

Senate Committee on Academic Development
Report to Senate - Meeting of April 30, 2013
**Proposal to delete the graduate field of "Religion and Modernity" in the
Master of Arts (Religious Studies)**

Introduction

The proposal to delete the graduate field of "Religion and Modernity" in the Master of Arts (Religious Studies) was reviewed by the Senate Committee on Academic Development (SCAD) at its meeting on March 13, 2013. B. Brouwer, Vice-Provost and Dean, School of Graduate Studies attended the meeting to speak to the proposal and answer questions from Committee members. Members of SCAD were provided with the QUQAPs Expedited Approval Submission Form which is attached to this report.

Analysis and Discussion

The following should be noted:

- The field of "Religion and Modernity" was introduced a decade ago to fill a niche that was under-represented in Canada and was, in the past, a particular strength of key faculty member;
- A number of these key faculty members have since retired and it is becoming difficult to attract current students to study this field which has a narrow focus of interest;
- Under the new Quality Assurance Framework institutions are no longer required to declare fields at either the master's or doctoral level.

Motion

that Senate approve the deletion of the field "Religion and Modernity" in the Master of Arts (Religious Studies) effective September 2013.

Respectfully submitted,



Laeque K. Daneshmend, PhD, DIC
Chair, Senate Committee on Academic Development

Committee Members:

L. Anstey, PhD'15, Education
M. Baird, Chemistry
L. Daneshmend, Deputy Provost (Chair)
J. Emrich, Faculty of Law
D. Garvie, Economics

A. Gill, BCom'15
I. Johnsrude, Psychology
L. Long, BComp (Honours)'13
K. McAuley, Chemical Engineering
P. Oosthuizen, Academic Colleague

GRADUATE PROGRAM - MAJOR MODIFICATION PROPOSAL

Expedited Approval Submission Form

This template is to be used when seeking approval for a Major Modification of an existing Graduate Program. Major modifications must receive the approval of the Graduate Studies Executive Council (GSEC) before being submitted by the Provost's Office to the Senate Secretariat for referral to the Senate Committee on Academic Development (SCAD) which will then make their recommendations to Senate. Academic Units are strongly advised to contact the Director of the Office of the Vice-Provost and Dean SGS or the appropriate Associate Dean in the SGS with any questions that arise during this proposal development. Refer also to the QUQAPs website at: <http://www.queensu.ca/provost/responsibilities/qualityassurance.html>.

Part A – General Summary

Name of Existing Program:	Master of Arts (Religious Studies) Field: Religion and Modernity
Academic Unit(s):	School of Religion
Proposed Implementation Date:	September 2013

Contact Information (1)		Contact Information (2)	
Name:	Richard Ascough	Name:	James Miller
Title:	Director	Title:	Graduate Coordinator
Unit:	School of Religion	Unit:	School of Religion
E-mail:	rsa@queensu.ca	E-mail:	James.miller@queensu.ca

Nature of Modification:	CHECK all that apply
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Creation, deletion or re-naming of a Graduate Field

Specify: Deletion of the field "Religion and Modernity" _____

Change in a degree designation without a substantial change in Program requirements or learning outcomes (e.g. MSc(E) to MASc)

- Significant changes to Program requirements from those existing at the time of the previous cyclical review (*e.g. admission or graduation requirements*)
- Significant changes to the Program structure (e.g. major changes to courses comprising a significant proportion of the Program, typically 35% or less)[Consult with Provost and/or Vice Provost, SGS]
- Introduction or deletion of a research project, research essay or thesis, course-only, internship or practicum option (*Master's level*)
- Change to requirements for comprehensive or qualifying examinations, field studies or residence requirements
- Significant changes to the faculty delivering the Program
- Significant changes to the existing mode(s) of delivery (*e.g. different campus, on-line, blended learning, inter-institutional collaborations, etc.*)
- Merger of two or more graduate Programs
- Changes to Program content (other than those listed above) that affect the learning outcomes, but do not meet the threshold for a Brand New Program

OTHER:	
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Description of Existing Program, Nature of the Major Modification, and Rationale for Proposed Change
<p><i>Briefly summarize (suggested 1-page maximum) the existing Program to be modified, the nature of the proposed Major Modification, and the rationale for the modification. Comment on the impact it will have on the structure, Degree Level Expectations, and learning outcomes of the existing Program(s) as appropriate. Explain (as appropriate) how the relevant stakeholders (e.g. faculty, staff, students) were consulted in preparing the proposal; and comment on additional resources required to implement the Program modification.</i></p>
<p>Proposed Modification: The School of Religion offers a one-year M.A. program in Religious Studies. The courses equip students with the analytic tools to engage issues of history, politics, culture, race, gender and science in the construction of religion. Students write a research essay that focuses on a particular religious tradition or phenomenon. This change will be effective as of September 2013.</p> <p>Rationale: When developing the M.A. a decade ago the School focused on Religion and Modernity to indicate a niche that was under-represented in Canada and was a particular strength of key faculty members. Although it served its purpose well to attract high-quality students to Queen's, two fundamental changes have brought about the desire to broaden the focus in order better to serve students. First, over the past few years some of the originating professors for the program have retired and have not been replaced. Since their expertise included Religion and Modernity, we are finding it difficult not only to provide the necessary content for such a narrow focus but also to attract students with interests in this area. Second, there are Faculty members in the School whose research specialty lies outside the field of "Modernity," particularly those who work in ancient religious traditions. These Faculty members would like to be more involved in the</p>

graduate program. In addition, prospective students have inquired about working with these Faculty members at Queen's. By dropping the designated field "Religion and Modernity" the School will be able better to utilize Faculty members while attracting a broader cross-section of students that includes but is not limited to those interested in Religion and Modernity.

Impact: The proposed modification will have very little impact on the extant structure, DLEs, and learning outcomes of the existing program. The names and descriptions of several directed reading courses need to be revised slightly to better reflect the revised course content that has grown out of changes in faculty expertise, and the evolution of curricula more broadly. Overall, the deletion of the field "Religion and Modernity" from the MA fits well with the extant DLEs and student learning outcomes (attached).

Consultation with Stakeholders: The School of Religion's Director and the Graduate Coordinator discussed this proposal together with other faculty members at the School and with the Administrative assistants, who supported the deletion. Conversations with current undergraduate students indicate support for a Master's program that would enable them to pursue research interests beyond the existing field Religion and Modernity. The proposal was brought before School's Curriculum Committee on February 5, 2012, and was approved to go forward to SGS.

Additional Resources: No additional resources are required, but more Faculty members at the School will have the opportunity to teach MA courses as part of their regular load. There will also be a better distribution of Research Essay supervision across the entire Faculty.

Part B – Evaluation Criteria

To facilitate evaluation of the proposal for a Major Modification of an existing Graduate Program, only the relevant textboxes below need to be completed (consult with the School of Graduate Studies to confirm the information required). Academic Units should refer to the New Graduate Program template <http://www.queensu.ca/provost/responsibilities/qualityassurance/DocumentsandLinks/Templates.html> for details regarding the Sections and Tables in that template that need to be completed as specified and imported into the relevant Sections below. Academic Units should bear in mind the diverse groups (e.g. GSEC, SCAD, Senate) that will be reviewing their submission and prepare their proposal accordingly.

Creation of a New Graduate Field

NA

Renaming or Deletion of a Field

Information required:

Renaming: *as above as relevant.*

Deletion: *Implication to program structure including courses offered, fulfillment of Degree Level Expectations and achievement of learning outcomes.*

Attached is the current list of courses in the MA program and the mapping of the DLEs. The proposed field deletion will not require any substantial changes to the list of courses offered or their calendar descriptions, although the School is proposing slight modifications to the names and descriptions of 6 courses (listed below) insofar as the name and description no longer include the word “modern” or limit the course content to the modern period. Doing so allows instructors to broaden their scope if necessary, depending upon the students enrolled. In addition, some Faculty members who have not regularly taught in the program will be able to teach RELS-874 Directed Studies in ~~Modern~~ Christianity. These changes are minor and do not substantially change what is already the practice, namely designing the courses to cohere with the research interests of the students enrolled in any given year.

RELS-871 Directed Studies in ~~Modern~~ Buddhism
Examination of selected topics using primary sources in translation.

RELS-872 Directed Studies in ~~Modern~~ Hinduism
Examination of selected topics using primary sources in translation.

RELS-873 Directed Studies in ~~Modern~~ Islam
An examination of ways in which Islam in various contexts ~~is or is not responding to the questions of modernity.~~

RELS-874 Directed Studies in ~~Modern~~ Christianity
Examination of selected topics relevant to understanding Christianity ~~in the contemporary world.~~

RELS-875 Directed Studies in ~~Modern~~ Judaism
Examination of selected topics in Modern Judaism .

RELS-876 Directed Studies in ~~Modern~~ Chinese Religions
Examination of selected topics in ~~Modern~~ Chinese Religions.

We will retain the core courses, including RELS-801 Core Course I: Religion and Modernity, which “Examines the nature of religious transition in response to various pressures for religious change.” This course is an important grounding for a Religious Studies speciality no matter what is their specialized interest in religious traditions, since specialists are often called upon to speak to contemporary issues involving religion.

Overall, the proposed modification will have very little impact on the structure, DLEs, and learning outcomes of the existing program. In the attached mapping of the DLEs, we have highlighted where “modernity” is mentioned explicitly. There is only one such notation. Under the DLE “Religious Traditions” the specified learning outcome is “*This degree is awarded to students who demonstrate... an understanding of the continuing evolution of historic religious traditions in modernity and postmodernity and how alternate spiritual traditions and new religious movements are formulated.*” This is not antithetical to the proposed field deletion, as the program will continue to have an emphasis on modern understandings of religion, even where ancient and historic traditions are explored.

Change in Degree Designation Without a Substantial Change in Program Requirements or Learning Outcomes
NA

Significant Modification of Program Requirements From Those Existing at the Time of Previous Cyclical Review (e.g. admission or graduation requirements) OR Significant Changes to Program Structure (e.g. to courses comprising the Program, typically no more than 35%)
NA

Introduction or Deletion of a Research Project, Research Essay or Thesis, Course-only, Internship or Practicum Option (Master's Level)
NA

Change to Requirements for Comprehensive or Qualifying Examinations
NA

Significant Change to the Faculty Delivering the Program (e.g. inter-institutional collaboration, different campus)
NA

Significant Changes to the Existing Mode(s) of Delivery (e.g. part-time, different campus, on-line, blended learning, inter-institutional collaborations, etc.)
NA

Merger of Two or More Approved Graduate Programs

NA
Other Changes that Affect the Learning Outcomes but Do Not Constitute a Brand New Program
NA

Part C - Authorizations

Part C is to be completed, as appropriate, by the SGS following GSEC approval, prior to submission to SCAD.

Note: additional authorizations may be required depending on the nature of the proposed Major Modification [refer to Part B]

<i>Date Approved by Faculty Graduate council</i>	February 5, 2013 _____	
<i>Date Approved by GSEC</i>	February 14, 2013	
<i>Vice-Provost and Dean, School of Graduate Studies</i>	 Signature	February 14, 2013 Date
<i>Provost and Vice-Principal (Academic)</i>	 Signature	2/2/13 Date
<i>Date Approved by SCAD</i>	_____	

Department/Academic Unit: School of Religion

Degree Program: M.A.

Degree Level Expectations, Learning Outcomes, Indicators of Achievement and the Program Requirements that Support the Learning Outcomes

DLE	Learning Outcomes (program specific)** <i>This degree is awarded to students who demonstrate...</i>	Indicators of Achievement <i>As evidenced by...</i>	Relevant Courses and academic requirements <i>(requirements contributing to achieving outcomes and DLEs)</i>
<i>Depth and breadth of knowledge</i>	a thorough understanding of a substantial body of knowledge that is at the forefront of the discipline of religious studies and ancillary disciplines.	a solid understanding of the historic and contemporary issues that arise in the study of religion;	RELS-801 Core Course I: Religion and Modernity RELS-802 Core Course II: Theory and Method in Religious Studies Elective courses in particular religious traditions (RELS-871 through 876)
		making connections with ancillary disciplines such as cultural studies, gender studies, history, philosophy;	Elective courses RELS 808, 809; 884, 885, 886 Elective courses from other departments.
		integrating this understanding into	RELS-898 Master's Research

		contemporary contexts.	Essay
<i>Research and scholarship</i>	<p>critical thinking skills and comprehension of techniques of research and inquiry used in religious studies;</p> <p>critical evaluation of complex issues and arguments with current research and scholarship in religious studies;</p> <p>the development and support of a sustained argument in written form.</p>	<p>careful, concise, critical analysis of the primary and secondary material and synthesizing and integrating this material clearly and concisely in logically organized rational arguments;</p> <p>understanding of and dialogue with counter positions in a manner that shows a grasp of the issues involved in current debate in religious studies and recognizes patterns within scholarship;</p> <p>original thinking and the formulation of a hypothesis that accounts for the evidence synthesized and provides a perceptive interpretation of the importance, meaning, and/or significance of the material.</p>	<p>RELS-801 and RELS-802 (core courses) require sustained written analysis and oral presentations, as do most elective courses in the dept.</p> <p>RELS-854 Theory in Religious Studies or equivalent (pre-req)</p> <p>Course papers</p> <p>RELS-898 Research Essay</p>

<p style="text-align: center;"><i>Application of Knowledge</i></p>	<p>competence in the integration of learning and application of ideas and theories to old and new questions and problems in religious studies;</p>	<p>adapting and using established ideas to construct new meaning;</p> <p>generalizing from given facts and relating knowledge from several areas to draw conclusions;</p> <p>interpreting, relating, and/or manipulating knowledge to solve complex problems or complete tasks;</p> <p>drawing conclusions based on the use of the critical thinking skills and the available evidence;</p>	<p>RELS-801 and RELS-802 (core courses) require sustained written analysis and oral presentations, as do most elective courses in the dept.</p> <p>Course papers</p> <p>RELS-898 Research Essay</p>
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<p><i>Professional capacity / autonomy</i></p>	<p>critical thinking, independent inquiry, and rational argumentation;</p> <p>ethical behaviour consistent with academic integrity and appropriate for the responsible conduct of research.</p>	<p>demonstrating critical thinking skills;</p> <p>indicating an ability to empathize with the arguments and opinions of others and engage them civilly;</p> <p>following Queen’s policies on Academic Integrity and, where appropriate, Ethical Conduct for Research Involving Humans;</p> <p>designing and completing a complex research project that culminates in a written research essay.</p>	<p>RELS-801 and RELS-802 (core courses) require sustained written analysis and oral presentations, as do most elective courses in the dept.</p> <p>Course papers</p> <p>RELS-898 Research Essay</p>
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<p><i>Communication Skills</i></p>	<p>the ability to communicate ideas, issues, and conclusions clearly.</p>	<p>oral and, especially, written presentations of careful, concise, critical analysis with a clear and well argued hypotheses based on a capacity to analyze, synthesise, and evaluate material.</p>	<p>Course papers</p> <p>RELS-898 Research Essay</p>
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<p><i>Awareness of limits of knowledge</i></p>	<p>cognizance of the complexity of knowledge and of the potential contributions of other interpretations, methods, and disciplines.</p>	<p>presenting one's own views within the context of the historic and contemporary arguments of scholarship in the study of religion;</p> <p>considering the plausibility of perspectives of other students and of scholars and making apt criticisms, discriminations, and qualifications to one's own arguments on that basis;</p> <p>indicating awareness of the strengths and limits of one's understanding and that of others, including awareness of one's prejudices.</p>	<p>Course papers</p> <p>RELS-898 Research Essay</p>
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<p><i>Religious traditions</i></p>	<p>an understanding of the continuing evolution of historic religious traditions in modernity and postmodernity and how alternate spiritual traditions and new religious movements are formulated.</p>	<p>using data from religious traditions in formulating arguments</p> <p>employing one or more methods drawn from religious studies in oral and written work</p> <p>appropriately citing religion theories and theorists in formulating arguments.</p>	<p>RELS-801 Core Course I: Religion and Modernity</p> <p>RELS-802 Core Course II: Theory and Method in Religious Studies</p> <p>Elective courses in particular religious traditions (RELS-871 through 876)</p>
<p><i>Religion and culture</i></p>	<p>comprehension of religion as a cultural phenomenon.</p>	<p>oral and written presentations in which religion and/or religious traditions are demonstrated to be part of the fabric of culture in various locales around the globe.</p>	<p>RELS-801 Core Course I: Religion and Modernity</p> <p>RELS-802 Core Course II: Theory and Method in Religious Studies</p> <p>Elective courses RELS 808, 809; 884, 885, 886</p> <p>Elective courses from other departments.</p>