January 4, 2010

Abbas Aminmansour, Chair
Senate Committee on Educational Policy
Office of the Senate
228 English Building, MC-461

Dear Professor Aminmansour:

Enclosed is a copy of a proposal from the Graduate College and College of Liberal Arts and Sciences to establish a M.A. in Religion.

This proposal has been approved by the College Executive Committee and the Graduate College Executive Committee. It now requires Senate review.

Sincerely,

Kristi A. Kuntz
Assistant Provost

KAK/dkK

Enclosures

c:  D. Dutta
   A. Eli
   C. Livingstone
   A. Mester
   R. McKim
December 17, 2009

Kristi Kunz
Assistant Provost
Office of the Provost
207 Swanlund, MC-304

Dear Kristi:

Enclosed is the proposal entitled "Establish a New Master of Arts (M.A.) in Religion, in the Department of Religion, College of Liberal Arts and Sciences." The Graduate College Executive Committee did vote unanimously to approve it.

I send it to you now for further review.

Sincerely,

Debasish Dutta
Dean of the Graduate College

Enclosure

cc: A. Mester
    R. McKim
Proposal to the Senate Educational Policy Committee

PROPOSAL TITLE: Establish A New Master of Arts (M.A) in Religion, in the Department of Religion, College of Liberal Arts and Sciences

SPONSOR: Robert McKim, Head, Department of Religion; tel: 333-0473; mckim@illinois.edu

COLLEGE CONTACT: Ann M. Mester, Associate Dean, College of Liberal Arts and Sciences, 3-1350; mester@illinois.edu

BRIEF DESCRIPTION: To establish a Master of Arts in Religion.

Students may qualify for the MA degree by earning at least 32 hours of graduate credit with at least a 3.0 grade point average (A = 4.0). At least 12 hours of course work must be at the 500-level, 8 hours of which must be in Religion. Two of the eight courses needed for the degree may be taken in other departments. Courses taken outside the department should be relevant to the student’s curriculum in Religion. If a student elects to write an MA thesis, then up to eight credit hours may be taken in “MA Thesis Research (RLST 599).” Credit hours earned in “MA Thesis Research” count toward the required total of thirty-two hours for the degree.

Students will be expected to fulfill the following additional requirements:

A. Each student will establish a primary field of study. This will be done in consultation with the Director of Graduate Studies and the student’s advisor. In most cases, the primary area of study will be a particular field (such as “Buddhism,” “Christianity,” “Hinduism,” “Islam,” “Judaism,” “Philosophy of Religion,” “Religion in America,” “Religion and Education,” etc). The range of fields would be limited to significant areas of scholarship in which there is adequate faculty expertise.

B. Each student will complete at least two courses within that field.

C. Each candidate for the MA must demonstrate reading comprehension in one language other than English that is appropriate for research in the student’s primary field of interest. The student will demonstrate that competence by completing a fourth-semester (or more advanced) course in a foreign language or by passing a reading comprehension test administered by the department.
D. Students will submit either an MA thesis or two approved research papers in the student's primary field of study.

E. Students must pass the MA examination. The MA examination is an oral examination that covers both general course work and the student's research projects (either the MA thesis or the two research papers). A committee consisting of at least three faculty members, formed in cooperation with the Director of Graduate Studies, will administer the examination.

JUSTIFICATION:

The primary justification for the advanced academic study of religion is intellectual. The proposed program will enable students to study historical, ethical, political, and philosophical dimensions of religion, and to learn in some detail how scholars have dealt, and now deal, with central issues in the field. The program will permit students to work with specialists in the major religious traditions and in academic fields that pertain to the academic study of those traditions, acquiring in the process a knowledge of the range of methodologies deployed in the academic study of religion. Students will acquire in the process the necessary intellectual sophistication, historical background, linguistic competence, etc., to pursue this sort of work at the graduate level. We expect some of our graduates to pursue Ph.D.s in the field. Others may wish to pursue the degree with a view to securing professional advancement. A second justification, therefore, is for our university to serve these and additional constituencies. Graduate programs in the study of religion that provide this sort of training are to be found at numerous leading universities in the U.S. and abroad.

The Department has 12 faculty members in the 2009-10 academic year (see Appendix A), and we are currently trying to recruit a replacement for a senior colleague who has just retired. With split appointments we expect to have 11.75 FTE in 2010-11. Since the inception of our unit (which recently became a department and which was a program for most of its history) around 30 years ago we have been very focused on undergraduate education, and we teach two to three thousand students each year in our undergraduate courses, providing many general education courses, as well as offering an undergraduate major.

We believe that given our current size, we can sustain an excellent MA program in all of the areas in which our faculty have expertise, and that we can do so without compromising our contributions to undergraduate education. In particular all courses required by our majors and minors will continue to be taught with the same regularity with which they currently are taught. See Appendix B for a listing of all graduate Religion courses, and the controlling units.

We hope that the first cohort of MA students enter in the Fall of 2011. In addition to our usual number of 400 level courses we would anticipate having available to our students a
sequence of seminars along the following lines during that academic year and the following two years:

2011-2012

Fall: RLST 510 and RLST 503; and eight or nine 400 level courses.
Spring: RLST 511 and RLST 562; and eight or nine 400 level courses.

2012-2013

Fall: RLST 510 and RLST 514; and eight or nine 400 level courses.
Spring: RLST 511 and RLST 567; and eight or nine 400 level courses.

2013-2014

Fall: RLST 510 and RLST 503; and eight or nine 400 level courses.
Spring: RLST 511 and RLST 562; and eight or nine 400 level courses.

Most of our 400-level courses are well enrolled even without an MA program. Enrollment in existing 500-level seminars is already good. For example, Professor Robert McKim regularly teaches a seminar that has been cross-listed with Philosophy (or, more accurately, has existed as a separate seminar in both units), that is a required course for a track in the doctoral program in Educational Policy Studies in the College of Education, and that generally has 10+ students in it from a number of departments - even in the absence of our own graduate program. We expect the newly developed 500-level seminars to have the same broad appeal; indeed we have selected the seminars that we have proposed initially partly on this basis. We plan for all of these other than RLST 510 to be cross-listed. We also have a Minor for grad students and that should bring some additional students into the new seminars. So we expect these courses to have healthy enrollments.

Most of our faculty are already very involved with graduate education. Many of us direct or co-direct dissertations, or serve as members of dissertation committees, in other units in which we have appointments or with which we have informal relationships. In addition, as a unit we teamed up recently with the Department of Educational Policy in the College of Education to create a special track in the EPS doctoral program. Some of the many TAs we employ in our general education courses are drawn from the pool of students in this program - which has attracted some outstanding students.

We expect that the demand for the MA program will come from a number of constituencies. These include outstanding students who for one reason or another want to
expand on their training in preparation for doctoral study. We would expect to admit some students who wish to pursue doctoral studies in a particular area of specialization, but who do not have an adequate academic background to do so. Some students will wish to pursue a terminal MA either for their intellectual development or for their professional advancement.

To give an idea of national demand for programs like this, this year Notre Dame has 151 applicants for a Masters in Theology; Princeton has around 160 applicants; Duke has 31. Of course these are well established programs and no doubt are very different from what we are proposing. But even if after a couple years we had, say, 20% of the Notre Dame number, probably we would be well able to identify 5-10 students whom we would wish to admit. Naturally we will do extensive advertising. We anticipate enrollment of 5-10 students for 2010-2011, the first year of the program. Thereafter we anticipate a total enrollment of 14-20 students per year since most students will need two years to complete the degree. Although we will advertise the MA nationally and internationally, we will pay particular attention to high quality undergraduate colleges. By way of example, Professor Valerie Hoffman recently had a very enthusiastic discussion with colleagues at Illinois Wesleyan about our proposed MA program.

We envisage using some of our TA positions to attract the very best applicants. But we would also expect to admit some students each year subject to their being able to pay their own way. This is fairly common in MA programs in religion across the country.

Making TAships available to students in the proposed program will involve a slight shift in the direction of supporting additional LAS graduate students. We currently employ as TAs a significant number of graduate students from other colleges and we would expect a shift in the direction of hiring more LAS TAs as the MA program develops.

**BUDGETARY AND STAFF IMPLICATIONS:**

a. Additional staff and dollars needed

We can deliver all of the necessary courses with our current faculty. Our faculty are able to incorporate the additional teaching that will be involved without compromising their (generally considerable) contributions to undergraduate education. In addition the admissions processing and staff needed to support the program already exists and is provided by the School of Literatures, Cultures, and Linguistics (SLCL) Graduate Student Services office. A support letter from the school is attached.

b. Internal reallocations (e.g., change in class size, teaching loads, student-faculty ratio, etc.)

Our faculty are able to incorporate the additional teaching that will be involved without compromising their contributions to undergraduate education. The proposed sequence of
courses for the MA would require a faculty member to teach a seminar at most every second year. This is something that some faculty do already through joint appointments and so on and is compatible with our other instructional, research, and public service activities. Actually most of the courses that are relevant to the MA are 400-level courses. Currently a typical combination for our faculty is to combine each year a couple of large enrollment general education courses with a couple of upper level courses. A continuation of this pattern will enable us to teach all of the courses we need to provide an attractive array of options for MA students. We do not anticipate any faculty needing to teach on overload in order to satisfy the needs of these students. If anything there will be competition among the faculty to teach the courses that are needed for the MA program, and in particular graduate seminars. The reason is just that seminars sometimes afford us an opportunity to present drafts of work in progress and in general are more likely to assist us with our research than are lower level survey courses. Lastly, we currently ask doctoral students with the requisite training and experience from a number of departments (in particular Philosophy and Educational Policy Studies) to teach an occasional introductory course for us, as needed, thereby freeing some faculty time for higher level courses. If necessary we can expand this practice, drawing on the services of such doctoral students, whom we expect to continue to serve as some of our TAs, or on exceptionally gifted advanced MA students.

c. Effect on course enrollment in other units and explanations of discussions with representatives of those departments

The number of students in any one subfield of religion will be small so effects on other departments will be negligible.

d. Impact on the University Library – See attached letter from the History, Philosophy and Newspaper Librarian.

c. Impact on computer use, laboratory use, equipment, etc.
Most, if not all, of the new courses will be taught in existing small seminar rooms. No new equipment or new facilities are required

**Desired Effective Date:** upon approval
STATEMENT FOR PROGRAMS OF STUDY CATALOG:

Religion

www.religion.illinois.edu/index.asp

Head of Department: Robert McKim
Director of Graduate Studies: David Price
3080 Foreign Languages Building,
707 South Mathews, Urbana, (217) 333-0473

Major: Religion
Degree offered: M.A.

Graduate Minor: Religion

Graduate Degree Programs

The Department of Religion offers a Master of Arts in Religion.

Admission

The Graduate College admission requirements apply. Applicants need not have an undergraduate major in the study of religion. But they must demonstrate a capacity to undertake advanced study in this area of inquiry. All applications for admission must be supported by three letters of recommendation from persons qualified to comment on the applicant’s aptitude for graduate study in religion. Applicants are required to submit a sample of their written work. The Graduate Record Examination (GRE) is required. International applicants whose native language is not English must take the IELTS or the Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL) and have their scores submitted to Institution Code #1836, Dept. #00. A score of at least 600 on the paper-based test (PBT), or 250 on the computer-based test (CBT), or 100 on the internet-based test (IBT) is required for admission to this program.
Degree Requirements

Master of Arts

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Required Courses:</th>
<th>Thesis option Required Hours</th>
<th>Non-Thesis option Required Hours</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>RLST 510</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Two additional 500-level courses at least one of which must be in Religion</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Each student will establish a primary field of study in consultation with the Director of Graduate Studies and the student’s advisor. Two courses must be taken within that field. In most cases, the primary field of study will be a particular field such as Buddhism, Christianity, Hinduism, Islam, Judaism, Philosophy of Religion, or Religion in America.</td>
<td>Min 8</td>
<td>Min 8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Language Requirement: Students will demonstrate reading comprehension in one language other than English that is appropriate for research in the main field of the student’s interest. The student will demonstrate that competence by completing a fourth-semester (or more advanced) course in a foreign language or by passing a reading comprehension test administered by the department.</td>
<td>Credit does not apply to requirements</td>
<td>Credit does not apply to requirements</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thesis Hours Required (min/max applied toward degree):</td>
<td>Max 8</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Hours</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minimum 500-level Hours Required overall:</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minimum Hours Overall Required Within the Unit:</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Requirements:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students may take up to two of the required eight courses in departments other than Religion. Courses must be relevant to the student’s curriculum in Religion.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students will submit either an MA thesis or two approved research papers in the student’s primary field of study</td>
<td>thesis deposit</td>
<td>2 papers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students must pass the MA examination</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*For additional details and requirements refer to the department’s graduate degree requirements and the Graduate College Handbook.

Graduate Teaching Experience
Although teaching is not a general Graduate College requirement, experience in teaching is considered an important part of the graduate experience in this program.

Graduate Minor

The graduate minor in Religion is designed for graduate or professional students in other disciplines who desire to complement their degree program with a study of Religion. The Minor will consist of any coherent set of at least 12 graduate hours of courses that is approved by the Director of Graduate Studies in the Department of Religion. It will include at least one graduate seminar in the Department of Religion. The successful completion of a minor is noted on the student’s transcript. For admission to the program contact the department.

Facilities and Resources

The extraordinary University Library is the department’s main research facility; within it, the History, Philosophy & Newspaper Library, the Rare Book Room, and the area studies libraries (Slavic, Africana, Latin American, Asian Libraries) all serve faculty and students with expert bibliographers and focused collections. Among other special collections that are likely to be useful to our students are Afro-American and Women’s Studies; the library is also a major repository for government documents.

Financial Aid

Financial aid is available to many students in the form of fellowships or assistantships. More information is available on the Graduate College web site, http://www.grad.illinois.edu/fellowship/finaid.
CLEARANCES:

Signatures:

[Signature]
Unit Representative: 3/23/09

[Signature]
School Representative: 3/20/09

[Signature]
College Representative: 5/8/09

[Signature]
Graduate College Representative: 12-18-09

[Signature]
Provost Representative: Date: 

[Signature]
Educational Policy Committee Representative: Date: 

Page 9 of 9
## Appendix A: Faculty in the Department of Religion, Fall 2009

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Rank</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>Research Interests</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ebel</td>
<td>Jonathan</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>American religious history; religion in modern America; religion and religion violence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hoffman</td>
<td>Valerie</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>Islamic theology; mysticism, gender ideology, and modern trends in Islamic thought</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Khalil</td>
<td>Mohammad</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>Islamic thought and Muslim societies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Layton</td>
<td>Richard</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>Early Christianity; history of the Bible</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mayer</td>
<td>Alexander</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>East Asian Buddhism and religions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>McKim</td>
<td>Robert</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>Philosophy of religion; early modern philosophy; applied ethics</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pandharipande</td>
<td>Rajeshwari</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>Hinduism; language of religion; Asian mythology; language and culture in India; South Asian languages</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pitard</td>
<td>Wayne</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>Hebrew Bible; ancient Near Eastern</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Price</td>
<td>David</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>Medieval, Renaissance and Reformation in Europe; history of arts; Christian-Jewish relations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rosenstock</td>
<td>Bruce</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>Modern Jewish philosophy; Hebrew Bible and the intersection of Judaism and Christian theology</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ruppert</td>
<td>Brian</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>Relationship between Buddhist practice and cultural life in Japan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Treat</td>
<td>James</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>Native religious traditions; religion and environment</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Appendix B: Religion Course Listing

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Course #</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Controlling Dept.</th>
<th>Crosslist</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>RLST 403</td>
<td>WOMEN IN MUSLIM SOCIETIES</td>
<td>RELIGION</td>
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<tr>
<td>RLST 408</td>
<td>ISLAM AND MODERN SOCIETY</td>
<td>RELIGION</td>
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<tr>
<td>RLST 409</td>
<td>TRANSNATIONAL ISLAM, EUROPE-US</td>
<td>ANTHROPOLOGY (ANTH 402)</td>
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<td>RLST 410</td>
<td>ISLAM IN EGYPT</td>
<td>RELIGION</td>
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<tr>
<td>RLST 412</td>
<td>READINGS IN SANSKRIT I</td>
<td>LINGUISTICS (SNSK 403)</td>
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<tr>
<td>RLST 413</td>
<td>READINGS IN SANSKRIT II</td>
<td>LINGUISTICS (SNSK 404)</td>
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<tr>
<td>RLST 415</td>
<td>INTRO READINGS OF THE TALMUD</td>
<td>RELIGION</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>RLST 416</td>
<td>READINGS IN RABBINIC MIDRASH</td>
<td>RELIGION</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RLST 420</td>
<td>JEWISH LIFE-Writing</td>
<td>GERMAN (YDSH 420)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RLST 424</td>
<td>PHILOSOPHY OF RELIGION</td>
<td>PHILOSOPHY (PHIL 424)</td>
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<tr>
<td>RLST 429</td>
<td>LANGUAGE OF RELIGION</td>
<td>RELIGION</td>
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<tr>
<td>RLST 434</td>
<td>HISTORY OF EARLY JUDAISM</td>
<td>HISTORY (HIST 433)</td>
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<tr>
<td>RLST 435</td>
<td>REVIVALISM AND EVANGELICALISM</td>
<td>RELIGION</td>
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<td>RLST 436</td>
<td>RELIGION IN AMERICA:1900-1941</td>
<td>RELIGION</td>
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<tr>
<td>RLST 440</td>
<td>EARLY CHRISTIAN THOUGHT</td>
<td>RELIGION</td>
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<tr>
<td>RLST 442</td>
<td>HISTORY OF EARLY JUDAISM</td>
<td>RELIGION</td>
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<tr>
<td>RLST 443</td>
<td>ANCIENT NEAR EASTERN CULTURES</td>
<td>RELIGION</td>
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<td>RLST 447</td>
<td>MODERN CATHOLIC THOUGHT</td>
<td>RELIGION</td>
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<td>RLST 450</td>
<td>THEORIES OF RELIGION</td>
<td>RELIGION</td>
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<tr>
<td>RLST 458</td>
<td>CHRISTIANS AND JEWS 1099-1789</td>
<td>RELIGION</td>
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<tr>
<td>RLST 463</td>
<td>RELIGION AND SOCIETY</td>
<td>ANTHROPOLOGY (ANTH 463)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
October 24, 2008

Dear LAS Program Committee,

I write to lend my support to the proposal for an MA program in Religion at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. The collections of the University Library are historically strong in religious studies, with particular strengths in the Judaic and Christian traditions. We currently subscribe to an extensive repertory of databases and full-text services that are essential for the study of religion, such as Religion Database (American Theological Library Association), Index Islamicus, Index to Jewish Periodicals, Catholic Periodicals Index, Old Testament Abstracts, New Testament Abstracts, Luthers Werke, Acta Sanctorum, Periodicals Archive Online, JSTOR, Patrologia Latina, Early English Books Online, Eighteenth Century Collections Online, Encyclopedia Judaica, and others.

Although our acquisitions budget for religious studies has not kept pace with inflation and the recent upsurge of publishing in this field, University of Illinois students can also avail themselves of the holdings of dozens of Illinois libraries through the I-Share consortium and to hundreds of other libraries through interlibrary loan. I am confident that the University Library can support the research needs of students in the proposed MA program in Religion.

Most sincerely,

Mary Stuart
History, Philosophy and Newspaper Librarian
Professor of Library Administration
Dear Mary,

This is OK with the School. We anticipate that some automation of our grad admissions and career tracking will expand our capacity to process the workflow from new graduate programs, such as this one. The work on the administrative programs has already begun, and should be in place well before the first applications come in for the MA in the Dept of Religion.

Best wishes,

Doug

Douglas A Kibbee
Professor of French Linguistics
Director, School of Literatures, Cultures and Linguistics University of Illinois
4072 B Foreign Languages Building, MC-171