

UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS  
AT URBANA - CHAMPAIGN

EP.10.34

Office of the Provost and Vice Chancellor  
for Academic Affairs

Swanlund Administration Building  
601 East John Street  
Champaign, IL 61820



RECEIVED

JAN 04 2010

OFFICE OF THE SENATE

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. Elli  
C. Livingstone  
A. Mester  
R. McKim

UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS  
AT URBANA - CHAMPAIGN

RECEIVED  
DEC 21 2009  
OFFICE of the PROVOST



Graduate College  
204 Coble Hall, MC-322  
801 South Wright Street  
Champaign, IL 61820-6210  
[www.grad.illinois.edu](http://www.grad.illinois.edu)

December 17, 2009

Kristi Kuntz  
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



ILLINOIS  
UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS AT URBANA-CHAMPAIGN

## 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; rmckim@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.

e. 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](http://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

	Thesis option Required Hours	Non-Thesis option Required Hours
<b>Required Courses:</b>		
RLST 510	4	4
Two additional 500-level courses at least one of which must be in Religion	8	8
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.	Min 8	Min 8
<b>Language Requirement:</b> 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.	Credit does not apply to requirements	Credit does not apply to requirements
<b>Thesis Hours Required (min/max applied toward degree):</b>	Max 8	
<b>Total Hours</b>	32	32
<b>Minimum 500-level Hours Required overall:</b>	12	12
<b>Minimum Hours Overall Required Within the Unit:</b>	8	8
<b>Other Requirements:</b>		
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.		
Students will submit either an MA thesis or two approved research papers in the student's primary field of study	thesis deposit	2 papers
Students must pass the MA examination		

\*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***

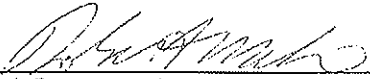
The extraordinary University Library is the department's main research facility; within it, the History, Philosophy & Newspaper Library, the Rare Book Room, and the area studies libraries (Slavic, Africana, Latin American, Asian Libraries) all serve faculty and students with expert bibliographers and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

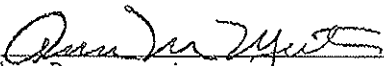
Signatures:

  
Unit Representative:

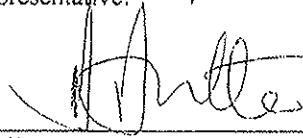
3/23/09  
Date:

  
School Representative:

3/20/09  
Date:

  
College Representative:

5/8/09  
Date:

  
Graduate College Representative:

12-18-09  
Date:

\_\_\_\_\_  
Provost Representative:

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date:

\_\_\_\_\_  
Educational Policy Committee Representative:

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date:

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

NAME		RANK	%	RESEARCH INTERESTS
Ebel	Jonathan	Assistant Professor	100	American religious history; religion in modern America; religion and religion violence
Hoffman	Valerie	Associate Professor	100	Islamic theology; mysticism, gender ideology, and modern trends in Islamic thought
Khalil	Mohammad	Assistant Professor	100	Islamic thought and Muslim societies
Layton	Richard	Associate Professor	100	Early Christianity; history of the Bible
Mayer	Alexander	Associate Professor	50	East Asian Buddhism and religions
McKim	Robert	Professor	100	Philosophy of religion; early modern philosophy; applied ethics
Pandharipande	Rajeshwari	Professor	75	Hinduism; language of religion' Asian mythology; language and culture in India; South Asian languages
Pitard	Wayne	Professor	100	Hebrew Bible; ancient Near Eastern
Price	David	Professor	100	Medieval, Renaissance and Reformatino europe; history of arts; Christian-Jewish relations
Rosenstock	Bruce	Associate Professor	100	Modern Jewish philosophy; Hebrew Bible and the intersectin of Judaism and Christian theology
Ruppert	Brian	Associate Professor	50	Relationship between Buddhist practice and cultural life in Japan
Treat	James	Associate Professor	100	Native religious traditions; religion and environment

Appendix B: Religion Course Listing

<u>Course #</u>	<u>Title</u>	<u>Controlling Dept.</u>	<u>Crosslist</u>
RLST 403	WOMEN IN MUSLIM SOCIETIES	RELIGION	ANTH 403 GLBL 403 GWS 403 HIST 434
RLST 408	ISLAM AND MODERN SOCIETY	RELIGION	PS 408
RLST 409	TRANSNATIONAL ISLAM, EUROPE-US	ANTHROPOLOGY (ANTH 402)	ASST 402
RLST 410	ISLAM IN EGYPT	RELIGION	
RLST 412	READINGS IN SANSKRIT I	LINGUISTICS (SNSK 403)	
RLST 413	READINGS IN SANSKRIT II	LINGUISTICS (SNSK 404)	
RLST 415	INTRO READINGS OF THE TALMUD	RELIGION	
RLST 416	READINGS IN RABBINIC MIDRASH	RELIGION	
RLST 420	JEWISH LIFE-WRITING	GERMAN (YDSH 420)	CWL 421 HIST 436 SLAV 420
RLST 424	PHILOSOPHY OF RELIGION	PHILOSOPY (PHIL 424)	
RLST 429	LANGUAGE OF RELIGION	RELIGION	LING 429
RLST 434	HISTORY OF EARLY JUDAISM	HISTORY (HIST 433)	
RLST 435	REVIVALISM AND EVANGELICALISM	RELIGION	HIST 486
RLST 436	RELIGION IN AMERICA:1900-1941	RELIGION	
RLST 440	EARLY CHRISTIAN THOUGHT	RELIGION	MDVL 440
RLST 442	HISTORY OF EARLY JUDAISM	RELIGION	HIST 432
RLST 443	ANCIENT NEAR EASTERN CULTURES	RELIGION	
RLST 447	MODERN CATHOLIC THOUGHT	RELIGION	
RLST 450	THEORIES OF RELIGION	RELIGION	
RLST 458	CHRISTIANS AND JEWS 1099-1789	RELIGION	HIST 458
RLST 463	RELIGION AND SOCIETY	ANTHROPOLOGY (ANTH 463)	

RLST 464	MODERN JAPANESE DRAMA	EAST LANG & CULTURE (EALC 464)	CWL 462 THEA 487
RLST 478	US INTEL & CULTR HIST FROM 1859	HISTORY (HIST 479)	
RLST 479	US INTEL CULTR HIST FROM 1859	HISTORY (HIST 481)	
RLST 480	ISLAMIC LAW	RELIGION	
RLST 481	MUSLIM ETHICS IN GLOBAL AGE	RELIGION	
RLST 482	MUSLIM-CHRISTIAN INTERACTIONS	RELIGION	
RLST 483	SALVATION IN ISLAMIC THOUGHT	RELIGION	
RLST 484	BUDDHIST MEDITATION	RELIGION	EALC 484
RLST 485	DRAMA IN PREMODERN JAPAN	EAST ASIAN LANG & CULT (EALC 463)	CWL 470 THEA 486
RLST 488	HISTORY OF CHINESE BUDDHISM	RELIGION	
RLST 493	HONORS SENIOR THESIS	RELIGION	
RLST 494	TOPICS IN RELIGIOUS THOUGHT	RELIGION	
RLST 495	TOPICS IN ASIAN RELIGIONS	RELIGION	
RLST 496	TOPICS IN HISTORY OF JUDAISM	RELIGION	
RLST 498	TOPICS OF BIBLICAL STUDIES	RELIGION	
RLST 503	RENAISSANCE OF THE BIBLE	RELIGION	
RLST 510	GRADUATE INTRO TO RELIGION	RELIGION	
RLST 511	SEMINAR IN STUDY OF RELIGION	RELIGION	
RLST 514	ISLAMIC THEOLOGY	RELIGION	
RLST 562	RELIGIOUS DIVERSITY	RELIGION	
RLST 567	MAHAYANA BUDDHISM	RELIGION	
RLST 590	INDEPENDENT STUDY	RELIGION	
RLST 599	THESIS RESEARCH	RELIGION	

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

**Kincaid, Debbie**

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**From:** Lowry, Mary K [lowry@illinois.edu]  
**Sent:** Monday, February 15, 2010 2:12 PM  
**To:** Kincaid, Debbie  
**Subject:** FW: Religion MA proposal, revisions request

-----Original Message-----

**From:** Kibbee, Douglas A  
**Sent:** Friday, November 06, 2009 4:22 PM  
**To:** Lowry, Mary K  
**Cc:** McKim, Robert J  
**Subject:** RE: Religion MA proposal, revisions request

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