

JDP Faculty Handbook & Policy Manual

Updated Fall 2021

Table of Contents

- Message from the Directors 4
- Brief History 5
- JDP Mission 5
- Governance..... 6
 - 2021–2022 JDP Committee members 7
 - Staff 7
 - DU/Illiff Joint PhD in the Study of Religion Org Chart - 2021 8
 - JDP Graduate Student Association 9
- Budget..... 9
- Communications 10
- Faculty..... 10
 - Faculty Policies and Procedures..... 11
 - Recruitment & Admissions 12
- Student Financial Aid 15
- Graduate Teaching Assistantships 16
- Advising and Mentoring..... 16
- Program Structure 18
- Curriculum..... 19
- Colloquia 21
- Modern Research Language 21
- Certificates 22
- Class Scheduling 22
 - Academic Calendar Conflicts 23

Comprehensive Exams	24
RLGN 6010 Comprehensive Review I: Perspectives in the Study of Religion.....	24
RLGN 6020 Comprehensive Review II: Area Theories and Methods.....	25
RLGN 6030 Comprehensive Review III: Knowledge in a Professional Field	26
RLGN 6040 Comprehensive Review IV: Knowledge in Minor Areas or Subfields	26
Responsibilities for RLGN 6030 and 6040 (winter quarter).....	26
Pre-2015 Procedures	28
Accommodations for Students with Disabilities for Comprehensive Examinations (Compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act).....	28
Dissertation Research Credit	29
Dissertation Committee and Roles of Committee Members	30
Qualifications and roles of each person	30
Dissertation Proposals	32
Oral Defense of the Proposal.....	32
The Dissertation Defense.....	33
Scheduling and Verification of the Oral Defense.....	33
Conducting the Defense	33
Submitting the Dissertation	34
“Opt-Out” DU/Illiff Joint MA in the Study of Religion	35
Program Assessment	35
Annual JDP Events.....	36



Mark K. George, Director
July 2020–June 2023
mgeorge@iliff.edu



Sandy Dixon, Asst. Director
July 2020 – June 2023
Sandra.dixon@du.edu

Message from the Directors

This Program and its success are due to the faculty of the JDP. We greatly appreciate the time, care, and effort each JDP faculty member puts into educating, mentoring, and professionally nurturing our graduate students. We recognize that you have multiple commitments and little time. This handbook is meant to make your life a bit easier by providing essential information about JDP curriculum, policies, and procedures.

If something is missing or confusing, please let us know so that we can clarify.

Brief History

The Joint Program was approved and adopted by the Board of Trustees of the University of Denver on November 14, 1980, and by the Board of Trustees of Iliff School of Theology on September 7, 1981. Iliff managed the Program until 2010 when administrative management moved to DU. Both institutions work in equal partnership to provide doctoral training and the degree is granted by both institutions. Institutional names may appear before the title in either order: DU/Iliff Joint Doctoral Program or Iliff/DU Joint Doctoral Program. Joint Doctoral Program, or JDP, is the most common nomenclature.

Until 2014 the Program was called the Joint Ph.D. in Religious and Theological Studies, with four concentrations: Biblical Interpretation, Religion and Psychology, Religion and Social Change, or Theology, Philosophy and Cultural Theory. The Program is now the Joint Doctoral Program in the Study of Religion and is a unified, interdisciplinary, cohort-model program in which students gain depth in their choice of professional sub-field by choosing relevant courses, comps, and dissertation topic.

JDP Mission

Drawing broadly upon the resources of both institutions, the University of Denver-Iliff School of Theology Joint Doctoral Program in the Study of Religion prepares globally minded scholar-teachers through dynamic, interdisciplinary training in the study of religion as theorized and lived. – *adopted by the JDP Committee, 2015*



Ryan Hall and her committee after a successful dissertation defense

Governance

The Joint Program is regulated by a legal Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) between the University of Denver (Colorado Seminary) and the Iliff School of Theology that became effective in July 2010 and is regularly updated. The MOA ensures that the Joint Program will be structured and operated such that the University and Iliff have equivalent authorities over the Program and equal responsibility and accountability for the Program's success. The MOA establishes the following structure for Program governance.

- *Administrative Deans*
DU's Vice Provost for Research and Graduate Education and Iliff's Academic Vice President & Dean of the Faculty serve as the Program's deans

- *Faculty Directors*
The Director and Assistant Director are appointed by the Administrative Deans, normally for a period of three years. These positions rotate between the University and Iliff. When the Director is at one institution, the Assistant Director will be from the other institution. Normally, the Assistant Director will become the Director at the time of rotation between the two institutions. The deans consult with each other and the existing director before finalizing any appointment. The Director will be given a two-course reduction and the Assistant Director a one-course reduction in their teaching loads by their institutions. The specific responsibilities and duties of the Directors are determined by the current position descriptions.

- *JDP Committee*
The Joint Ph.D. Committee is composed of the Director, the Assistant Director, the Program Manager, and four faculty members (two from each school). The Administrative Deans from each institution serve as ex-officio members. The Administrative Deans appoint the faculty members of the Joint Ph.D. Committee in consultation with the Director and Assistant Director. They seek to achieve a diverse committee representing several academic areas, ranks, ethnicities, and genders. Faculty will normally serve staggered two-year terms. The responsibilities of the JDP Committee include:
 - The final admission decision for new students, including financial aid rankings.
 - Oversight of the Joint Program curriculum, Program policies, and degree requirements. Where the unique needs of the Joint Program require alterations to the established University or Iliff policies, the Joint PhD. Committee may develop policies specific to the Joint Program but only to the extent that they directly apply to the Joint Program curriculum, Joint Program academic policies, and Joint Program degree requirements. The Joint PhD Committee may establish new program policy where there is no existing policy.
 - Academic review and assessment of student progress as well as Program assessment.
 - Determination of faculty status in the Joint Program.
 - Other responsibilities assigned to it by the Director with approval of the Administrative Deans.

- *Executive Committee*

The Administrative Deans, the Director, and the Assistant Director constitute the Executive Committee of the Joint Program and are responsible for the overall planning and oversight of the Joint Program. The Executive Committee will normally meet in matters of urgency when the Joint PhD Committee is not available (for example, in summer) and/or regarding confidential matters.

2021–2022 JDP Committee members

Dr. Sandra Dixon (DU)

Dr. Rhonda Eaker (JDP)

Dr. Kelly Fayard (DU)

Dr. Mark K. George (Iliff), Chair

Dr. Albert Hernandez (Iliff)

Dr. Boyung Lee (Iliff)

Dr. Corinne Lengsfeld (DU)

Dr. Eric Smith (Fall 2021, Iliff)

Dr. Anthony Alumkal (Winter, Spring 2022, Iliff)

Staff

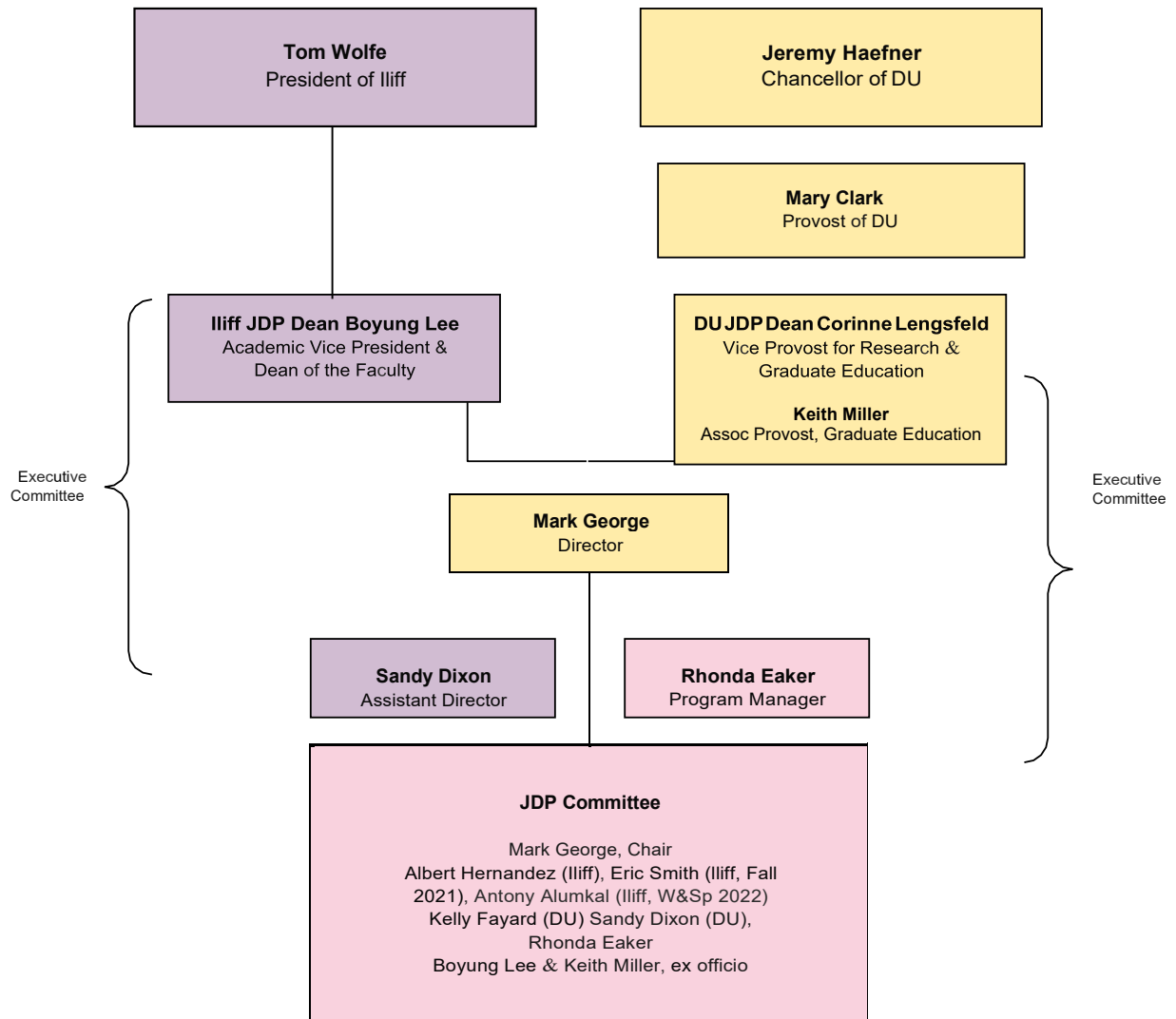
The JDP has one full-time staff person, the Program Manager, who works under the Director’s supervision to manage the JDP’s operations and protect its financial assets while ensuring compliance with Executive Committee directives, institutional policies, and federal and state requirements. The Program Manager works with appropriate staff at both Iliff and DU to ensure smooth operations. The specific responsibilities and duties of the Program Manager are determined by the current position description.



Rhonda Eaker, Program Manager
JDP Office, Iliff Hall, Rm 110
303-765-3136

Timely faculty responsiveness to communications from the Program Manager is critical for the smooth operation of the JDP Office and student progress through the Program.

DU/Iliff Joint PhD in the Study of Religion Org Chart - 2021

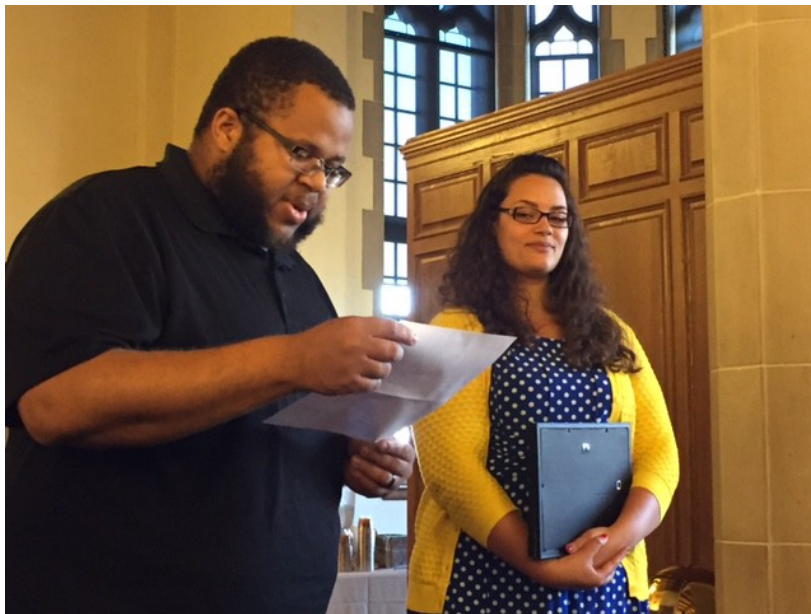


JDP Graduate Student Association

The JDP GSA advocates for student issues and functions as a central point of coordination and communication about student concerns and affairs. It typically meets on a monthly basis (at a minimum once a quarter). Meetings are open to all students in the Joint PhD Program. Students may receive partial reimbursement for conference paper costs through the GSA. Full information about this and current officers and meetings are available on the [GSA tab](#) of the JDP Portfolio site.

Officers:

- President/Director of Communications
- Vice President/Director of Finance
- Graduate Student Government Representative (DU)
- Director of Inclusive Excellence/Community
- Members at Large



Anthony Roberts and Teresa Crist give out awards

Budget

The JDP budget is almost entirely dependent on tuition revenue. Because the revision of the Program included reducing the number of students admitted, it has a very tight operating budget with very few discretionary funds. Faculty are encouraged to seek funds for guest speakers and other special needs from other sources available to them at Iliff and DU.

DU currently manages the small JDP endowment. Fundraising is a work in progress.

Communications

Portfolio – an inward facing site that provides the primary [resources for faculty](#), including copies of all student [handbooks](#) for the past 10 years, frequently used JDP and Office of Graduate Education (OGE) [forms](#), Program requirements, and resources for emergencies. Please consult [Portfolio!](#)

Newsletter – produced quarterly by the JDP Office, it provides timely information about actions of the JDP Committee, Directors, Deans, changes in policy, faculty activities, student accomplishments, JDP events, and activities.

Website – an outward facing [site \(du.edu/duiliffjoint\)](http://du.edu/duiliffjoint) that JDP uses to recruit prospective students.

Email – JDP maintains two list serves:

jointphd-fac@du.edu

jointphd-stdnts@du.edu

Faculty and student lists are moderated, meaning that anyone on the list can send a message to the list but it will first go to the list administrators (Program Manager and Director) for approval.

Social Media – JDP asks faculty to participate, to the extent that they are comfortable, in its social media efforts to promote the JDP and those involved in it. Faculty participation aids in making the Program better known.

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/DUiliffJDP/>

Twitter: <https://twitter.com/duiliffjdp>

Instagram: <https://www.instagram.com/duiliffjdp/>

Print Materials – Marketing materials are available in digital and print format.

See page 11 for policy regarding faculty responsibility for communicating with staff and students.

Faculty

JDP faculty have faculty lines in their respective institutions, the University of Denver or Iliff School of Theology. They assume some combination of responsibilities for the JDP in the following list.

- Active scholarship in the study of religion
- Teach graduate-level courses relevant to the Program
- Teach required JDP courses
- Participate in JDP Colloquia
- Mentor first and second year students

Mentor GTAs
Serve on dissertation committees *
Serve as Dissertation Directors/Advisors
Participate in developing common comp bibliographies
Develop, supervise and grade comp exams *
Attend JDP faculty meetings
Serve on standing or *ad hoc* committees
Serve on the Admissions Committee *
Serve on the JDP Committee
Serve as Director or Assistant Director

**Non-tenure-line faculty* with an earned PhD or the appropriate terminal degree for their field may participate by agreement of their chair or dean and the JDP Committee, with specific limitations: 1) They may not serve as a Dissertation Director or as the first reader on a comp exam; 2) They will not normally serve on a dissertation committee or on the Admissions committee.

Participation on the JDP faculty is part of the job description for most tenure-line and some teaching-line faculty in DU's Department of Religious Studies as well as for most tenure-line and some appointed faculty at Iliff. For other faculty at either institution, acceptance of duties within the JDP is voluntary.

The JDP Committee and the Directors have the authority to determine criteria by which faculty members will be recognized as JDP faculty and listed in the JDP faculty directories on the website and/or Portfolio site.

Tenure-line Faculty in undergraduate-only departments at DU are welcome to participate as JDP faculty in all the ways listed above. By arrangement with the Directors, such faculty may teach a required or special JDP course, which will normally count as overload and will be paid for by the JDP at the JDP adjunct rate. If the Chair of the faculty member's department is willing to count the JDP course on load and it is a required course, the JDP will pay the department for the course at the JDP adjunct rate.

Faculty Policies and Procedures

- *Communication*
Faculty will inform JDP students of their preferred means of communication (e.g. phone, email, office hours, text messaging) and will respond in a timely way to students who contact them by these means, normally within one or two business days. If a full response will take longer, a note should be sent to that effect, with an estimated time for the full response. See policies on sabbaticals and summers, below, for exceptions.

Faculty are expected to monitor their email and respond to requests from the JDP Office *or* to provide the JDP Office with a preferred means of communication to which faculty will respond in a timely manner, normally within one or two business days.

- *Sabbatical Leave Policy*
JDP faculty who are on leave have limited responsibilities for their PhD students regarding exams, dissertations, and oral defenses. Faculty and students should work out reasonable accommodation so as not to hinder students' completion of their degree program. Faculty should provide their dissertation advisees with a means of communication while on sabbatical. – *Approved April 7, 2017 by JDP Committee*
- *Summer Policy*
Faculty are on nine-month contracts and are not expected to work with students during the summer break unless they so choose; students therefore are responsible for planning accordingly. – *Approved Nov. 13, 2015 by JDP Committee*

No oral defenses will be held during the summer unless essential to keep a student within Program time limits.

Recruitment & Admissions

All Faculty

Everyone can help recruit excellent students by knowing the JDP described in these pages and by telling colleagues and prospective students about it. Everyone helps by providing such a positive educational experience to JDP students that, as alumni, JDP students will promote the JDP and send their own students our way.

The Program Manager or Directors may ask faculty to email or meet with students who are inquiring about the Program. This kind of interaction is critical for recruiting successful students. Faculty involvement and input is essential both for recruiting and for determining whether prospective students are a good match for the JDP. Please inform the Program Manager of any prospective students who contact you directly (minimally please include both name and email contact info).

All student applications will be available to all JDP faculty to make comments and send their recommendations to the Admissions Committee if they wish. To do so, please request access from the Program Manager.

Admissions Committee

Each year the JDP Office asks for JDP faculty volunteers to serve on the Admissions Committee. The JDP Committee appoints additional JDP faculty members in order to ensure the greatest breadth and diversity of representation across the Program. Both the Director and Assistant Director serve on the Admissions Committee. Ideally, the committee will consist of 6–8 people.

The Admissions Committee is charged with reviewing all applications with the goal of creating a

class broadly representative of the current interdisciplinary vision of the Program and its goals of diversity and inclusive excellence. The Committee assesses each applicant's overall academic credentials and preparedness for doctoral level study, their ability to successfully complete our PhD in religion, and their "fit" with the areas of specialization represented by core faculty. In their application letters, students must indicate the members of the faculty they think they want to work with and the reasons for their choices. Our marketing materials and web site encourage them to read publications by those faculty and to speak with them in advance of making their application. The JDP Office is responsible for sending files to, and consulting with, potential Dissertation Directors and committee members in order to ensure that the student's anticipated goals can be met in this Program. The Committee must have a commitment from one or more JDP faculty willing to take on the role of Mentor for any student granted admission.

The JDP Office will provide the Committee with a spreadsheet identifying the numbers of students currently being advised by faculty members and where those students are in the Program, so the Committee can avoid assigning too many students to any single faculty member (limit 7 dissertation advisees). The Program Directors will give the Admissions Committee a target goal in terms of the number of candidates needed each year to meet budgetary and Program goals. The Committee will identify a set of desired applicants and rank them in tiers, briefly articulating its rationale for preferences. It will send this list to the JDP Committee for final approval. – *Phase II Doc modified by practice.*

JDP Committee Role

The JDP Committee has ultimate responsibility for establishing admission standards and ensuring that admitted students meet them. This should be balanced against the need to meet minimum admissions for budgetary reasons. The committee acts upon the recommendations of the Admissions Committee, making the final determinations about admission. It ranks the admitted students into three or four groups for purposes of financial aid. The Directors then apply financial aid, working with the Program Manager and financial advice from the Office of Graduate Education (see Financial Aid, below).

Process

1. Students inquire about the Program through the website, social media, JDP Office, or faculty. Information about each prospect is entered into Slate, the application software managed by DU's Office of Graduate Education. *Faculty should get the student's name and contact information and send this to the JDP Program Manager, who can make the initial Slate entry. Notes about students' areas of interest or background also are helpful.*
2. Once in Slate, students will begin receiving auto-messages from the JDP Director with additional information and encouragement to begin an application.

3. Students apply through Slate. Once an application is begun, the student begins receiving a second set of auto-messages.
4. The Office of Graduate Education (OGE) reviews each application for completion and sends it to the JDP Office. Upon verified completion, each student begins receiving the third set of auto-messages from the Director. International student credentials are reviewed by OGE which verifies and interprets transcripts and visa status which takes extra time.
5. The JDP Program Manager sends applications through to Admissions Committee members as they are received. JDP Directors identify applications that need additional input from faculty not on the committee and Program Manager requests that information and sends it on to the committee. JDP Directors also provide the Committee with a target number for the class and Program Manager provides a list of all current Dissertation Directors and the number of advisees each has.
6. The Admissions Committee reviews all applications individually, then meets as a group to determine which ones to accept, send back or interview for more information, or reject. It sends its recommendations to the JDP Committee.
7. The JDP Committee makes final decisions and ranks applicants for the purposes of financial aid.
8. Directors make financial aid decisions based on JDP Committee rankings. They may request faculty letters to support special student fellowships in some cases. The Program Manager works with OGE and the Directors to ensure that admission and aid letters are properly completed and sent out through Slate.

Timeline

August or September: OGE closes previous recruitment cycle and opens a new year in Slate.

October-December: Students inquire, visit, apply. JDP admissions committee is formed.

January 15: JDP priority deadline for students to apply with best chance of admission and financial aid.

February: The Admission Committee makes recommendations to JDP Committee and JDP Committee makes final decisions. Directors assign financial aid and inform students of decisions.

March-April: The Director and Program Manger negotiate with students regarding financial aid, etc. There may be some late applicants to consider.

Faculty participation in recruiting and admissions is essential. Thank you for volunteering!

Student Financial Aid

Scholarship

Most JDP students are offered a tuition discount scholarship upon admission that will continue through their first 82 credit hours of coursework (out of 90 degree hours). It may cover from 60% to 100% of tuition for these 82 credit hours. In most cases students must be full time (see student aid letter), but the scholarships apply to summer and interterm as well as other quarters.

Work Study

Work study positions are available to any student who has been granted work study by the financial aid office. The JDP Office may have positions open for these students, who can work anywhere across campus. The JDP appreciates faculty who encourage students to apply for the JDP positions. Note that students may not hold a work study position and GTA in the same quarter.

GTA Stipends

Students who accept a GTA (graduate teaching assistant) position, will be paid a stipend of \$2500 per course. Their original JDP scholarship is unaffected and they do not receive a tuition waiver. The stipend is the sole remuneration for the assistantship. Note that students may not hold a work study position and GTA in the same quarter. See below for other information about GTAs.

GRA (Graduate Research Assistant)

Currently, no GRA positions are available in the JDP. They may be established in the future.

Dissertation Research Fellowships

Students pay for their last 8 credit hours of RLGN 6995 Dissertation Research. Note that a student may go over 8 hours of RLGN 6995 (and over the minimum requirement of 90 hours for the degree), depending on how long it takes them to complete the degree. Students must register for a minimum of 1 quarter hour each fall quarter until the dissertation and degree are complete. Some years the JDP is able to offer competitive dissertation fellowships in the spring quarter, but not always. In addition, students in the dissertation stage may apply for fellowships from OGE. Students are encouraged to apply for research grants from IRISE and other DU initiatives, as well as external grants from FTE, Louisville Institute, and other agencies and foundations. The JDP Director will write letters of support as needed for these. DU offers help with Fulbright and other applications.

Graduate Teaching Assistantships

Each spring, the Program Manager will send a call for GTA requests to the faculty list (jointphd-fac@du.edu). Faculty should respond by the deadline in order to be considered for a GTA the following academic year. Eligible classes include undergraduate and master's-level classes that do not enroll JDP students. Please do not request a GTA for any class that may enroll doctoral level students. The call will list criteria by which decisions are made. Please note that the JDP is obligated to do its very best to provide an equal number of GTAs to faculty from each institution. Every effort is made to accommodate faculty requests, but student needs come first.

At the same time that faculty are solicited for courses, the Program Manager sends a call to students in their second, third, and fourth years to find GTAs, requesting the number of courses they want, which quarters they are available, in which subjects they have expertise, and whether there are any faculty with whom they particularly want to work. **It is recommended but not required that students take Pedagogy before becoming GTAs.** The Program Manager and Directors work together to make the GTA assignments, considering the best interests of the students, how many times each has previously assisted in courses, and the courses available.

Having a GTA is a responsibility as well as teaching assistance. Please refer to the GTA best practices document for updated information about policies and suggestions for making the most of your student's GTA experience.

In rare instances of past institutional need or miscommunication, an experienced GTA became the instructor-of-record and taught their own course, but this is *not* the intended use of the GTA positions. Assistantships are supervised learning experiences at an entry level. Compensation to the GTA is discussed above under "Financial Aid."

Advising and Mentoring

Students are responsible for knowing and fulfilling the requirements of the JDP Student Handbook for their entry year. Faculty advisors can support students in this endeavor through informed and timely advice, but should never take over responsibility for student success.

Initial Academic Advisor

All students entering the Program in fall 2015 and later have the same academic advisor to begin with, the Assistant Director of the JDP. They consult with this Academic Advisor quarterly until they have chosen their Dissertation Director/Advisor. At that time, responsibility for all advising moves to the Dissertation Director.

The Assistant Director, in the role of Academic Advisor, will:

1. Approve, reject, or consult with others as appropriate to determine status of courses proposed for transfer. Help students wanting to transfer classes to do so within the Office of Graduate Education (OGE) deadline of the first quarter of coursework.
2. Require from students a plan for completing the modern language requirement, urge them to take the exam within the first year or register for language classes, and inform them that they cannot defend the dissertation proposal until the language requirement is complete and final candidacy filed.
3. Help students manage their required classes and provide suggestions on electives if requested.
4. Ensure that students know they must complete exactly 62 credits by the end of the second year.
5. File the OGE Application for Preliminary Candidacy as soon as the student has regular status and has transferred any approved courses (usually by the end of the first quarter).
6. Update the student's course plan annually and file it in the JDP Share Drive.
7. Encourage (and as needed, aid) students to find an appropriate mentor.

Mentor

All students will be coached by the Assistant Director to choose a mentor within their first two quarters. Normally this will be a faculty member in the field of specialization the student anticipates entering. The responsibility of the mentor is to meet with the student (at the student's instigation or the mentor's) to talk about how the Program is going for the student, suggest appropriate electives, and provide professional development advice.

Note that the mentor does not assume responsibility for academic advising unless and until the student asks the mentor to become the Dissertation Director/Advisor! If that happens, the advisor should inform both the Academic Director and the Program Manager that s/he is the Dissertation Director and is taking over academic advising.

Dissertation Director/Advisor

If a faculty member agrees to become a Dissertation Director for a student before the third year, the faculty must assume the duties listed under beginning academic advisor above (with the exception of transfer classes and filing preliminary candidacy). This includes updating the student's course plan annually until coursework and comps are complete. The updated course plan must be filed with the JDP Office. Blank forms are available on Portfolio, but faculty are encouraged to update the previous year's form.

Program Structure

The JDP uses a cohort model, aiming to bring in 7–10 students each fall quarter. Students earn a PhD in the Study of Religion, granted jointly by both institutions. Regular coursework takes two years, at the end of which students must have completed 62 credits of JDP coursework and should have completed their modern research language requirement. The third year is devoted to four comprehensive exams and the dissertation proposal seminar. Students may not defend their dissertation proposal until they have completed their modern language requirement and are advanced to final candidacy (submission of this paperwork may happen simultaneously with the paperwork for scheduling the oral proposal defense). Students are expected to be in residence during these three years.

Credit Hour Distribution

The JDP requires 90 credit hours, of which 66 are for regular coursework (24 required + 42 electives), 16 are related to comp exams, and 8 are dissertation research credits.

Requirement	Year/Qtr	Credits
RLGN 4000 Theory & Method	1/1	4
RLGN 5000 Pedagogy	1 or 2	4
RLGN 5010 Lived Religion Colloquium	1 or 2	4
RLGN 5020 Conceptual Approaches Colloquium	1 or 2	4
RLGN 5030 Text, Image and Artifact Colloquium	1 or 2	4
Electives, may include up to 12 independent study	1 or 2	42
RLGN 6010 Comp Review I: Perspectives on the Study of Religion	3/1	4
RLGN 6020 Comp Review II: area (choose from 6)	3/1	4
RLGN 6030 Comp Review III: Professional Field	3/2	4
RLGN 6040 Comp Review IV	3/2	4
RLGN 6000 Dissertation Proposal Seminar	3/3	4
RLGN 6995 Dissertation Research Credits, 1/qtr to reach 8*	4 through 7	8*
Total		90*

*Students who have not completed the degree at the end of the sixth year are required to register for one additional credit of dissertation research each fall quarter until they complete the degree. This will bring them above the 90-credit-hour minimum for completion of the degree.

The 42 hours of electives do not divide neatly into 4-credit classes. DU still offers some 5-credit classes; Iliff has some 2-credit classes; and independent study can be done in increments as small as 1 credit.

Transfer Credits

The amount of credit students are allowed to transfer into their programs has changed over time. Consult the Student Handbook for the year the student entered. As of Sept 25, 2015, the JDP Committee approved a transfer limit of 10 quarter credit hours.

Curriculum

Course Numbering System

RLGN is the designator for JDP classes. Required classes taken in the first two years are JDP- only and have the numbers 4000 (Theory & Methods), 5000 (Pedagogy), 5010, 5020, and 5030 (colloquia). They may be taught by either Iliff or DU faculty. All courses taken in the third year are in the 6000 series. Other classes are numbered by topic area:

- 4100 – Bible
- 4200 – Psychology & Pastoral Care
- 4300 – Comparative Religion
- 4400 – Race, Ethnic Studies, Anthropology, International Studies, Pol. Sci., Social Change
- 4500 – History, Art & Media
- 4600 – Theology, Philosophy, Ethics

Special Topics use the DU topics numbers RLGN 4701–4703

Independent Studies use the DU IS numbers RLGN 4991, 5991, and 6991. Students register with the DU Registrar's [Independent Study form](#), filling in the appropriate number and the title of their choice. The limit on independent study has changed over time, so check the Handbook for a student's entry year. As of Sept 25, 2015, the JDP Committee set the limit at 12 hours.

Directed Studies use the number and title of the course, which must already exist in the DU course catalog. Directed Study is used instead of independent study only when a student needs to take an existing course that is not offered in the quarter when the student needs it. This is rare but can occur if a student is nearing completion of coursework and a required class or one essential to the student's comps or dissertation will not be offered before coursework is completed. The professor must use the usual syllabus and requirements in a Directed Study. It does not count toward the limit on Independent Study credits but is treated the same as if the student had taken the regular course; it appears on the transcript that way. The same registration form is used as for independent study, but the directed study box is checked.

Independent Research (formerly called Dissertation Research) uses RLGN 6995 and as of Nov 13, 2015, is pass/fail.

Elective Classes

All electives offered by Iliff faculty for JDP students must have an RLGN number. This gets them into the DU course catalog and class schedules so that JDP students can register for them. Electives offered by DU faculty in religious studies normally use the designator RLGs. Electives offered by DU faculty in other departments, schools, and programs may have other designators. DU course numbers in the 3000 series may enroll both undergraduate and graduate students (check the level[s] listed in the course catalog for each course). Courses numbered 4000 will only enroll graduate students and 6000 level courses will only enroll PhD students. DU faculty may choose to cross list their classes as RLGN in order to make them more visible to JDP students. See the course approval process below.

Course Approval Process

The JDP Committee functions as the curriculum committee for the JDP. It approves courses that have already been approved by the Iliff Curriculum Committee for the Iliff masters' program(s) and are being submitted for consideration for use in the JDP. It also approves courses that have already been approved by DU processes and are being submitted for consideration for use in the JDP. All courses approved for the JDP curriculum by the JDP Committee will be given RLGN designators by the JDP Program Manager and must be entered into the DU Registrar's on-line system, which includes an approval queue from the JDP Faculty Director, to the Iliff JDP Dean/VP, to the Vice Provost for Academic Programs at DU, to the DU Registrar.

Materials to be submitted to the JDP Committee for consideration:

- Syllabus – may be a draft. Must include course description, goals, student learning outcomes, required texts and/or reading list, schedule of weekly topics, attendance policy, and accommodations statement. If mixed level (e.g. MA or MDiv and PhD) must distinguish between PhD and lower levels in its goals, student learning outcomes, and requirements/expectations.

Course approval request must be submitted two quarters prior to the quarter in which the course is first expected to be taught. *-Approved by JDP Committee October 28, 2016*

Cross-listing Courses

DU faculty who regularly teach a course that registers JDP students are strongly encouraged to request an RLGN cross-listing. This will allow JDP students to find the course much more easily.

Syllabi

The JDP requires the following on all syllabi for courses taken by JDP students.

- Course number & title.
- Faculty name, office hours (may be by arrangement) and preferred means of contact.
- Course description.
- Course learning goals and objectives for PhD students (in addition to any others).
- Student Learning Outcomes (for PhD students in the class).
- Books and other readings (required or recommended).
- Accommodation statement to the effect that JDP students in need of accommodation should contact the DU Disability Services Program. Policies, documentation, and other information is available here: <https://www.du.edu/studentlife/disability-services/faculty-staff/index.html>. DU uses software to provide official letters of student accommodation to faculty. Faculty are legally responsible for administering the accommodations. Faculty rights are also detailed on this page.
- Attendance policy (determined by individual faculty).
- Requirements (assignments, grading criteria, etc.).
- Weekly schedule of classes.

Faculty may consider additional policies such as Religious Accommodations, Honor Code, and Inclusive Classroom.

Colloquia

All JDP faculty and students are encouraged to participate regularly in the colloquia. One colloquium is offered every quarter and the themes and readings change from year to year. Normally one instructor-of-record organizes the course and handles all requirements and grading. In developing the syllabus, the instructor-of-record invites other faculty to participate, usually by providing the assigned reading and a presentation and/or leading the discussion one week. Faculty and unregistered students may drop into any class sessions they are able to attend.

The instructor-of-record should provide the Program Manager with the syllabus (or a schedule of topics and readings, meeting place, and days/times) before the quarter begins and the Program Manager will send it to the JDP student and faculty lists with an invitation to read and participate in the discussions. The 3 colloquia are:

RLGN 5010 Lived Religion
RLGN 5020 Conceptual Approaches to Religion
RLGN 5030 Text, Image and Artifact

Colloquia were developed to provide a space for interdisciplinary discussion. Their success correlates with the extent of participation by faculty and students from different disciplines.

Modern Research Language

Students in the Joint Ph.D. Program are required to demonstrate proficiency in one modern research language other than their first or primary language. The purpose is to make it possible to expand access to scholarly literature in their field. While typically French, German, or Spanish for native English speakers, and English for others, any modern language that allows the student to undertake research in their field and which is approved by their Academic Advisor can be used. On Sept 28, 2018, the JDP Committee approved new methods to satisfy this language requirement. The new policy supersedes all previous handbooks. Please see the document on the [student resource tab in JDP's Portfolio](#) site for details.

Faculty advisors can help ensure that students complete this requirement by enforcing the following rules:

- Students must satisfy the modern language requirement before they will be allowed to defend their dissertation proposal.
- Students may not advance to final candidacy until the language requirement has been fulfilled. – DU rule.
- For native English speakers, the three main methods of fulfilling the requirement are:

- 1) passing a language examination at DU's [Center for World Languages and Cultures](#);
 - 2) receiving a grade of "B" or higher in the last quarter or semester of the second year of language study at the college/university level within the past five years (submit the transcript to JDP Office);
 - 3) submitting a transcript not more than ten years old showing successful completion of a degree or major in a modern research language.
- Students for whom English is not their primary language have two main methods of fulfilling the requirement:
 - 1) pass the Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL) with a minimum score of 100 (internet) or 600 (paper) or the International English Language Testing System (IELTS) with a minimum score of 7.0;
 - 2) those who have already acquired a college degree from an accredited English-language institution in the U.S.A. at the time of admission to the JDP may submit a U.S. transcript with evidence of degree completion.
 - Any exceptions to these ways of satisfying the language requirement must be approved by the Director before work begins, and the student must work with the JDP Office to record results.
 - Students who plan to use a CWLC exam but have not passed it by the end of the first year should be advised to enroll in a class. Language classes can be taken at a community college or other university.
 - Language courses taken to meet this requirement will not count toward the 90 credits needed for the Ph.D. degree and are not covered by Program-awarded financial aid.
 - In the case of students who are using a language approved by their advisor that CWLC does not test, the student can petition to work with a faculty person fluent in the language to have an exam administered, but the exam and results must meet normal CWLC level of competence. — *JDP Committee, April 7, 2017*. Please work with the JDP Office in these cases to record results.

Certificates

- **Certificate in Latinx Studies** (credit-bearing, part of 90-hour degree). Application is required. This certificate was approved by the JDP Committee March 11, 2016, and by the DU Graduate Council. It appears on the student's transcript. For full information consult [Latinx Certificate tab on Portfolio](#).
- **Future Faculty in Religion Certificate** (non-credit bearing certificate of completion). For full information consult [Future Faculty in Religion tab on Portfolio](#).

Class Scheduling

- The required classes, RLGN 4000 Theory & Methods and RLGN 5000 Pedagogy, are normally scheduled on Thursdays from 4:40-8:10 PM.
- The required colloquia are scheduled on Friday mornings 9:00 AM – 12:30 PM.

- DU Faculty are asked to schedule all other classes likely to enroll JDP students at times other than these two JDP slots to maximize access to their classes.
- All faculty should check in regularly with Program Manager to ensure that their classes are listed appropriately for JDP students. Faculty also are encouraged to check the DU registrar's schedule of classes to ensure that their classes are properly listed.
- New classes must be approved in their respective institutions and submitted to the JDP Committee by the stated deadlines before being acted on by the Committee, forwarded through the approvals queue, entered into the DU online catalog, and then scheduled to be taught. This takes a full 2 quarters, so plan ahead.

Academic Calendar Conflicts

DU and Iliff academic calendars sometimes differ, not only on which days are holidays, but also on when winter and/or spring quarters begin and end. JDP policy is to schedule classes based on the home institution of the instructor teaching the class. As a precaution, please alert your students before the DU quarter begins if you will be using the Iliff calendar.



JDP Faculty and Students

Comprehensive Exams

Comprehensive examinations test both comprehensiveness of knowledge and competency within specific areas, including breadth as well as depth. The examinations comprise a major component of the Program. Passing them is recognized as a milestone in the completion of the PhD degree.

All students who entered the Program since 2015 take four comps, each associated with a review course. RLGN 6010 and 6020 are taken in the fall term of the third year and RLGN 6030 and 6040 are taken in winter term of the third year. Each course has two faculty examiners who will write the exam questions and grade the answers. The primary examiner must be tenure-line member of the Joint PhD Program faculty. The second reader must hold the terminal degree in their field. Iliff faculty on limited term contracts must also have the Iliff dean's approval. A JDP petition for an academic exception must be submitted to the JDP Office to request an examiner outside these approved parameters.

Both the review courses and the exams are pass/fail. In cases where two examiners are unable to agree upon the results of an exam, that examination will be sent to the JDP Committee for a determination, a process that may take an additional quarter.

Any student who fails an examination may retake it once at the end of the next quarter. Other options for timing and format of a retake or partial retake may be determined as appropriate by the examining faculty with the approval of the Director. A student who fails the retake is terminated from the Program. A student who fails the retake may appeal the decision.

Note: for all four examinations, answers normally do not exceed 25 pages (typed, double-spaced, with 1-inch margins).

RLGN 6010 Comprehensive Review I: Perspectives in the Study of Religion

RLGN 6010 is taken by all JDP students in the fall of their third year. The exam is a 4-hour, closed book, no-notes exam taken near the beginning of the tenth week of fall quarter. The bibliography is compiled by all JDP faculty and includes material from RLGN 4000 and other classes. The goal is to integrate theoretical material from various classes in a more critical and sophisticated manner than students encountered when they started the Program. The bibliography is available on [Portfolio](#).

- The class is convened weekly by an ABD JDP student or a recent alumnus. This convener, in consultation with students and examiners, will divide the bibliography into a schedule of weekly discussions.
- The two faculty examiners meet with the convener and students the first day of class so that everyone has an opportunity to get to know one another as well as come to agreement on the following matters:
 - Set a date for the final examination, typically in the first part of week 10 or finals period;
 - General instructions for the examination, including the number of questions that

- will appear on the examination, and how many of those questions students will be required to answer;
 - Whether sample questions are available and how students can access them;
 - Whether the examiners will attend any additional meetings with students and convener and/or recommend other faculty to attend specific sessions to help students understand the material;
 - How students may contact the examiners if they have questions about the materials or examination.
- The examination will be administered on the agreed upon date in a room arranged by the JDP Program Manager. All students will take the examination in that room at the same time and the 6010 convener will proctor the examination to be able to address any examination issues that might arise during the examination period.
- Should an unforeseen interruption occur during the exam, such as student illness, bomb threat, or internet failure, the convener and examiners will determine the best course of action for the immediate circumstance and will consult the JDP Director for approval or modification of any follow-up action before implementing it.

RLGN 6020 Comprehensive Review II: Area Theories and Methods

In the spring of their second year, each student chooses one of the following six program areas in which to take their second comp exam. They will register for the appropriate section of RLGN 6020 in the fall of the third year:

Bible, Ancient Judaism and Early Christianity
 Social Justice, Race, and Identity
 Media, Art, and Religion
 Religion and Human Experience
 Religion and Politics
 Theories of Religion

- Each area has two faculty examiners selected by the JDP staff to formulate a plan with the student or students registered for their area to review and discuss the standard area bibliography, which is posted on [Portfolio](#).
- The area bibliography is set by the area faculty. If the area bibliography has more than 40 items listed on it, the faculty and student work together to select the equivalent of 40 books for the examination (instructions for doing so may be established by area faculty and are to be followed).
- The primary examiner and the student(s) will meet at the start of the quarter for two purposes. First, to establish a regular schedule of meetings with the examiners during the quarter, to help the student(s) prepare for the examination. Second, to discuss the examination format, including the number of questions, whether the 4- or 72-hour length, and other related matters.
- The date of the exam is scheduled by the faculty examiners in consultation with the students. Exams should be scheduled in week 10 or finals week of the fall quarter, but not on the same day as the RLGN 6010 comprehensive exam.

- The faculty will set up the exam questions as a time released assignment in the appropriate section of the 6020 DU Canvas course.

RLGN 6030 Comprehensive Review III: Knowledge in a Professional Field

The RLGN 6030 exam covers knowledge in the particular field the student intends to claim as their professional identity. A “field” in this case is defined as any commonly recognized specialization in the guild. The review and examination are concerned with the formation of professional identities of students. Unlike the fall review courses, this one functions as an independent study for one or two students and the primary examiner (normally their Dissertation Director/Advisor). A second faculty examiner (a committee member or other faculty) works with the student and the primary examiner on the bibliographies, questions, and expectations. Both examiners grade the comprehensive. See also “Responsibilities for RLGN 6030 and 6040 (winter quarter)” below.

RLGN 6040 Comprehensive Review IV: Knowledge in Minor Areas or Subfields

This review course has maximum flexibility to accommodate the great diversity of the Program. The examination is tailored to the student, but in no case will it be so narrow that it is an examination on the dissertation. There are at least two options:

1. **Greater Specialization**: The subject area reflects the student’s subfield(s) within the field identified in the Field Exam.
2. **“Minor” Field(s)**: Here a student selects a bibliography from another field or fields in which they would like to demonstrate secondary competence. Consideration must be given to the student’s goals in the job market in deciding what is best as a “minor” field(s).

Students work with their Dissertation Director/Advisor to determine the best subject for this fourth exam and to choose the two examiners. See also “Responsibilities for RLGN 6030 and 6040 (winter quarter)” below.

Responsibilities for RLGN 6030 and 6040 (winter quarter)

The Dissertation Director/Advisor normally is the primary examiner for RLGN 6030 and 6040 and will be the instructor of record. The student must ask both first and second readers to serve in these positions and get their signatures on the JDP 6030/6040 Comp Form before turning it in to the JDP Office by the first Thursday of the first week of winter classes. The Dissertation Director will help the student determine the second reader. Each comp must have at least 2 readers and, between 6030 and 6040 examinations, each student must have at least 3 different readers. For example: RLGN 6030: Prof A and B; RLGN 6040: Prof A and C.

- The two readers and the student will work together to develop an approved bibliography and design a study program for the quarter. The Dissertation Director and second reader will work with students to determine the conditions (open or closed

book/notes, 4-hour or 72-hour) and format (how many questions on exam and whether there is any flexibility to choose among them).

- The readers will draft the question(s) and post it/them to the DU canvas course as a time-released assignment that will start on a day and time agreed to by the student and will end 4 or 72 hours later.
- The comp exams are normally taken in week 10 or finals week of winter quarter but should not be on the same day. A full day of rest between the 6030 exam and the 6040 exam is desirable.

By accepting the responsibility of serving as examiners for any of the comp exams, the two faculty members agree to the following:

- They will confer with each other in the creation of the examination questions.
- The primary examiner will post the exam as a time-released assignment in the appropriate RLG DU Canvas Course.
- They will make themselves available by email (or provide alternate contact information) during the examination to answer any technical or procedural questions that might arise and that require their guidance or judgment to resolve. In particular, they need to be available during the 4-hour 6010 exam.
- Once each of them has read the examinations they will discuss their grades for each student and arrive at a final P or F grade. Should they be unable to agree, the primary examiner will notify the Program Manager and JDP Director of the lack of agreement, and the matter will be referred to the JDP Committee for a determination.
- The primary examiner will record the Pass grade for the course through PioneerWeb by the DU grade submission deadline. However, in the case of a failed exam, ***no course grade is recorded until a second examination has been given*** (normally at the end of the following quarter). The primary examiner must notify the JDP Program Manager and Director if a student fails.
- They will advise the students of the exam results and, in the case of a fail, will provide feedback for improvement.
- If a retake examination becomes necessary, they will determine a procedure in consultation with the JDP Director.

Guidelines for Bibliographies – approved by the JDP Committee March 11, 2016

- Should include both books and articles focused on method and theory deemed seminal for the study of religion or the specified area within religious studies.
- Should recognize that students will need to locate items on the bibliographies within the study of religion as a kind of genealogy of scholarship.
- Must be diverse in terms of the perspectives represented.
- Might include emergent as well as classic works, critiques as well as canonical voices, especially where a field seems homogeneous.
- Can be a single list of readings OR can be a series of categories from which the student and readers will select readings.

- Will normally have about 40 book equivalents, where 5 articles equal a book.
- Students in **RLGN 6010 and 6020** will be able to study bibliographies from the time they enter the Program and will encounter many of the readings in their classes, but should be able to *review* everything on a bibliography during the course of a 10-week review class leading up to the comp. **Students in 6030 and 6040** are developing their bibliographies with their readers or receiving them from the readers at the beginning of the review course.
- The bibliographies for RLGN 6010 and 6020 will be reviewed by the JDP Committee every 3-5 years. They may be revised by the faculty at any time.

The JDP Committee has ultimate responsibility for establishing standards and ensuring that students have roughly similar comp experiences. It also must ensure that faculty have equitable levels of expectation for comprehensive/competency exams across areas of specialization. It is not the intention for the Committee to micromanage (or make changes to any specific exam), but rather to have oversight at a programmatic level, ensuring a program-wide level of rigor. It will do this by establishing guidelines that may include length of exams, length and quality of bibliographies, types of questions, and the conditions for sitting the exams. At regular intervals, the JDP Committee or a subcommittee will also review some of the students' completed exams and the examiners' comments and grades. It will convene faculty to share and discuss exams if inequities are discerned. (*Phase II Document, approved by JDP Committee Nov. 14, 2014*)

Pre-2015 Procedures

Exams for pre-2015 students are currently administered through a DU Canvas comp site that is managed by the JDP Program Manager. Please see their handbooks for requirements and work with the Program Manager to administer them.

Accommodations for Students with Disabilities for Comprehensive Examinations (Compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act)

Students who have a time-and-a-half testing accommodation established through DU's Disability Services Program will have 6 hours to complete a 4-hour comprehensive examination and 90 hours to complete a 72-hour comprehensive examination. The JDP adopted this policy in consultation with the Disability Services Program. The policy is informed by graduate-level testing practice at DU and by the differences in the demands of the 4-hour and 72-hour comprehensive exam formats.

Dissertation Research Credit

All students who entered the Program after 2015 must take a minimum of 8 credits of RLGN 6995 Independent Research (formerly called Dissertation Research). The units start at the beginning of their fourth year after students have completed 82 units of coursework, and are taken one credit per quarter (fall, winter, spring) until the total of 8 is reached. The only exception to this start time occurs when a student has not completed the modern language requirement and therefore cannot yet defend the dissertation proposal. In this case, a student must take a leave of absence to complete the language requirement and then start the dissertation research credit.

If a student completes the dissertation and its defense (and is therefore ready to graduate) before the eighth quarter of RLGN 6995, the remaining dissertation research credits are taken in the last quarter before graduating.

If a student completes the 8 units and is not ready to defend their dissertation and graduate, the student must continue to take at least 1 dissertation unit per year in the fall quarter until the dissertation is successfully defended and the degree is completed even if this means going over the 90 credits required for a degree.

Independent (Dissertation) Research Credit is not covered by the JDP tuition discounts, which ends at 82 units. However, other scholarships and fellowships are available for students during this time and students are encouraged to apply for them.



Rode Molla after her dissertation defense

Dissertation Committee and Roles of Committee Members

By a student's third year they must begin to form their Dissertation Committee. There are three roles on the committee.

1. Dissertation Director/Advisor: No later than the start of the third year, this person takes over as the student's advisor and takes the lead in overseeing the dissertation process.
2. Dissertation Committee Members: Additional faculty members who read the dissertation and provide feedback from their areas of expertise.
3. The Oral Defense Committee Chair: This is a non-voting faculty member of the committee who participates in the final oral defense as an impartial outsider. The job of the Oral Defense Chair is to ensure a fair and equitable process in the defense. This person does not need to be identified until shortly before the dissertation defense.

Formation of the committee is to be undertaken by the student in consultation with the Dissertation Director. Once all the members of the Dissertation Committee (except the outside chair) have been identified, invited and agreed to serve, students must fill out the JDP [Formation of Dissertation Committee](#) form. Once the appropriate signatures are obtained, students must submit the completed form to the JDP Program Manager for review and approval by the Directors. In the case of any irregularity or concern about the proposed committee, the Directors may send the matter to the JDP Committee for action at its next stated meeting. In addition to JDP approval, the Office of Graduate Education must approve the Committee.

The Directors must approve any changes to a Dissertation Committee that already has been approved. To pursue such a change, students should first consult the Dissertation Director and the member to be replaced (if applicable), and then the member to be added. Once all parties have agreed to the change, the student must complete the [JDP Petition to Change Dissertation Committee](#) form and submit it to the JDP Program Manager for approval by the Directors. If there are concerns about the new committee, the Directors may send the matter to the JDP Committee for action at its next stated meeting.

Qualifications and roles of each person

Dissertation Director/Advisor

The DU Graduate bulletin outlines the requirements for the Dissertation Director [here](#). The JDP has the following additional requirements:

- Tenure-line and research faculty from DU or Iliff are automatically eligible to serve as the Dissertation Director if their expertise is in the student's field of study.
- Takes over the role of Academic Advisor.
- Chairs the proposal defense and signs forms to report results.
- Meets or corresponds regularly with the student with constructive criticism.
- Determines when the student is ready for the oral defense.
- Writes recommendation letters for the student.

- Ensures that the student's research meets appropriate academic standards for the discipline.
- May develop a written schedule with the student for completion of the dissertation, recognizing that faculty normally are not available during the summer.
- Answers email from students within one or two business days, even if just to say when a response will be forthcoming.
- Mentors the student's intellectual and professional development.
- Reads all chapters and responds with constructive criticism. During the academic year, a two-week turn-around for each student submission is considered best practice. When the Dissertation Director cannot meet this expectation, the student must be informed of the estimated response time.
- Reaches agreement with the student and readers for an appropriate process for committee members to read and comment on the complete dissertation draft. In either case, manages the reader process among committee members.
- Each Dissertation Director may have no more than 7 such advisees at a time, *per JDP Phase II (of 2015 program transition) document*.

Committee Members

The DU Graduate bulletin outlines the requirements for Dissertation Committee members [here](#). The JDP follows these requirements along with the following:

- Tenure-line and research faculty from DU or Iliff are automatically eligible to serve as Dissertation Committee members if the dissertation subject is appropriate to their field of expertise.
- Every Committee must have at least one DU and one Iliff faculty member as voting members. No more than one member of the committee may come from a third institution.
- Any person not tenured or tenure-track at either DU or Iliff must be approved by the JDP Director. Students should submit a CV for any such individual when they submit the [JDP Petition to Form a Dissertation Committee](#).

Oral Defense of Dissertation Committee Chair (Outside Chair)

The requirements and role for the Oral Defense Committee Chair are also outlined in the DU [Graduate Bulletin](#). The JDP has the following additional requirements:

- Must be a tenured member of either the Iliff or DU faculty whose area of specialization is outside the field of specialization represented by the student's dissertation.
- When a doctoral degree is interdisciplinary, the defense committee chair should be from a discipline not represented in the degree, but can be from the same department and institution (DU or Iliff) as any other faculty member on the committee except the Dissertation Director.
- Has no conflict of interest or appearance of conflict of interest with the student, topic, or field, or with any other committee member.

- Takes responsibility for ensuring a fair examination process that adheres to the policies of both DU and Iliff.
- It is the responsibility of the student and Dissertation Director to find an appropriate Oral Defense Committee Chair who meets these requirements and agrees to serve. In case of difficulty reaching agreement, the JDP Director will make a decision. This decision cannot be appealed.

Dissertation Proposals

Each student is required to prepare and defend a research proposal that outlines the work to be carried out for the dissertation.

The dissertation proposal must include the following items:

- The proposed title.
- A statement of the thesis and description of the scope of the dissertation.
- A description of the methodology to be used in the research.
- The rationale for pursuing the thesis, indicating why the topic is significant and what contribution it can be expected to make to the discipline.
- A provisional bibliography, in correct form, which will demonstrate rigor used in the search for necessary sources.

The proposal should be no more than 10 pages of text (bibliography is additional, but total length should not exceed 25 pages), and is to be double-spaced, with 12-point font and 1” margins.

It is recommended that students consult with the Religious Studies Area Reference Librarian in the Anderson Academic Commons as they develop their proposals. This Librarian’s signature is required on the JDP Dissertation Proposal Form once the librarian is satisfied that the bibliographic methods used by the student are appropriate and that the resources are adequate for the dissertation research. The student may then request permission from the committee to proceed to the oral defense of the proposal.

Oral Defense of the Proposal

The student’s Dissertation Committee must approve the proposal before the student may begin full time work on the dissertation. This is done through a proposal defense.

Once the student and the Dissertation Committee decide on an appropriate two-hour dissertation proposal defense time and date, the student must send a request to schedule the defense, along with a copy of the proposal and the [JDP Dissertation Proposal Form](#) (signed by the Librarian and containing the date of the oral defense), to the JDP Office at least three weeks prior to the defense. The office will schedule a room, make the proposal available for public review, and announce the proposal defense to JDP faculty and students two weeks prior to the scheduled defense.

Students will bring to their defense the JDP Dissertation Proposal Results Form, along with a copy of the [Thesis/Dissertation Oral Defense Committee Recommendation Form](#) for the Office of Graduate Education. Once the proposal has been approved, students will obtain the required signatures on both forms and submit them to the JDP Office. At this point, the Oral Defense Committee Chair can be left blank.

Nota Bene: Students planning human subjects research must complete any necessary IRB approvals prior to submitting proposal defense paperwork. <http://www.du.edu/research-scholarship/research-services/compliance>

Relevant forms and instructions for proposals are found [on Portfolio](#).

The Dissertation Defense

Students must deliver the dissertation to all committee members (including the Oral Defense Committee Chair) at least 14 days before the oral defense. Students must ask committee members their preferred form for reading, i.e., whether print or electronic (PDF), bound or loose-leaf. For PDF dissertations, the complete dissertation must be delivered as a single file (i.e., not divided into chapters or other sections, but a PDF of the entire dissertation from front matter to last page of the bibliography). All the required components of the dissertation as stipulated in the [Thesis and Dissertation Formatting Guidelines](#) must be included in the defense draft, including front matter, table of contents, bibliography, etc., as well as any supplementary material, such as images or charts.

Scheduling and Verification of the Oral Defense

Students must work with their examination committee (a.k.a. full Dissertation Committee including the Oral Defense Committee Chair) and the Program Manager to schedule a time and date for the defense. The Program Manager will reserve a room for the defense and send out a notification to the JDP community. The student must submit the [Schedule of Oral Defense](#) form to the Office of Graduate Education no later than four weeks prior to the anticipated date of the defense. After the form has been submitted, the OGE staff will verify that all examination committee members meet the minimum university requirements to participate in the oral defense.

Conducting the Defense

Students are expected to be physically present at DU/Iliff for their oral defense unless emergency circumstances make it impossible. In this case, the student must consult their Dissertation Director and the Oral Defense Committee Chair and then follow OGE procedures to request permission to participate by conference call, web app, or other medium.

The Oral Defense Committee Chair will preside over and manage the defense process. The Chair is

responsible for making certain the defense is conducted in a professional manner and that the student has a fair opportunity to defend the dissertation. The Chair is expected to provide opportunities for each voting member of the examination committee to participate in the defense and to ensure that the defense is of high quality while remaining within proper limits of inquiry.

Interested members of the DU/Iliff community may also attend the oral defense. After the Committee has conducted the essential examination of the candidate, pertinent questions (as determined by the examination committee) may be asked by others who are present.

When the defense is completed, the Chair will request that the candidate and all other persons not on the examination committee leave the room and will call for a motion to pass or fail the candidate. A recommendation to pass can have no more than one negative vote from members of the examination committee. If the motion is a recommendation to pass, the committee must then agree on the conditions of the recommendation, as follows:

- **Pass with no revisions** means that only grammatical, labeling, or numbering changes are required. Only a limited number of sentence additions or deletions should be necessary.
- **Pass with minor revisions** means that the candidate is required to reorganize portions of the manuscript and change some of the content.
- **Pass with major revisions** means a complete chapter or chapters must be rewritten, additional tables are required and interpreted, or the general format must be changed. Responsibility for seeing that needed revisions are made rests with the Dissertation Director, but committee members also may require their approval before final submission. The Dissertation Director and designated committee members must agree the changes made meet the requirements of the examination committee the vote to pass to be validated.
- **Fail** means that the dissertation content is not of acceptable quality or that the candidate cannot defend the research. In most cases, failing the defense results in the rejection of the student's dissertation and a new or related study usually will need to be undertaken.

A candidate who fails the oral defense may petition the Oral Defense Committee for a maximum of one re-examination. If granted, the re-examination must be scheduled through the Office of Graduate Education and must occur within normal timelines. Failure of the re-examination results in termination from the Program without the awarding of the PhD degree.

The *Result of Oral Defense form*, which will be sent from the Office of Graduate Education directly to the Oral Defense Committee Chair, must be signed by all committee members and returned immediately after completion of the Oral Defense to the Office of Graduate Education.

Submitting the Dissertation

The student must submit the completed dissertation, incorporating any and all changes required by the examination committee, to the Office of Graduate Education in order to graduate. Prior to submitting the completed dissertation, students need to verify the dissertation complies with the [Thesis and Dissertation Formatting Guidelines](#) and arrange for a formatting review of the dissertation with the Office of Graduate Education.

“Opt-Out” DU/Iliff Joint MA in the Study of Religion

In the rare instance where a student has completed everything except the dissertation and finds that they cannot complete the PhD within the ten-year limit, they may officially withdraw from the JDP and apply to receive the “opt-out” DU/Iliff Joint MA in the Study of Religion. To be eligible, the student must have completed 82 credit hours of coursework, including all required classes; passed all of their comprehensive exams; and completed their modern research language (tool) requirement. They will have taken the dissertation proposal seminar, but they need not have passed the proposal defense. See the JDP Program Manager for exact procedures. Please note that no joint master’s program exists to which any student may apply. This MA is only a means of acknowledging the work a PhD student has done if they opt out of the PhD program near its completion.

Program Assessment

Student Learning Outcomes (SLOs) and assessment instruments — approved by the JDP Committee on January 19, 2018.

By the completion of their degree:

1. Students will make an original and substantial contribution to the study of religion. (Assessed through a rubric sent to dissertation committee members at time of oral defense);
2. Students will engage a variety of disciplinary perspectives in interdisciplinary conversation and scholarship. (Assessed by a 30-minute in-class writing assignment near end of each colloquium sent by Program Manager and tabulated by committee);
3. Students will demonstrate competence in a specific field within the study of religion. (Assessed by the Program Manager tabulating success on RLGN 6030 comp exam III [pass first or second attempt, and fail]);
4. Students will critically use theories, methodologies, and knowledge from underrepresented groups to address fundamental questions in their primary area of study. – *revised by the JDP Committee May 21,2021.*
5. Students will demonstrate their ability to communicate effectively in various settings the theories, principles, and practices of the study of religion. (survey of GTA experience by all student TAs and their faculty teaching mentors; internship surveys may also be used)

The JDP Committee is responsible for Program assessment and has developed an [assessment plan](#) based on the student learning outcomes. Program assessment, not individual student assessment, is the objective of this plan.

In addition, aspects of the Program will be assessed as needed. All assessment data are shared with the JDP Committee for discussion about Program effectiveness, need for additional assessment, and/or proposed changes to curriculum or other aspects of the Program. Anything the Directors and Committee believe needs the attention of the JDP faculty at large will be

brought to the faculty through special meetings. Routine reports to faculty and students may be made in newsletters or by email.

The JDP Committee monitors student progress through a report compiled by the Program Manager from annual student self-reports that the advisor signs to signify they agree the student has been planning appropriately.

– adopted Nov 13, 2015

Annual JDP Events

Welcome Dinner

During orientation week a dinner is held to welcome the new cohort of students and their families, normally at the home of one of the Directors. Faculty whom these students identified in their applications as likely mentors are also invited, as are the second-year students. This has been an annual event since fall 2014.

JDP Women's and Non-Binary Folk's Tea

Begun in 2017 in response to students who identify as female and non-binary reporting feeling isolated, this holiday tea is hosted by the women faculty of the JDP as a social and networking event.

Vincent Harding Memorial Speaker Series

Process (adopted by JDP Committee Oct 28, 2016):

1. An open invitation will be sent to all JDP faculty of color every Fall to gather and agree upon a scholar to invite for the following year. They will pick senior scholars or tenured scholars with significant publications who are making a contribution to the discourse early in their career.
2. Faculty of color will confirm the availability of the visiting scholar, choose one or more JDP faculty hosts, and inform the Directors of these decisions.
3. JDP Director will put it on the next JDP Committee meeting agenda for formal approval and will send an official letter of invitation to the scholar.
4. The Program Manager will work with hosts to make all arrangements.

Traditional Schedule

1. The event is usually held in late October or early November.
2. The Scholar meets with students of color for a mentoring opportunity, often at lunch.
3. A public lecture is normally given for the whole community.
4. A workshop for all faculty and students with assigned reading or separate workshops if enough attendees.

Spring Fling

This is a gathering of all faculty, staff, students, and student's families for a community reception.