-Assyrian, Assyrian, and Neo-Babylonian) periods and 2) post-exilic (Persian, Hellenistic, and Greco-Roman) periods. Successful completion of the exam will demonstrate the student's familiarity with major historical sources and literary compositions of the mentioned periods and demonstrate his/her ability to employ these materials in biblical interpretation and to engage critically major modern and post-modern trends and theories pertaining to the study of the Hebrew Bible in different ancient contexts.
2. Hermeneutics and Basic Topics of Hebrew Bible Studies
   This examination covers (1) the hermeneutical developments as they pertain to Hebrew Bible studies since the emergence of the modern worldview, with special consideration given to contemporary debates on social location of the reader and (2) basic topics in the study of particular biblical corpora and books. Successful completion of the exam demonstrates the student's ability to engage critically major trends and theories in modern and postmodern study of these issues.

3. Methodologies of Hebrew Bible Studies
   This examination covers diachronic/historical-critical and synchronic/literary-critical scholarly approaches to the Hebrew Bible. Successful completion of the exam will demonstrate the student's understanding of the principles and presuppositions underlying these approaches and of the scholarly debates about their strengths and limitations as well as his/her ability to apply one or more approaches from each group to specific texts of the Hebrew Bible.
4. An elective (chosen in view of the student's anticipated dissertation)

New Testament

1. Background of the New Testament: The Greco-Roman milieu and Hellenistic Judaism
   Successful completion of this exam should demonstrate the student's ability to engage critically: 1) the governance, rhetorical, religious, social, and philosophical practices ingredient to the Roman imperial context; and 2) the history of the various schools, movements, and groups within Judaism in the Hellenistic and the Roman imperial periods.
2. History of the interpretation of the New Testament: introductory and classical issues
   Successful completion of this exam should demonstrate the student's ability to engage critically both the development of early Christianity and the evolution of the discipline of New Testament Studies from the 18th century to the 1970s.
3. Contemporary methods of interpretation
   Successful completion of this exam should demonstrate the student's ability to engage critically some of the major issues and figures in contemporary methods/perspectives in New Testament Studies, that is, from the 1970s to the present. The exam should also demonstrate the student's ability to apply one or more contemporary methods/perspectives to New Testament writings.
4. Elective (chosen in view of the student's anticipated dissertation)

The Christian Tradition

1. Survey of the history of Christian doctrine and theology
   The historical theology comprehensive field examination covers four broad periods in the development of Christian theology and doctrine: ancient (100-600), medieval (600-1400), early modern (1400-1700) and modern (1700-the present). Students are expected to exhibit substantial knowledge of one or more important theological figures from each of these four periods, some knowledge of the theological diversity of each period, and knowledge of at least one of the major theological or doctrinal debates of each period. The exam as a whole should engage the student in reflection on several doctrines or theological topics, and should provide opportunities for critical assessment of the historical material under consideration.
2. Another survey (e.g., history of Christian ethics, institutions, liturgy, art, etc.)
   Students should choose a survey area commensurate with their research focus. The exam should involve reading of primary as well as secondary historical texts

relevant to this survey area from the four broad fields also covered in the examination on the history of Christian doctrine, namely ancient (100-600), medieval (600-1400), early modern (1400-1700) and modern (1700-the present) Christianity. Students should be able to contextualize primary sources within these periods with respect to social, political, cultural, and possibly regional developments relevant to the texts. Students should demonstrate their familiarity with major scholarly works and methodological approaches to the historical study of the survey area.

3. A period in ecclesiastical history
   This exam covers important theological, ecclesiastical, liturgical, and/or other relevant developments in Christian history during a specific time period and usually within a certain geographical region (e.g., the Roman Empire in the ancient period, Latin America in the early modern period, or Britain and North America in the modern period). The student must demonstrate both knowledge of these developments and familiarity with the major scholarly works and methodological approaches to the issues for the period in question.

4. A corresponding period in intellectual and cultural history
   In order to successfully complete this examination, a student must demonstrate (a) knowledge of the major trends in intellectual and cultural history (broadly defined to include political, economic, and social developments) during a period in some broad geographical context contemporaneous with the subject matter of the third examination, and (b) familiarity with the central historiographical issues for the period in question.

Systematic Theology

1. Systematic theology
   The systematic theology comprehensive field examination normally covers four areas: method in theology (at least two different points of view), major theologians (at least two important positions), one major doctrine (in its historical background and contemporary discussion), and an issue in contemporary theology. In drawing up the plan for the exam, the student should note and take advantage of opportunities for coordination and integration among these four areas. Students should also keep in mind the possibility of similar coordination between the systematic theology examination and the examinations in the other sub-fields required.

2. Historical theology
   The historical theology comprehensive field examination covers four broad periods in the development of Christian theology and doctrine: ancient (100-600), medieval (600-1400), early modern (1400-1700) and modern (1700-1900). Students are expected to exhibit substantial knowledge of one or more important theological figures from each of these four periods, some knowledge of the theological diversity of each period, and knowledge of at least one of the major theological or doctrinal debates of each period. The exam as a whole should engage the student in reflection on several doctrines or theological topics, and should provide opportunities for critical assessment of the historical material under consideration.

3. Philosophical theology
   The comprehensive field examination in philosophical theology focuses on the critical and constructive engagement of the student with one or more philosophical traditions and their implications for the study of theology, as well as the implications of the study of theology for those philosophical traditions. Students who engage one tradition are expected to demonstrate in-depth knowledge and a good grasp of its location in the wider field of philosophy. Students who engage various traditions should develop a sense of their interconnectedness and the critical and constructive implications that emerge at the intersection of these traditions.

4. Moral theology
   The comprehensive field examination in moral theology generally concentrates on contemporary moral theology with some understanding of the history of Christian Ethics and philosophical ethics. Students should work out the details with the professor(s). Students often take the MT 6303 Perkins course if they have no similar background, do other assigned readings, and/or take advantage of other course offerings. In drawing up the plan for the exam, students should note and take advantage of opportunities for coordination between the moral theology examination and examinations in other fields.

Religious Ethics [Christian Ethics]

1. Contemporary Theological Ethics
   Successful completion of this exam should demonstrate the student's ability to critically engage some of the major issues, figures, and theories in contemporary theological ethics. The exam should also demonstrate the student's ability to compare these issues, figures, and theories with one another and trace developments from the 1920s to the present.

2. History of Christian Ethics
   Successful completion of this exam should demonstrate the student's broad knowledge of and critical engagement with major figures, ideas, and developments in the history in Christian ethics, beginning with pre-Christian Greek and Hebrew ethics and continuing through Early Christianity, the Middle Ages, the Reformation period, and Early Modern religious thought.

3. Philosophical Ethics
   Successful completion of this exam should demonstrate the student's critical engagement with major issues, figures, and theories in moral philosophy from the seventeenth century to the present.

4. One of the following: Systematic Theology, Philosophical Theology, Biblical Ethics, Applied Ethics, or Ethics of another major religious tradition.
   Successful completion of this exam should demonstrate the student's critical engagement with another discipline that is closely related to the study of religious ethics, with theological and philosophical approaches to a specific moral problem, or with the history, figures, and issues in the ethics of another major religious tradition. The exam should also demonstrate the student's readiness for independent study of this discipline, problem, or tradition in his/her dissertation research.

Religion and Culture

1. Modern study of religion
   This examination covers representative works which have been and continue to be of theoretical and/or methodological significance in the academic study of religion. Students are to demonstrate knowledge of the major concepts, theories, methodologies and empirical findings in the study of religion today.

2. Contemporary theories and critiques of religion and culture
   Contemporary theories and critiques of religion and culture provide both critical evaluation and further development of the modern academic study of religion (see field exam 1). The purpose of field exam 2 is to demonstrate a grasp of several different recent developments, with substantial attention given to perspectives that go beyond the dominant models of modern Western academic study as well as to the growing number of interdisciplinary/transdisciplinary approaches. Students must demonstrate the ability to deal with the material both critically and constructively.

3. Religion in comparative perspective
   Successful completion of this exam should demonstrate the student's ability to critically engage some of the major issues and figures relevant to the comparative study of religions in cultural and historical contexts. The student is expected to demonstrate familiarity with the history of and contemporary problems in the comparative study of religion, and also to read eight to ten sources specifically relevant to two or more religious traditions.

4. Elective (chosen in view of the student's anticipated dissertation)

Principles of Governance

1. All tenured and tenure-track members of the faculty of Perkins School of Theology and of the Department of Religious Studies in Dedman College, along with the Maguire University Professor of Ethics and the Scurlock Professor of Human Values, are members of the faculty of the Graduate Program in Religious Studies, unless, in consultation with the Dean of Perkins, the chair of the Department, or the Provost (as the case may be), they explicitly exempt themselves from membership. Other members of the faculty of Southern Methodist University may become members of the GPRS faculty upon the recommendation of the Director, by vote of the GPRS faculty.

2. The GPRS faculty as a body exercises academic oversight of the program; individual members of that faculty participate in instructional activity as their interests and competences and the needs of the program may determine. A member of the faculty is expected to attend its meetings; to serve on the Steering Committee if elected; and to participate, as appropriate, in the work of one or more fields.

3. The faculty shall establish, review, and revise policies governing admission, curriculum, fields of study, and degree requirements, subject to the approval of the Graduate Council of Dedman College. It shall consider other matters pertinent to the operation and well-being of the program that may be brought to its attention and shall act upon them, or recommend action to others, as may be appropriate to the case.

4. The faculty shall meet annually in April or May, and on the call of the Director at other times as the need may arise. The Director shall preside. The Assistant to the Director shall serve as secretary to the faculty, and shall keep the minutes of its meetings.

5. The faculty shall delegate certain responsibilities to a Steering Committee.

Composition:

The Steering Committee shall consist of the Director, who will serve as its chair; the Chair of the Department of Religious Studies; one member of the faculty for each field of study in the GPRS, and, if recommended by the Director, one or more additional faculty members; and two GPRS students. The overall composition of the Steering Committee should reflect diversity in gender, ethnicity, academic affiliation, and other pertinent respects.

The Director and the Chair of the Department shall serve ex officio. The other faculty members of the Committee shall serve two-year terms, staggered so that approximately half will be replaced each year. The new members shall be elected by the GPRS faculty each spring for the ensuing academic year, upon the nomination of the faculty of the

respective fields. The Director may, at his or her discretion, nominate one or more additional faculty members. Nominations may be made from the floor. The student members shall serve one-year terms, and shall be elected by the registered students of the GPRS each spring for the ensuing year.

The student members of the Steering Committee shall participate fully in the work of the Committee except when individual student cases involving confidential information are being considered.

The Assistant to the Director shall serve as secretary to the Steering Committee, and shall keep the minutes of its meetings.

Duties:

The Steering Committee shall exercise general oversight of the program on behalf of the faculty. It shall be responsible for ongoing program assessment and for long-range planning, and shall bring to the GPRS faculty any recommendations it deems advisable concerning modifications in any aspect of the program. It shall serve as an advocate for the interests of the program within the University, and shall work with the Director, the Dean of Perkins School of Theology, the Dean of Dedman College, and the Dean of Graduate Studies to further these interests.

It shall oversee the process by which applications for admission to the GPRS are considered, and with the advice of the faculty of the various fields of study, shall act upon applications.

It shall monitor the progress of students in course, act upon students' admission to candidacy, and consider individual student petitions for any variations from normal curricular requirements.

Upon the recommendation of the faculty of the pertinent fields, it shall approve students' plans of study and dissertation proposals.

It shall undertake such other duties as the faculty may assign to it.

6. The faculty involved in each field of study shall collectively undertake certain responsibilities in the program. The faculty in the individual fields of study shall be convened as needed

- to monitor the progress of students in course; to review students' plans of study, to consider the relationship between faculty resources in the field and students' interests and objectives, and to advise the students, each other, and the Steering Committee accordingly;
- to review students' dissertation proposals;
- to review applications for admission, and to make recommendations to the Steering Committee;
- to nominate faculty for membership on the Steering Committee; and

- to take up any other matters pertinent to the operation of the field that they may wish to consider, whether on their own initiative or upon the request of the Steering Committee, the Director, or the faculty as a whole.

A member of the Steering Committee shall normally serve as convener of the faculty involved in each field for these purposes.

7. Amendments to these Principles of Governance may be proposed by any member of the faculty, or by the Steering Committee. Any proposed amendment must be distributed in writing to all members of the faculty at least seven days prior to the meeting at which it is to be considered. In order to pass, an amendment must receive the support of a majority of the members of the faculty who are based in the Department of Religious Studies and a majority of the members of the faculty who are based in Perkins School of Theology.

Adopted by the faculty of the Graduate Program in Religious Studies, March 24, 2006

The Degree Programs

Degree of Master of Arts

The requirements for the degree of Master of Arts are the following:

(1) satisfactory completion of thirty credit hours of approved course work, including the four courses of the Core Seminar in Religious Studies: Reli 6301, The Philosophical Study of Religion; Reli 6302, Approaches to Asian Religion; Reli 6303, History, Theory, and Method in Religious Studies; and Reli 6304, Contemporary Approaches to the Study of Religion;

(2) passing an examination in an approved foreign language;

(3) satisfactory completion of a master's thesis on an approved topic in one of the four areas of studies.

The student is encouraged to develop an area of concentration in his or her eighteen hours of undesignated course work. A maximum of six credit hours may be taken in Independent Study courses. Concentrations in areas of scholarship represented primarily in the Department of Religious Studies in Dedman College are especially welcome. Students whose main interests are in areas represented in the typical theological curriculum are advised to consider the Master of Theological Studies degree in Perkins School of Theology as an alternative to the Master of Arts degree in the Graduate Program in Religious Studies.

Each student will be assigned an advisor in his or her anticipated area of concentration, to aid in the development of a plan of study. A thesis proposal, endorsed by a three-member thesis committee, is to be submitted to the Steering Committee for its approval. Approval of the proposal, normally occurring early in the fall term of the second year of study, will signify admission to candidacy for the M.A. degree, provided that the student has satisfactorily completed twenty-four hours of approved course work and has passed the required foreign language examination.

The language examination must be taken during the August examination period at the beginning of the first year. Students who do not pass at that time will be allowed to retake the examination during the January examination period of the first year.

The program normally occupies two academic years: one year of full-time course work (twenty-four credit hours) and one year involving six hours of course work—the two remaining components of the Core Seminar, one each term—and the writing of a thesis. In accordance with university policy, the maximum time allowed for completion of the degree is six years. Ordinarily, transfer credit is not allowed toward the degree.

The MA degree is not normally awarded “in course” to Ph.D. students. However, a Ph.D. student who, owing to a change of plans or circumstances, wishes to receive the M.A. rather than proceed to the Ph.D. may do so upon the Steering Committee’s approval of a plan for doing so. Such a plan would normally involve the completion of at least thirty hours of course work, the passing of at least one language examination, and the completion of either an approved M.A. thesis or the four comprehensive field examinations in the student’s Ph.D. field.

Degree of Doctor of Philosophy

The requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy are the following:

(1) satisfactory completion of forty-eight credit hours of approved course work, including the four courses of the Core Seminar in Religious Studies: Reli 6301, The Philosophical Study of Religion; Reli 6302, Approaches to Asian Religion; Reli 6303, History, Theory, and Method in Religious Studies; and Reli 6304, Contemporary Approaches to the Study of Religion;

(2) passing examinations in two approved foreign languages (for students in the two fields of biblical studies, four languages are required: examinations must be passed in both Hebrew and Greek as well as in two additional languages);

(3) passing four comprehensive field examinations on the subjects designated for examination in the student's field, each consisting of a six-hour written examination based on the bibliography agreed upon with the examiner and the second reader;

(4) securing the Steering Committee's approval of a dissertation proposal endorsed by the student's advisor, two other members of the GPRS faculty, and one reader from outside the GPRS faculty (see the "Guidelines for Preparing and Securing the Approval of the Dissertation Proposal" elsewhere in this handbook);

(5) satisfactorily meeting the practice teaching requirement (see "Practice Teaching Requirement" elsewhere in this handbook);

(6) satisfactorily completing the approved doctoral dissertation;

(7) passing an oral examination covering the student's entire course of study as well as the dissertation.

A maximum of twelve credit hours of course work may be taken in independent study courses.

Each student is assigned a faculty advisor in his or her anticipated field of study, to aid in the development of a plan of study (see "Plan of Study" elsewhere in this handbook). The role of the faculty advisor is distinct from that of the dissertation advisor.

A student is admitted to candidacy for the Ph.D. following the satisfactory completion of all required course work and all required examinations (language examinations and comprehensive field examinations), upon the review and approval of the Steering Committee.

The time limits within which the requirements for the degree must be satisfied are as follows:

(1) The forty-eight credit hours of course work must be completed no later than the end of the second year.

(2) At least one language examination must be taken during the August examination period at the beginning of the first year. Students who do not pass will be allowed to retake the examination during the January examination period of the first year.

Students in the two fields of biblical studies must take the second language examination no later than the May examination period of the first year; students who do not pass at that time will be allowed to retake the examination the following August. All other students must take the second

language examination no later than August of the second year; students who do not pass at that time will be allowed to retake the examination in January of the second year. Students in biblical studies must pass their third and fourth language examinations no later than May of the third year.

(3) The comprehensive field examinations must be completed no later than August of the third year.

(4) The dissertation proposal must be submitted to the Steering Committee for approval no later than November 30 of the student's third year of study, or, in the case of students in biblical studies, no later than April 30 of the third year.

(5) The practice teaching requirement will normally be completed during the third or fourth year, and must be completed no later than the end of the fifth year.

(6) and (7) The dissertation will normally be completed and the oral examination passed by the end of the fifth year. These requirements must be completed no later than five calendar years after the student's admission to candidacy.

Time Limits

Requirements for the M.A. degree

	No later than
Pass language exam	August of 1st year
Complete 30 hours of approved course work Core Seminar Reli 6301, Reli 6302, Reli 6303, Reli 6304 (12 hrs) Elective course work (18 hrs.)	May of 2nd year (1st year 24 hrs, 2nd year 6 hrs)
Complete thesis	April of 2nd year (Consult deadlines published by Office of Research & Graduate Studies.)

Requirements for the Ph.D. degree

	No later than
Pass 1st language exam	August* of 1st year
Submit synopsis of Plan of Study	October 15 of 1st year
Submit Plan of Study	March 1 of 1st year
Pass 2nd language exam	August* of 2nd year (Biblical Studies: May of 1st year)
Complete 48 hours of approved course work Core Seminar Reli 6301, Reli 6302, Reli 6303, Reli 6304 (12 hrs) Elective course work (36 hrs.)	May of 2nd year
Pass four comprehensive field exams	August* of 3rd year
Submit dissertation proposal	November 30 of 3rd year (Biblical studies: April 30 of 3rd year)
Biblical studies: Pass 3rd and 4th language exams	May of 3rd year
Be admitted to candidacy for degree	May of 3rd year
Practice teach one-semester course	May of 5th year
Final term of enrolled student status	Spring term of 5th year
Complete dissertation Pass oral examination covering dissertation and entire field of study	April of 5th year but no later than 5 calendar years after admission to candidacy

*August marks the **beginning** of the school year.

Policies on Time Limits

A student's continuation in a degree program from year to year is contingent upon his or her making satisfactory progress toward the degree. Each student's progress is renewed annually by the Steering Committee. The preceding page provides a chart indicating the normal expectations and time limits pertaining to the degree requirements for the M.A. and Ph. D. degrees.

With regard to these time limits, the following policies apply.

1. *Language Examinations*. A student who fails a language examination on the first attempt is allowed one re-take. The re-take must be scheduled for the next following examination period after the examination period in which the student fails the language exam. Thereafter, the student is allowed to retake a failed language exam only (a) upon the recommendation of the language examiner and (b) with the approval of the Steering Committee.
2. *Comprehensive field examinations*. Comprehensive field examinations should be taken no earlier than the May exam period at the completion of the first year of study and not later than the August exam period at the beginning of the third year of study. A student who fails a comprehensive field examination is allowed one re-take of the examination, (a) upon the recommendation of the examiner and (b) with the approval of the Steering Committee. The re-take must be scheduled for the next following examination period.
3. *Plans of Study*. Plans of Study are to be submitted no later than March 1of the first year.
4. *Dissertation Proposals*. Dissertation proposals may be submitted later than the stipulated deadline only by petition to the Steering Committee and with the Steering Committee's approval of the student's petition.
5. *Completion of Course Work*. Admission to the Graduate Program in Religious Studies assumes a commitment to full-time study toward the anticipated degree. The expectation is that all students will complete twenty-four credit hours of course work during the first year; that M.A. students will complete their remaining six hours of course work, along with work on the thesis, in the second year; and that Ph.D. students will complete their remaining twenty-four hours of course work in their second year. In certain cases, exceptions may be granted by the Director to this requirement, e.g., a case in which a course needed by a Ph.D. student is only offered on a schedule that requires the student to take the course in the fall semester of the student's third year. In such a case, a corresponding postponement in the deadline for completion of comprehensive field examinations may also be appropriate.
6. *Leaves of Absence*. Leaves of absence for medical or other valid personal reasons must be approved by the Steering Committee. Time spent on an approved leave of absence from the GPRS will not be counted as part of the time limits.

   Parental leave: The GPRS recognizes that many graduate students will be enrolled during prime childbearing years and welcomes the addition of children to our community. SMU is currently working on a comprehensive set of policies regarding maternity, paternity, and child-care. Until such policies are applicable to graduate students, the GPRS adopts the following policies.

The GPRS will not discriminate against any student or prospective student for pregnancy or becoming a parent.

1. If requested, the GPRS will make accommodations to the course of study following the birth or adoption of a child. These accommodations might include allowing a student to take a leave of absence from the Program for one-two terms* (depending on complications and timing of the birth) and/or allowing a student to postpone exams (language and comprehensive) and other deadlines for the period of leave. In particular, the program will "stop the clock" during the period of leave.

2. The student will not receive stipend support for the period of leave. However, if a student chooses to take a period of leave, the Program will extend stipend support for one term past the term in which support would ordinarily have terminated.

**Term* is understood to refer to a fall or spring term.

In special circumstances, exceptions to these policies may be granted upon petition to the Steering Committee and with the Steering Committee's approval. In such cases, the student's petition to the Steering Committee must give a detailed account of the circumstances that the student believes to justify the request for an exception.

Languages and Language Examinations

Requirement: Students in the M.A. degree program are required to pass an examination, oral and/or written, in one approved foreign language. Students in the Ph.D. degree program in fields other than biblical studies are required to pass examinations, oral and/or written, in two approved foreign languages; students in the Ph.D. degree program in the two fields of biblical studies must pass examinations, oral and/or written, in Hebrew and Greek as well as in two approved modern foreign languages.

Time Limits: At least one language examination must be taken during the August examination period at the beginning of the first year. Students who do not pass will be allowed to retake the examination during the January examination period of the first year. Ph.D. students in the two fields of biblical studies must take the second language examination no later than the May examination period of the first year; students who do not pass at that time will be allowed to retake the examination the following August. All other Ph.D. students must take the second language examination no later than August of the second year; students who do not pass at that time will be allowed to retake the examination in January of the second year. Students in biblical studies must pass their third and fourth language examinations no later than May of the third year.

Approved Languages: The foreign languages approved for examination in both the M.A. and the Ph.D. degree programs are French, Spanish, German, Hebrew, Greek, and Latin. When a student's course of study makes it necessary or desirable that the student be examined in a foreign language not already approved, the student may petition the Steering Committee for approval to be examined in that language. In the event that the student petitions to be examined in a language without a GPRS examiner (eg, he or she is enrolled in an approved, graduate-level intensive summer language program at another campus), the student must describe the method of evaluation (e.g., oral exam, written exam, grading criteria) which will be provided upon completion of the course. The student must submit the petition to the Secretary to the Program in writing no later than sixty days prior to the beginning of the examination period in which the student wishes to schedule the examination.

Language Examinations: The purpose of the language examinations is to assure that the student is competent in reading, and, when applicable, speaking the language in question and in using it in research. Thus the language examiner is required to certify whether the student is or is not sufficiently competent in reading, and, where applicable, speaking the language to be able to do research in the primary and/or secondary literature written in that language, and, where applicable, to do primary ethnographic research in that language. The examinations may be oral as well as written; and the student will be required to demonstrate competence in reading the various kinds of literature in the language in question that are relevant to scholarship in the student's area or field of religious studies. The specific form and content of the language examinations, however, are left entirely to the discretion of the language examiners; and students should consult the language examiners

directly for further information about the language examinations and about appropriate preparation for them. The names of the examiners for the various approved foreign languages can be obtained from the Secretary to the Program. If a student has gained approval for a language without a GPRS examiner, she or he must provide evidence to the Steering Committee that she or he has achieved competence sufficient to conduct research in that language (e.g., a copy of a graded final exam in that language from an accredited course adequate for graduate research needs or a signed FLAS foreign language evaluation) in order to pass the language requirement.

Administration of Language Examinations: "Request to Take a Language Examination" forms are available online or from the office of the Secretary to the Program. The completed form, signed by the examiner, must be submitted to the Secretary to the Program no later than thirty days prior to the beginning of the examination period in which the student wishes to schedule the examination. Language examinations are normally taken during one of the regularly scheduled examinations periods of the academic year, and (except for any oral component) are administered by the Secretary to the Program.

Comprehensive Field Examinations

The purpose of the comprehensive field examinations is to demonstrate the student's critical and constructive engagement with the sources and scholarship in that student's field, in such a way that the student is prepared to begin to participate in the student's scholarly guild. Students will assess and evaluate the past traditions and current trajectories of their scholarly field, and will be prepared to begin teaching basic courses in that field and to contribute to scholarship in their field.

General: All comprehensive examinations are taken during the three two-week examination periods scheduled annually in August, January, and May. Examiners, as well as second readers, for the comprehensive field examinations are appointed by the Director in consultation with the student and his or her faculty advisor; normally, these assignments are worked out at least tentatively during the preparation of the student's plan of study. Further information about examinations may be obtained from the several examiners; and it is with the examiners that students preparing for comprehensive field examinations should reach agreement on the topics, materials, and bibliographies to be covered by the examinations in their specific cases.

Comprehensive field examinations should be taken no earlier than the May exam period at the completion of the first year of study and not later than the August exam period at the beginning of the third year of study. All arrangements for taking the examinations must be made directly by the student with the appropriate examiner and second reader. Such arrangements include the student's formal request to take an examination, which must be submitted to the examiner and second reader in writing no later than thirty days prior to the beginning of the examination period in which the student wishes the examination to be scheduled. Copies of the form for making this request are available online or from the Secretary to the Program. Along with the Request to Take a Comprehensive Field Examination form, the student should submit a copy of the bibliography agreed upon by their examiner and the second reader.

Scheduling: A schedule of all examinations to be taken during each examination period is posted by the Secretary some two weeks prior to the beginning of that period. All examinations are administered by the Secretary; and students taking examinations should report to the office of the Program on the day and at the hour indicated. Comprehensive field examinations are six-hour examinations and are scheduled from 9:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. on the days fixed for the examinations.

Evaluation: The evaluation of a comprehensive field examination shall be based on the bibliography agreed upon with the examiner and the second reader. The grade assigned to a comprehensive field examination shall be the average of the overall scores assigned by the examiner and the second reader, as computed by the Director. When there is a 10% disparity between the overall scores of the two examiners, based on the higher grade, the

Director of the GPRS will appoint a third reader to read the exam. This reader will be given a copy of the agreed-upon bibliography and will meet briefly with the two examiners to discuss the exam. The third reader's scores will be averaged together with the first two examiners' scores to determine the student's grade for the exam.

Practice Teaching Requirement

As one of the requirements for the Ph.D. degree, all students must satisfactorily complete a one-semester course of practice teaching in religious studies or an approved alternative. This teaching will normally be completed during the third or fourth year and must be completed no later than the end of the fifth year. The initiative for making arrangements to fulfill the teaching requirement rests with the student, who should consult with his/her advisor at least one year in advance.

There are two ways to meet this requirement. In the first, the student teaches a course of his/her own design, planned with the advice and under the guidance of the student's advisor or other supervising professor. Ordinarily the teaching venue will be Perkins School of Theology, but with the permission of the Director of the Program it may be elsewhere on the SMU campus or at another institution. Once the student and advisor have settled on a proposal, the GPRS form, "Proposal for Fulfillment of Practice Teaching Requirement" should be submitted for the Director's approval.

For any course to be offered at Perkins School of Theology, an official new course proposal must be approved by 1) the student’s advisor, 2) the relevant Division of the Perkins faculty, and 3) the Perkins Faculty as a whole. Copies of the current Perkins new course proposal form may be obtained from the GPRS Program Secretary. The student's advisor can give guidance on how this form is to be completed.

In the second, the student meets the teaching requirement by serving as a Teaching Assistant in a course taught either at Perkins School of Theology or, with the permission of the Director of the Program, elsewhere on the SMU campus or at another institution. In this case, the student must be significantly engaged with the students taking the course in question, both in instruction and in the evaluation of their work. If it is to count as meeting the teaching requirement, the Teaching Assistantship must provide the student with the opportunity to lecture (or make equivalent presentations) at least twice and regularly to lead discussion sections. In addition, the student must prepare a full syllabus for the course as if he/she were teaching it alone.

When the teaching requirement has been fulfilled, the student's advisor (or the supervising professor) will submit to the Director of the Program the GPRS form, "Fulfillment of Practice Teaching Requirement," along with a copy of the syllabus that the student has prepared.

Guidelines for Preparing a Plan of Study

Developing a plan of study

During the fall term of the first year, each Ph.D. student is to prepare a plan of study for the ensuing three terms (thirty-six term hours) of course work. In developing this plan, the student should keep at least three things in mind: the comprehensive field examinations, the dissertation, and life beyond the Ph.D. program. Together with the student's previous academic preparation and experience, the course work chosen should prepare the student successfully to complete the four comprehensive field examinations designated in his or her field. It should also provide some of the groundwork for the dissertation he or she expects to write. And it should aid in equipping the student for his or her anticipated future career, e.g., as a teacher and scholar in a college, university, or seminary setting. Although these three considerations are listed here in an order of obvious priority, all three should enter into one's planning from the outset. It is not unusual to discover close and mutually reinforcing relationships among all three.

Each entering student will be assigned a faculty advisor in his or her anticipated field of study. The student will work with this advisor in developing an overall plan of study and in deciding on the specific courses to be taken from semester to semester. The faculty advisor will communicate with the student prior to registration for the first term, in order to discuss the student's preparation, interests, and objectives and to advise the student as to appropriate course choices for the first semester of study. When a tentative plan for the first semester has been worked out, the advisor will confer with the Director of the GPRS as to further steps to be taken.

Early in the fall of the first year, each student will meet with his or her advisor for further discussion of a general plan of study for the remaining three semesters of course work. Drawing upon available projections of course offerings in Perkins School of Theology and in Dedman College and on the schedule of directed studies already planned, and having in mind the specific array of comprehensive field examinations to be taken and the anticipated area of dissertation research, advisor and student will identify likely course choices from among the existing options as well as topics that may need to be addressed through Independent Studies, new Directed Studies, or other means. A brief written synopsis of the results of this discussion is to be submitted by the student to the GPRS office by October 15. The synopsis is to indicate 1) what scheduled courses the student wishes to take, 2) what existing directed studies the student wishes to join, and 3) what additional course work the student is likely to need in order to fulfill his or her objectives.

On the basis of these summaries, the GPRS Director will work with the faculty advisors and other pertinent faculty members to identify potential course offerings (including directed and independent studies and advanced seminar courses in Perkins School of Theology) that would most effectively and efficiently meet the students' needs, so that these potential offerings can be taken into consideration by faculty members in their planning for the ensuing three semesters. Each student's plan of study can be filled out in a provisional way in time to be useful for guidance in advance registration for the spring term of the first year (normally early November). A completed plan of study, with accompanying documentation (see below), is to be submitted to the GPRS office by March 1, for review by the faculty in the student's field and by the Steering Committee.

Recall that, of the forty-eight credit hours of course work required for the Ph.D. degree, twelve hours are devoted to the Core Seminar, and a maximum of twelve hours may be in independent study. Typically, in each of the four semesters of course work, a Ph.D. student will take three hours in the Core Seminar, six additional hours in graded courses (that is, in regular courses and/or directed study courses), and three hours in independent study.

Special notes: Students in the field of New Testament are required to include the following courses in their plans of study: (1) a course in Greek exegesis; (2) a course in Hebrew exegesis; (3) a course in Contemporary Methods of Interpretation; (4) a course in Hellenistic Judaism; (5) a course in the Greco-Roman Milieu; and (6) a course in Christianity in the Second Century. In addition, New Testament students are required to take at least one course in the gospels and at least one course in Paul, requirements which may be satisfied by the regularly-offered Greek exegesis course and/or by independent study courses. Students in New Testament should consult their advisors with regard to which courses in particular will satisfy the listed requirements.

Students in the field of Religion and Culture will be required to include courses (independent study or directed reading) in the following three areas: (1) Modern Study of Religion (in the fall term of the student's first year; (2) Contemporary Theories and Critiques of Religion and Culture (in the spring semester of the student's first year); and (3) Religion in Comparative Perspective (in the fall term of the student's second year).

Submitting the plan of study for approval

The plan of study (submitted to the GPRS office by March 1 of the student's first year) is to include the following elements:

1. A brief statement (perhaps half a page in length) indicating which of the fields the student is pursuing, what particular focus within that field is guiding his or her plan of study, and—with whatever degree of specification seems appropriate at this point—what he or she anticipates as a topic or problem area for the dissertation. (One might, for example, indicate The Christian Tradition as one's field; a particular era, region, or aspect of that tradition as one's focus within the field; and a still more specific figure, event, or issue as a likely dissertation subject. Or one might indicate Systematic Theology as one's field; identify a particular doctrinal locus or theological approach as one's focus; and offer a still more specific theological question or proposal as a likely dissertation subject. Whatever is said at this point concerning the dissertation topic is not irrevocable.)

2. A listing of the four comprehensive field examinations to be taken, with an indication of the ways in which those examinations are to be shaped, insofar as such shaping is called for in the examination protocols, in light of one's objectives. For example, students in the field of the Christian Tradition are to specify a period of ecclesiastical history and the corresponding period in intellectual and cultural history, while students in the field of Religion and Culture are to specify an elective topic associated with the anticipated dissertation.

3. A listing of the courses completed and underway in the first year, and a projected program of study for the fall and spring of the second year. This listing should indicate the specific courses taken or to be taken in each of those terms, and the bearing of each of these courses upon preparation for comprehensive field examinations, dissertation research, and/or other relevant purposes. The schedule should also indicate in which examination period the student intends to take each of the comprehensive field examinations.

The written plan of study is to be accompanied by a completed *Directed Study Advisor Request Form* and supporting documentation for each directed study course listed, and by a tentative bibliography, approved by the supervising faculty member, for each independent study course listed. In addition, there should be a statement signed by the instructor of each regularly scheduled course included in the plan, indicating the instructor's understanding of the student's intent to participate in the course and that, if appropriate, additional or more extensive work will be required for doctoral credit. The plan is also to carry the endorsement of a faculty member in the student's field: either the student's initial advisor or another member of the faculty who, by endorsing the plan, agrees to become the student's advisor until such time as a dissertation advisor (who may or may not be this same faculty member) is appointed.

Guidelines for Preparing the Dissertation Proposal

The purpose of the doctoral dissertation is to contribute to the ongoing discussion of the problem with which it deals in the relevant field of specialization. Accordingly, the dissertation proposal must be formulated in such a way as to make the student's accomplishment of this purpose within the specified time limits seem a reasonable objective. Specifically, the dissertation proposal must include the following four components:

(1) a statement of the specific question or problem to be investigated;

(2) a statement of the reasons that make an investigation of this question or problem important and desirable both for the ongoing scholarly discussion in the relevant field and for the student individually;

(3) a self–assessment by the student of her or his qualifications, including competences in relevant foreign languages, to carry out the proposed investigations; and

(4) either a bibliography of the primary and secondary literature basic to the proposed investigation or some other appropriate indication of the student's awareness of the bibliographic requirements of the investigation and of ways and means of meeting those requirements.

Excluding the bibliography, the dissertation proposal should be **five to ten typewritten pages (1500 to 3000 words) in length**.

Before submitting the dissertation proposal for approval, the student must secure its endorsement by the prospective dissertation advisor, by two additional members of the faculty, and by an external reader, all of whom are willing to work with the student in satisfying the two final requirements for the Ph.D. degree (i.e., the completion of the dissertation and the oral examination). In effect, then, the Steering Committee's approval of the dissertation proposal constitutes, at the same time, its appointment of these members of the faculty to serve as the student's dissertation committee, together with the external reader, and as the primary examiners for the student's oral examination.

Once these endorsements have been secured, the completed proposal is to be submitted to the faculty of the student's field for its review and, upon its recommendation, to the Steering Committee for approval. The dissertation proposal must be submitted to the Steering Committee no later than November 30 of the student's third year of study, or, in the case of students in biblical studies, no later than April 30 of the third year.

Procedures for Preparing and Securing the Approval of the Dissertation and for the Oral Examination

Appointing the Dissertation Committee: The Steering Committee's approval of the student's dissertation proposal is, in effect, its appointment of three members of the faculty as the chairperson and other two members respectively of the student's dissertation committee as well as an outside reader. It is understood that, from this time on, it is this committee, and most particularly the student's advisor, who is its chairperson, that has immediate supervisory responsibility for his or her course of study, including preparing and securing the approval of the dissertation, and conducting the oral examination thereon.

Preparing the Dissertation: So far as the procedures for preparing the dissertation are concerned, it is up to the chairperson of the committee, in consultation with the student, to establish and follow such procedures as may seem to him or her appropriate. In other words, while the Steering Committee makes no regulation as to *what* these procedures should be, it does rule *that* definite procedures be established and followed and that, therefore, they be mutually understood by the chairperson and the student. One way of securing such understanding is for the chairperson to propose such procedures and to discuss them with the student until they can be agreed on, and then to require that the student write up his or her understanding of them, giving a copy thereof to the chairperson. Copies of the current guidelines for preparation of theses and dissertations are available from the Graduate Office of Dedman College.

Securing the Approval of the Dissertation: Securing the approval of the dissertation is regulated as follows. Every year, the official calendar of the Graduate Office of Dedman College specifies two dates toward the end of each semester that determine the schedule for the approval of dissertations and for oral examinations. The later of these dates (a week or so prior to the official close of the semester) is the last day of oral/written examinations for students seeking degrees at the close of that semester. The earlier date (three weeks of so prior to the official end of the semester) is the last day to submit approved dissertations in final form to the Dean of the College. Therefore, while an approved dissertation in final form may be submitted to the Dean at any time earlier in the semester, and while the oral examination on the dissertation may be held at any time after the dissertation has thus been submitted, these two dates set the ultimate possible limits for the schedule to be followed by both the student and the chairperson and the other members of the dissertation committee. Accordingly, prior to the first date specified, all of the following procedures must have already been completed: (1) the student must have submitted his or her completed dissertation to the chairperson and secured the chairperson's tentative approval of it; (2) the chairperson must have forwarded the tentatively approved dissertation to the other members of the committee for their reading and approval; (3) the other members of the committee must have read and approved the dissertation, with or without proposals for revision, and have reported accordingly directly to the chairperson; (4) the chairperson must have given final approval of the dissertation, having first seen to it that the student has made any and all proposed revisions that, in discussion with the other members of the committee have seemed indicated; and (5) the student must have prepared the final copy of the approved dissertation for submission to the Dean. Ordinarily, therefore, the chairperson

should require that the student submit his or her completed dissertation early enough to have secured the chairperson's tentative approval by no later than sixty days prior to the official close of the semester. This allows some four to five weeks for the other members of the committee to read and approve the dissertation, and for the student to prepare the final copies of the approved dissertation for submission to the Dean.

Oral examination: Only after the approved dissertation has thus been submitted can the oral examination of the student on the dissertation be held—although it must be held, naturally, on or before the last day for such examinations specified in the calendar of Dedman College if the student expects to take his or her degree at the close of that semester. Since the dissertation by that time has already been read and approved not only by the chairperson but also by the other members of the committee, whose proposals for revision, if any, will already have been taken into account, the purpose of the oral examination is in no way to propose or insist on revisions in the dissertation. Its purpose, rather, is to require the student to defend the thesis, and thus the supporting argument, of his or her completed and approved dissertation in face of the kind of criticism that may fairly be expected to be made of it by his or her scholarly peers. Consequently, the evaluation of the oral examination is distinct from the evaluation of the dissertation itself and is determined solely on the basis of the student's success or resourcefulness in defending the thesis and supporting argument of his or her dissertation.

Policy on the Limits of Faculty Responsibility

Two points of this policy in particular need to be clarified: (1) faculty responsibility for students during the summer; and (2) faculty responsibility for students during a period of approved research leave.

With respect to both points, the official policy of the Program is that members of the faculty have no such responsibilities. Therefore, neither the Director of the Program nor its students may properly expect faculty members to continue their instructional, advisory, or chairpersonal responsibilities for students during either the summer or a period of approved research leave.

At the same time, it should be clear that this is the official policy with respect to the *responsibilities* of faculty members, not with respect to their *rights*. A member of the faculty certainly has the right to continue responsibilities for students during either of these periods, whether as instructor, advisor, or chairperson of a dissertation committee. But this is a right to be exercised entirely at the faculty member's own option, and by agreement with his or her students—in no way a proper expectation either of the Director of the Program or of the students concerned.

This means, among other things, that no student may properly expect to complete the requirements for his or her degree during a period of approved research leave for the chairperson of his or her dissertation committee.

Finally, the Steering Committee recommends to any chairperson of a student's dissertation committee who will be on approved research leave during the period when the student expects to complete the requirements for his or her degree that the chairperson make special arrangements with the student for completing these requirements—whether by postponing their completion until after the chairperson's return from leave; by the student's petitioning the Director to appoint another chairperson of the committee; or, possibly—and entirely at the option of the chairperson—by his or her agreement with the student to continue the responsibilities of chairperson even during the period of approved research leave.

Evaluations, Grades, and Necessary Conditions for Continuing in Study

Evaluations: A student's performance in both the M.A. and the Ph.D. degree programs is evaluated, first of all, by the grading procedures in force in his or her several courses. In addition, there are evaluations of the student's performance on language and written comprehensive examinations, evaluations of the student's performance on his or her M.A. thesis or Ph.D. dissertation, as well as on the Ph.D. oral examination, and also, in the case of a student for the Ph.D. degree, evaluations of his or her performance during the one-semester course of required practice teaching. The purpose of each of these evaluations is to assess in some way and at some level the student's operational competence as a scholar-teacher in religious studies.

Grades: In accordance with the general regulations of Dedman College, all evaluations of a student's course work appear on his or her permanent academic record as letter grades (including pluses and/or minuses). But these letter grades are in many if not most cases merely a way of transcribing what are originally calculated as number grades, and number grades do, in fact, provide the currency for evaluations of the student's performance on language examinations as well as on written comprehensive examinations. At the same time, all evaluations other than of the student's course work—including those of his or her performance on the M.A. thesis and/or the Ph.D. dissertation, as well as the Ph.D. oral examination—appear on his or her placement dossier neither as letter nor as number grades but in terms of yet a third system employing the four grades of "Honors," "High Pass," "Pass," and "Fail" respectively. The following are the equivalences that are understood to obtain between these three systems of variously expressing or recording evaluations:

92-100	A	Honors
90-91 87-89	A- B+	High Pass
82-86 80-81	B B-	Pass
77-79 72-76 70-71	C+ C C-	Fail

Necessary Conditions for Continuing in Study: Generally speaking, the necessary conditions for a student's continuing in study are two: (1) securing a grade of Pass or better (= B– or better = 80 or better) on all evaluations of his or her performance in courses attempted or in satisfying any other degree program requirement; and (2) satisfying all such requirements within the normal time limits specified for doing so. Failure to fulfill either of these conditions is reason enough for a student not to be continued in study, although in the event of such failure the student will not be discontinued automatically or without formal notification from the Director of the Program.

Review of student progress: Each student's progress in study is reviewed annually by the Steering Committee. In a case in which there is insufficient evidence of satisfactory progress toward the degree, the Steering Committee may decide, in consultation with relevant members of the faculty, (1) to discontinue the student from the program, (2) to allow the student to continue under certain specified conditions, or (3) to recommend to the student a change of degree program.

POLICY ON STUDENT ACADEMIC RESPONSIBILITY

"Academic honesty boils down to three simple but powerful principles:

- When you say you did the work yourself, you actually did it.
- When you rely on someone else's work, you cite it. When you use their words, you quote them openly and accurately, and you cite them, too.
- When you present research materials, you present them fairly and truthfully. That's true whether the research involves data, documents, or the writings of other scholars.

These are bedrock principles, easy to remember and follow. They apply to all your classes, labs, papers, and exams. They apply to everyone in the university, from freshmen to professors. They're not just principles for students. They're principles for academic honesty across the entire university."[1]

I. Academic Honesty and Dishonesty

Descriptions of what constitutes academic honesty and dishonesty may be found in the Honor Code of Southern Methodist University (available online at http://www.smu.edu/studentlife/PCL_05_HC.asp) and in the "Statement of Academic Responsibility" of Perkins School of Theology (included as Appendix B in the Student Handbook and available online at http://www.smu.edu/theology/community/, click on link to current Handbook). The following paragraphs are taken from the latter document:

> *What is Academic Honesty?*
>
> In its broadest sense, academic honesty is maintaining standards of truth and personal integrity in all statements or actions that relate to one's life in the University. It is not distinct from other standards of honesty, but merely defines the context in which that honesty is maintained. But in an institution in which the responsible exchange of information and ideas is of paramount importance, standards of honesty have a correlative importance.
>
> *What is Academic Dishonesty?*
>
> Defined inclusively, academic dishonesty is behavior which misrepresents the origin or nature of one's activities in the University, or which violates the integrity of one's relationship to the University community, whether by design or accident. Misrepresentation includes both the act of falsification, and the neglect of providing a true representation when it is called for. Maintaining an honest relationship to the University requires that students learn what constitutes accidental misrepresentation so as to avoid it; not knowing that an action is generally construed as dishonest does not excuse the action. Within

[1] Charles Lipson, *Doing Honest Work in College* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2004), p. 3.

this broad definition, academic dishonesty includes (but is not limited to) the following:

1. Cheating or copying on a quiz, test, or examination, or other class exercise which is required to be performed independently and individually.
2. Misrepresenting one's academic standing or record.
3. Misrepresenting the causes for missing quizzes, tests, etc., or for lateness in completing assigned work.
4. Aiding or concealing acts of dishonesty by other persons.
5. Acts of theft or unauthorized access to academic materials belonging to others, whether students or faculty members.
6. Soliciting, aiding, or attempting to aid another in planning or committing an act of academic dishonesty.
7. Submitting as one's own work materials that have been wholly or partially prepared by others.
8. Representing that one's work is the result of research or study which one has not personally performed.
9. Stealing or defacing library books.
10. Plagiarism.

These statements, intended primarily for students in undergraduate and professional degree programs, do not specifically address some of the special aspects of academic work in a program such as the GPRS, e.g., practice teaching, but the basic principles identified here can be extended to such contexts. Beyond that, students are encouraged to consult their professors or any of the more extensive treatments of academic honesty and academic ethics currently available. It is especially important for those preparing for careers in teaching and scholarship both to understand what academic integrity requires and to exhibit that integrity in their own work.

It should also be noted that graduate students serving in any instructional capacity at Southern Methodist University are subject to the same standards of professional conduct as are binding on regular faculty members (see especially policies 6.1-6.3 in the University Policy Manual, http://www.smu.edu/policy/.)

II. Administrative Procedures

The faculty of the Graduate Program in Religious Studies has established the following procedures to be followed in dealing with incidents of suspected academic dishonesty:

1. Should an instructor believe that a student has committed an act of academic dishonesty, the instructor will notify the Director in writing. The Director will then arrange as soon as possible a meeting with the student and the instructor. The Director will be present at this meeting. Should he or she wish, the student may also have another faculty member present. At the meeting, the instructor will present his or her concerns to the student. The student may then respond to those concerns. Following this, the instructor will consult in private with both the Director and the faculty member invited by the student (if a faculty member has been invited). If after consultation, the instructor still believes that academic dishonesty has taken place, he or she will assign an appropriate penalty. (The penalty can range from a failing grade on the assignment to a failing grade for the course.) Final authority for determining whether academic

dishonesty has taken place and for the determination of the penalty rests solely with the instructor.

Following the meeting, the decision of the instructor and the nature of the penalty assigned by the instructor will be communicated in writing by the Director to the student, with a copy to the instructor. Following the meeting, the instructor will also prepare a written account of the student's academic dishonesty and the penalty. This account is to be placed in the student's academic file.

Should the instructor deem the student's academic dishonesty to be sufficiently grievous as to call into question that student's fitness to continue in the program, he or she may also request that the matter be referred to the Steering Committee, for consideration of whether the student should be dismissed from the Graduate Program (see section 6).

2. A student accused of academic dishonesty has the right to appeal the decision of the instructor. His or her appeal as described here may concern only the determination of academic dishonesty, not the grade resulting from the dishonesty. (A student wishing to appeal a grade assigned by an instructor should follow the procedures described in section 7.)

Two levels of appeal are possible.

The student may appeal, first, to the Steering Committee. Should the student wish to appeal, he or she will inform the Director within two weeks of receiving the letter described above. The director should as soon as possible arrange for a special meeting of the Steering Committee, in executive session. Relevant documentation will be provided to all the members of the Steering Committee in advance of the meeting. Relevant documentation includes: (i) the assignment deemed by the instructor to be academically dishonest, (ii) any supporting documentation the instructor deems necessary to establish academic dishonesty (e.g., photocopies of books plagiarized or websites copied), (iii) the written statement which the instructor placed in the student's file following the meeting mentioned above, and (iv) a written statement from the student. The steering committee will consider the written documentation, and then consult with both the student and instructor, either separately or together, at the committee's discretion. Following the examination of the evidence, the committee is required to vote as to the question of whether the student has committed an act of academic dishonesty. A majority vote will be decisive.

Should the student wish to pursue the matter further, he or she may next appeal the decision reached through the Steering Committee to the office of the Dean of Graduate Studies. All written documentation considered by the Steering Committee, as well as the minutes of its meeting, will be provided to the Dean's office. The Dean's office will be responsible for determining further procedures to be followed for review of the appeal.

3. When an instructor or other concerned party (e.g., the Director of Bridwell Library) believes that a student has committed an act of academic dishonesty in a context other than course work (for example, in a comprehensive field examination or dissertation, or in the case of theft or destruction of library materials), the procedures described in section 1 and 2 will be followed.

4. Upon a second determination of academic dishonesty, the matter shall be referred to the Steering Committee, for consideration of whether the student should be dismissed the Graduate Program (see section 6).

5. Should the penalty for an act of academic dishonesty result in a student’s being unable to fulfill the requirements for the Graduate Program or to miss deadlines for meeting those requirements, the Director will describe to the Steering Committee how the penalty assigned by the instructor affects the student's progress. The Steering Committee will then need to consider

whether the student should be allowed to continue in the program, and if so, under what conditions (see section 6).

6. If the Steering committee is called on to determine whether the student should be allowed to continue in the program, the director should as soon as possible arrange for a special meeting of the Steering Committee, in executive session. Relevant documentation will be provided to all the members of the Steering Committee in advance of the meeting. Relevant documentation includes: (i) the assignment deemed by the instructor to be academically dishonest, (ii) any supporting documentation the instructor deems necessary to establish academic dishonesty (e.g., photocopies of books plagiarized or websites copied), (iii) the written statement which the instructor placed in the student's file following the meeting mentioned above, and (iv) a written statement from the student. If this is the second instance of academic dishonesty, the instructor's letter describing the first instance should also be included. The steering committee will consider the written documentation, and then consult with both the student and instructor or instructors (if this is the second instance), either separately or together, at the committee's discretion. Following the examination of the evidence, the committee is required to vote as to the question of whether the student should be allowed to continue in the program. A majority vote will be decisive.

7. The award of a grade is a matter solely within the academic discretion of the faculty member. A student who wishes to appeal an assigned grade must first discuss the matter with the faculty member who awarded the grade. If the faculty member decides not to seek a grade change, the student may petition the Director of the GPRS for a review of the faculty member's decision. The Director is not authorized to change a grade, even with the consent of the faculty member who awarded it. If, after discussion of the matter with the Director, the faculty member decides to seek a grade change, he or she should follow standard procedures for doing so. The Director will then report the faculty member's decision to the student. If, after discussion of the matter with the Director, the faculty member decides not to pursue a grade change, the student may petition the Dean of Graduate Studies for a review of the faculty member's decision. The Dean may proceed as he or she deems appropriate. By university policy, final authority in the determination of grades rests with the instructor.

Adopted by the GPRS Faculty, May 4, 2007

CONSTITUTION OF THE GRADUATE PROGRAM IN RELIGIOUS STUDIES STUDENT ORGANIZATION

SOUTHERN METHODIST UNIVERSITY

PREAMBLE

We, the students of the Graduate Program in Religious Studies at Southern Methodist University, do hereby establish a Student Organization to assist students in completing the program and to facilitate relationships with other entities, organizations and communities.

ARTICLE I: Name of the organization

The proposed organization is to be known as the Graduate Program in Religious Studies Student Organization, or GPRS Student Organization (GSO).

ARTICLE II: Affiliation with other groups

The GSO will be affiliated with the following groups:

- GPRS Steering Committee (by student representation on the Steering Committee)
- The Perkins Student Association (by GPRS liaison)
- Graduate Student Association (by student representation in the Association)
- American Academy of Religion and Society for Biblical Literature (by student liaison representation)

ARTICLE III: Purpose/main function of the organization

The purposes of the GSO are as follows:

- Facilitate communication among the GPRS students and between students and the GPRS steering committee and faculty;
- Assist students in progressing through the program;
- act as a medium for the exchange of ideas and involvement in relevant concerns within the SMU and Perkins communities, the Dallas community, our larger academic communities, and the global community.

ARTICLE IV: Membership

The membership of the GPRS Student Organization (GSO) shall consist of all students officially enrolled in the Graduate Program in Religious Studies of Southern Methodist University.

ARTICLE V: Officers

The leadership of the GSO shall consist of the GSO Officers' Council, nominated by GSO faculty or students, from the floor or by prior announcement, and elected by a majority of votes of those voting during the fall meeting. GPRS members may abstain from voting if they choose. The offices of the GSO Council include President, Community Life Coordinator, Colloquy Chair, Professional Development Coordinator, Representative to the Steering Committee (2),

Organization Liaisons (4). Terms of office and election procedures are described in the bylaws (see below, section C).

ARTICLE VI: Advisor

The GSO Advisor role will be filled by – and coterminous with – the GPRS Director. Alternatively, the GPRS student body can nominate another GPRS faculty member; if willing to serve in the capacity of GSO Advisor, this faculty member can be elected to the role by a simple majority vote at the fall meeting. If the role of GSO Advisor is filled by a faculty member other than the GPRS director, the Advisor will serve a two-year renewable term.

ARTICLE VII: Meetings

One regular meeting of the GPRS student body is scheduled each year, associated with a fall orientation for incoming students. Informational meetings and brown-bag seminars are scheduled on an ad-hoc basis, and may be called by GPRS students or faculty.

ARTICLE VIII: Quorum

Half of the enrolled GPRS students must be present at any meeting in which an election, referendum, or other item of official GPRS business is to be transacted.

ARTICLE IX: Referendum and recall procedures

Referenda, including special elections and officer or advisor recalls, must be announced at least one week prior to a meeting of the GSO. Upon approval of two-thirds of the members of the GSO attending the meeting, the referendum will pass.

ARTICLE X: Ratification and Amendments

The need for ratification of or amendments to this constitution will be presented and voted upon in an official meeting of the GPRS student body, announced with at least one week's notice, by email and mailbox. This constitution or amendments to it shall be distributed by email one week prior to the meeting. Upon approval of two-thirds of the members of the GSO attending the meeting, the constitution or amendment will pass.

ARTICLE XI: Bylaws

Section A. All GPRS students shall become members of the GSO upon registration in the program, and shall remain members until no longer registered in the program.

Section B. There are no dues attendant on membership in the GSO.

Section C. GSO Council offices are constituted as follows:

- President – The President organizes the fall meeting of the GSO, including developing student goals/agenda for each meeting, and helps organize sub-field groups with faculty representative and student coordinator for each sub-field group. The President may call meetings of the GSO and of the GSO Council; may preside at GSO Council meetings, and GSO meetings when necessary; and shall represent the GSO at meetings with other groups outside the GSO, or appoint, with the approval of the membership or of the Council, representatives to such meetings. Term: one year, renewable. Elected at the fall meeting.

- Representatives (2) to the GPRS Steering Committee – Facilitate communication to/from students and Steering Committee; serve as the voice of the students' interests in any policy changes of the GPRS. Attend Steering Committee meetings and participate in the business of the GPRS Steering Committee. Term: two years, renewable once. Terms renewed in

alternate-year rotation, so someone with previous experience is always in office. Elected at the fall meeting.

- Community Life Coordinator – Organize fall and spring social events, and work with President to enhance possibilities for networking with alums. Work with AAR and SBL reps to plan social events for GPRS attendees at annual meetings of the AAR and/or SBL. Organizes student mentoring program. Term: one year, renewable. Elected at the fall meeting.

- Colloquy Chair – The Colloquy Chair is responsible for duties related to the twice-annual student colloquy. The student colloquy is an occasional meeting designed around the presentation of original research by one or more students. Duties include organizing the selection process, receiving and promulgating submissions, and making provision for the hosting of the event. Hosting the event includes finding a space to meet, publicizing the event, and refreshments; hosting also includes facilitating presentation and discussion.

- Professional Development Coordinator - The Graduate Student Organization recognizes the need for its students to develop professionally. Most students in the Graduate Program in Religious Studies hope to teach at the University or Seminary level. The goal of this position is to facilitate professional development of GPRS students toward the goal of teaching. The responsibilities of this position include:*Organize monthly meetings to gather students and some faculty for a panel discussion, informal discussion, or presentation on topics relevant to job applications. Such topics may include writing a CV, interviewing, presenting at conferences, publishing papers, and advice for practice teaching.*Maintain and periodically disburse a list of presentation and publication opportunities that is informed by the GPRS Administrator who periodically receives information about presentation and publication opportunities, contact with colleagues, or own research. *Disseminate information from the AAR. *Develop new ways to facilitate professional development.

- Organization Liaisons (4) – Liaison roles include the following:

    - SBL student representative. Term: two years, renewable once. Elected at the fall meeting. The responsibilities of the student representative will include planning the semi-annual GPRS biblical studies colloquy.

    - Representative to the Graduate Student Association (GSA). Term: one year, renewable. Elected at the fall meeting.

    - Representative to the Perkins Student Association – Serves as liaison to/from the Perkins Student Association, which includes GPRS students in its membership. Reports on or presents opportunities or requests for collaboration or assistance. Term: one year, renewable. Elected at the fall meeting.

    - Perkins Journal Representative - Serves as liaison to the editorial board of the Perkins Student Journal. Facilitates communication between the graduate students and the editorial board and provides assisstance to the board as needed.

Section D: A GSO Officers' Council quorum shall be constituted by the presence of at least three of the members at the meeting. The Council shall bear the responsibility of preparing and

ordering the agenda for each meeting of the GSO. At such time as the GSO may prepare a budget and obtain discretionary funds, the GSO Council will be responsible for developing such a budget for the upcoming academic year and presenting it to the GSO at the fall meeting. The outgoing GSO Officers' Council shall be responsible for briefing the incoming Officers' Council on their respective duties.

Section E: Standing or special committees can be formed at the request of any member of the GPRS student body or faculty. Standing committees require the approval of a simple majority of the GPRS student body at a regularly called meeting. Special committees can be formed by the approval of a simple majority of the GPRS student body at a regularly called meeting, or by the request of the GSO Advisor or GSO President. However, special committees cannot commit the GSO or the GPRS to any binding decision or action, or commit funds or student/faculty time without following appropriate procedures, e.g., the referenda guidelines in Article IX.

Section F: Regularly called meetings will follow an agenda developed by the GSO Council working in conjunction with the GPRS Advisor and/or Director. GSO members can recommend agenda items to the GSO Council for consideration and possible inclusion on the agenda of the next meeting. Agenda will typically address old business, new business and business arising from floor announcements, requests and questions.

Section G: Robert's Rules of Order will provide a framework for the GSO's functioning, though parliamentary procedure is not a requirement for all meetings, particularly those that are primarily for the providence of information as opposed to the conduct of business or elections.

Section H: See Articles IX and X for information about amendment procedures.

Revised, Fall 2010