

Call for Proposals

This Seminar invites paper proposals that address the problems faced by stand-alone MA programs in public and private universities. The 2012 session — the second in three annual sessions — will focus on articulating the specific strengths of stand-alone MA programs in religious studies and determining specific ways in which the AAR can support these programs. The Seminar particularly encourages submission of papers that will ultimately produce materials of value to a wide variety of stand-alone MA programs.

Mission

Across the country numerous departments of religious studies offer MA degrees, but not PhD degrees. Recently, leaders in these departments have gathered in formal and informal settings to address issues particular to these departments. Increasingly, we find that deans and presidents encourage us to begin offering PhD degrees without adequate understanding of the resources needed and the dim job prospects in academia that graduates of such PhD programs face. In addition, in tough budget times it is increasingly important for us to identify external sources of funding for our faculty and this can be difficult when a department does not offer a PhD degree. And as the public conversation regarding the importance of liberal arts programs and degrees has heated up we are being asked to make the case for religious studies as a relevant and helpful undergraduate major or graduate degree. Departments are being asked to “make the case” about how they contribute to the broader mission of higher education. This Seminar provides a multiyear workshop to address issues faced by stand-alone MA programs. We have gathered for a “state of the programs” information-gathering and review meeting and are seeking to articulate the strengths of and imagine the possibilities for these programs. We plan to focus on implementation as well; i.e., how does an MA-only program either:

- Grow into a viable PhD program

- Make the case to an administration that it is valuable as a Masters program

- Shape itself so as to produce employable graduate students? When appropriate either during or after the three year Seminar series, we plan to produce materials that might be valuable to AAR members

Anonymity of Review Process

Proposer names are **visible** to chairs but **anonymous** to steering committee members.

Questions?

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Method of Submission

A large, orange, rounded rectangular button with the text "Submit to PAPERS" in white, centered on the button.