

**DEPARTMENT OF RELIGIOUS STUDIES
TENURE AND PROMOTION GUIDELINES (9.15b)**

I. PRELIMINARIES

A. **Mission:** The Department of Religious Studies engages in the analysis and interpretation of those features of the human experience and expressions of human culture commonly referred to as “sacred” or “religious.” Religion is one of the most significant features of human existence historically, cross-culturally, and—especially today—globally. It thereby is a critical dimension of the liberal arts and sciences at the very center of the university experience. The scholarly study of religion draws on multi-disciplinary approaches, especially in the humanities and social sciences, for examining a wide range of phenomena – myth, symbol, and ritual; the genesis, transmission and interpretation of religious texts; the formation, history, sustainability, ecology, and character of religious communities; traditions of religious belief and practice; the role of religion in politics, society, culture, and global affairs; religious ethics; religion and the arts; as well as the material culture of religion. The Department of Religious Studies emphasizes theories and methods for the scholarly study of religion globally. It is committed to preparing students for a diversity of careers and advanced study as active citizens of a religiously diverse global world.

B. **General Expectations:** The faculty of Religious Studies is composed of outstanding scholar-teachers. Candidates for tenure and promotion therefore are expected to exhibit excellence in teaching and scholarship as well as engagement in Tampa Bay, the Florida region, the nation, and/or the global world. Tenure and promotion at the University of South Florida are defined by the USF Guidelines for Tenure and Promotion and the USF-UFF Collective Bargaining Agreement, supplemented by relevant College of Arts and Sciences guidelines, including the Research Expectations for Tenure and Promotion in the Humanities. Candidates for tenure and promotion should become familiar with all of these documents. The following guidelines further define and specify the application of University, College, and School standards for tenure and promotion in the Department of Religious Studies. This Department is not currently a multi-campus unit. If departmental faculty are hired at branch campuses we will modify our governance and T&P documents to ensure that those faculty are included in matters of faculty governance and Tenure & Promotion to ensure they have voice in departmental issues. We recognize the principles of equity of assignment, resources and opportunities of faculty across a multi-campus university.

C. Tenure and Promotion Procedures

1. **The Application:** Candidates for tenure and/or promotion must complete the College application package. They may include additional materials supporting the application that pertain to specific accomplishments and enhance their application. In completing the application candidates will find the advice and assistance of the Chairperson and other senior faculty as well as the CAS staff helpful. Applications must be complete and available for departmental review at least two weeks ahead of the College deadline.

2. Departmental Review: The application for tenure and/or promotion will be reviewed and evaluated by the Department's (a) Faculty Advisory Committee (ordinarily consisting of three tenured faculty members) and (b) the Chairperson. All eligible tenured members of the faculty also review and vote by secret ballot to approve or disapprove the application. Only full time tenured members of the departmental faculty participate in tenure and promotion decisions (those with at least a 49% appointment in Religious Studies and faculty on leave that are anticipated to return to at least a 49% appointment in the Department). For promotion to the rank of full professor only full professors are eligible to vote. The Faculty Advisory Committee's vote and supporting narrative as well as the Chairs recommendation and narrative, along with the vote of eligible faculty become a part of the candidate's tenure and/or promotion file.

II. TENURE AND PROMOTION TO ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR

The criteria for USF tenure and promotion in Religious Studies are excellence in teaching and research as well as substantive contributions in service consistent with the mission of the Department. The following specify standards of excellence in each of these areas.

- A. Teaching: All faculty are expected to make substantial high quality contributions to the Department's teaching mission. Assessing excellence rests on the expertise of the faculty grounded in disciplinary training and the highest standards of scholarly and pedagogical rigor. Those professional judgments are largely qualitative and they necessarily must consider and balance as a whole a wide variety of indicators of excellence as outlined below accumulated on an annual basis during the candidate's tenure earning years.

The primary basis for demonstrating teaching excellence are course syllabi and related materials—such as study guides, bibliographies, and handouts—deriving from classroom instruction appropriate to the content and level of the course. These materials should exhibit the best disciplinary and instructional practices appropriate for the content and level of the course, including whenever possible active learning, critical thinking, as well as oral and written expression. Additional evidence of teaching excellence may include: course and curricular development (new course design as well as redesign and development of courses and curriculum); teaching innovations; direction of independent student projects; service on student examination and project committees; participation in theses and dissertations; publications on teaching; professional development related to instruction; teaching awards; and any other indication of high quality, effective university teaching.

Student evaluations may be used interpretatively in relationship to course syllabi and other indicators of teaching effectiveness (as listed above). Student comments often are helpful in assessing classroom performance. The quantitative ratings of students may be used as one indication of teaching effectiveness. Courses in which a majority of the students do not complete the evaluation should be interpreted with tremendous caution as providing an incomplete and potentially biased viewpoint.

All faculty are expected to make substantial contributions to the teaching mission of the

Department. This includes considerations involving the level of instruction, number and nature of course preparations, as well as class size and diversity (majors/nonmajors), with larger numbers (fifty or more) of students, courses in the core USF curriculum, and writing intensive courses being considered, on balance, as more demanding. Ideally, every faculty member should offer one large enrollment course or a writing intensive course with twenty or more students or a course serving the core university curriculum or some combination of such courses on a regular (typically an annual basis) unless exempted by a unique assignment of duties (such as a sabbatical, a course release for another specific purposes, or graduate instruction).

Junior faculty should have some involvement with graduate instruction, including offering independent studies as well as serving on examination and thesis committees.

- B. Research: Candidates for tenure are expected to have records of publication commensurate with USF's standing as a research-intensive university. Tenure-track faculty are expected to publish in leading presses (university or major academic or commercial) known for disseminating reputable scholarly work and in leading journals in specialties or the field as a whole. The quality of the venues in which faculty members publish, as assessed by professional disciplinary standards, is taken both as an indicator of the quality of the work and as evidence of the work's visibility within and impact on the field.

The Department recognizes two broad categories of scholarly work. Category A includes authored or co-authored books; translations with significant interpretative commentary; edited books; refereed journal articles; and invited book chapters or articles in peer-reviewed collections. Category B includes translations without significant interpretive commentary; papers presented at professional meetings; book reviews; reference articles; and textbooks embodying original scholarship. Faculty are expected to show a sustained program of research and publication primarily in Category A or spread across the two categories with a majority concentration in Category A.

An excellent record in research requires publication of a book and approximately two to four articles or approximately ten articles (with a majority of them in Category A), or of an equivalent quantity of work primarily focused in Category A. The publications must also be of a quality commensurate with the expectations of a research-intensive university. Judgments of quality will be based on such measures as the venue of publication—as assessed by disciplinary standards, the evaluations of both internal and external reviewers, the receipt of competitive grants for research support, and other evidence of impact on the field.

- C. Service: Candidates for tenure and promotion are expected to have participated actively in one or more of the following service areas.
1. Department, College, and University: Serving on departmental committees, attendance at student recruitment and other departmental events, and other involvement with departmental governance; serving on committees in other departments; service on committees and participation in the governance of the School of Humanities, College of

Arts and Sciences, and University, including commencement and other similar events.

2. **Profession:** Holding office in a professional society, editing a professional journal or serving on its editorial board, organizing and/or chairing sessions at professional meetings, refereeing research papers or book manuscripts submitted for publication, among other activities related to professional organizations as well as consulting or evaluating for another institution.
3. **Public Service:** The sharing or disseminating of scholarly expertise and knowledge outside the University, including participating in community outreach and participation in local, regional, or national government or civic organizations.

Service activities should reflect the commitment to the institutional and social role of faculty in a public university and they should involve approximately six major activities (such as service on a departmental, college or university committee, substantial professional involvement, and/or substantial participation in local, regional, or national organizations). The service activities of tenure earning faculty normally will not be extensive (entail more than six major activities, such as service on a committee or participation with a community organization, during the tenure earning years) and they usually will be concentrated in the Department.

III. PROMOTION TO PROFESSOR

Promotion to Professor in Religious Studies at USF requires excellence in teaching and research beyond tenure and promotion and substantial contributions in service, especially professional service activities. Successful candidates must meet and then exceed the requirements for tenure and promotion during the five years preceding the application for promotion to full professor. This requirement is to be supported by conclusive evidence of a reputation beyond the University, among peers on a national or international level, for excellence in research and teaching and at least a substantial record of service (beyond the expectations for promotion to associate professor). Excellences in teaching and research as well as significant contributions in service are indicated by the following standards.

- A. **Teaching:** The senior faculty, like all faculty, are expected to make substantial high quality contributions to the Department's teaching mission, including undergraduate instruction. Excellence in teaching is assessed by the same standards as specified above for tenure and promotion.

Senior faculty are expected to contribute to the undergraduate teaching mission with a repertoire of offerings that includes at least three different courses in support of the Department's programs and University's core curriculum. Teaching excellence includes considerations involving the level of instruction, number and nature of course preparations, as well as class size and diversity (majors/nonmajors), with larger numbers (fifty or more) of students, courses in the core USF curriculum, and writing intensive courses being considered, on balance, as more demanding. Ideally, every faculty member should offer one large enrollment course or a writing intensive course with twenty or more students or a

course serving the core university curriculum or some combination of such courses on a regular (typically an annual basis) unless exempted by a unique assignment of duties (such as a sabbatical, a course release for another specific purposes, or graduate instruction).

An important part of the teaching of senior faculty is a continuous and substantial record of successful involvement with graduate students on theses and dissertation committees as well as the direction of theses and dissertations.

- B. Research: Candidates for promotion to Professor are expected to have records of publication commensurate with senior faculty status and USF's standing as a research-intensive university. A record of excellence in research requires publication, over a five year period since the attainment of tenure, of a book and approximately two to four articles, or approximately 12 articles, or of an equivalent quantity of work a majority of which is in Category A (as defined above). The publications must also be of a quality commensurate with the expectations for senior faculty at a research-intensive university. Evaluations of quality will be based on such measures as the venue of publication, the judgments of both internal and external reviewers, the receipt of competitive grants for research support, and other evidence of impact on the field.
- C. Service: Tenured faculty are expected to contribute more extensively than tenure-earning faculty to professional, university, and public service as defined above, consistent with a primary focus on teaching and research.

Faculty may satisfy these expectations for a substantial record by effective service as chair of a departmental committee as well as service on college and university committees in conjunction with some involvement in professional and community service. Professional service, specifically, provides a strong indication of visibility and reputation at the national and international levels.

This document may be amended by a majority vote of the tenured faculty (in accordance with the Department's Governance Document).

Approved by faculty vote, September 28, 2015

Approved by Dean's Office, October 9, 2015

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