Department of Religious Studies  
College of Arts and Sciences  
Georgia State University  

**NON-TENURE TRACK FACULTY REVIEW AND PROMOTION GUIDELINES**

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I. INTRODUCTION

Non-tenure track (NTT) faculty housed in the Department of Religious Studies (RELIGIOUS STUDIES) are vital components of our faculty. The policies and procedures related to the review and promotion of faculty in non-tenure track ranks are outlined in this document (Department guidelines), the College of Arts and Sciences Promotion Manual for Non-Tenure Track Faculty (college manual), and the Georgia State University Promotion Manual for Non-Tenure Track Faculty (university manual). Whereas the university and college NTT manuals provide general statements of the expected quality and significance of NTT faculty accomplishments, this document identifies the concrete forms these achievements should take. In particular, this document articulates the Department’s criteria for the various rankings that candidates for promotion might receive in the areas of teaching and service. Candidates should consult the college and university manuals for matters of process and procedure, dossier requirements, and time-in-rank policies that govern eligibility for promotion consideration.

The Department of Religious Studies employs regular, full-time NTT faculty in the lecturer track. The ranks within the lecturer track include the following (listed from most junior to most senior): Lecturer, Senior Lecturer, and Principal Senior Lecturer. The general duties for lecturer track faculty are described in the college manual.

II. DEPARTMENT REVIEW PROCESS FOR PROMOTION TO SENIOR LECTURER AND PRINCIPAL SENIOR LECTURER

A. Process Overview

The primary stages of the Department-level NTT faculty promotion review process are as follows:

1. Following notification of eligibility from the Dean’s Office, the candidate standing for promotion will submit the required review materials outlined in the college manual to the Department Chair.

2. The Department Chair forwards the candidate’s materials to the Department NTT Promotion Review Committee.

3. The Department committee submits its recommendation, including any minority reports, to the Department Chair. The Department Chair will provide a copy of the Department committee’s report, including any minority reports, to the candidate with a notification that the candidate has the option to respond directly to the Department Chair within three business days.

4. The Department Chair submits her/his independent recommendation and the recommendation of the Department NTT Promotion Review Committee, including any minority reports and any responses from the candidate, to the Dean’s Office. The Department Chair will provide a copy of her/his own report to the candidate with a notification that the candidate has the option to respond to the Dean’s Office within three business days. The Dean’s Office will provide to the Department Chair a
copy of any response from the candidate to the Department Chair’s report.

See sections III and IV in the college manual for information on the evaluation processes at the college and university levels.

**B. Composition of Department Non-Tenure Track Promotion Review Committee**

The Department NTT Promotion Review Committee consists of all tenured Religious Studies faculty and all NTT faculty of Senior rank and above in the Department (Senior Lecturer, Principal Senior Lecturer), except the Chair of the Department and any members of the Department serving in a position that will review the candidate’s promotion application at the college or university levels. According to the college manual, units may operate through a system of subcommittees that initially review and evaluate each candidate’s credentials. All final recommendations must be made by the committee of the whole. The committee of the whole must meet to discuss and vote on its final recommendation. The letter from the departmental committee must be signed by the committee chair and all committee members who agree with the recommendation. Committee members who do not sign this recommendation must provide a separate letter (minority report) indicating their recommendation and supporting rationale. In the event of a minority recommendation, individual committee members’ recommendations must not be identified to the candidate; therefore, the signatures must appear on a separate page so that they can be removed when the candidate is provided with his or her copy of the committee’s reports.

Faculty of equal or lower rank to the candidate’s current rank may not vote on the final recommendation of the committee of the whole. In consultation with the Department Chair, the dean may augment the Department NTT Promotion Review Committee with NTT members from other units when the Department does not have a sufficient number of faculty to constitute a committee of at least three members.

**III. LECTURER REVIEWS**

**A. General Considerations**

There are five types of structured reviews for faculty on the lecturer track: 1) annual review leading to re-appointment, 2) third-year review, 3) fifth-year review with promotion to senior lecturer, 4) subsequent review with promotion to principal senior lecturer (the timing for which is defined in the college manual), and 5) post-promotion cumulative review (five-year structured review). In these reviews, the primary considerations are contributions in teaching and service, with consideration given to contributions in the area of professional development bearing on the candidate’s knowledge as it relates to pedagogical practice. This document defines ratings that are used in all of the reviews listed above; however, the ratings in the body of the document are defined in the context of Department expectations specific to candidates being considered for promotion to senior lecturer or principal senior lecturer.
B. Scope of Evaluations

1. Evaluation of Teaching

As stated in the college manual, evaluation of teaching effectiveness will use the criteria of the college’s policy ([http://www2cas.gsu.edu/docs/as/teaching_effectiveness.pdf](http://www2cas.gsu.edu/docs/as/teaching_effectiveness.pdf)). Evaluators will assess the teaching effectiveness of lecturers as it relates to their core mission of engaging undergraduate learning in survey classes fulfilling general education requirements. Additionally, if a lecturer has primarily been assigned an alternate set of teaching and administrative duties, then their assessment will reflect criteria suitable to their assigned role in the Department.

As a general rule, evaluators will consider in their assessments of teaching effectiveness the following criteria:

a. **Quality of course content:** The quality of course content will be evaluated through review of syllabi, exam questions, writing assignments, in-class exercises, readings, and other elements integrated into the learning environment created by the candidate for promotion. Syllabi should be reviewed for conformity with university guidelines. Exam questions should require students to engage material that is appropriate for the course level and catalog description. Writing assignments should develop the students’ ability to work with primary and secondary sources in crafting coherent arguments that demonstrate critical thinking. Course materials should also be assessed for their appropriateness in relation to the current state of knowledge in the field. Lecturers may provide additional materials, such as customized texts, handouts, software, and other course elements that reflect the faculty member’s efforts to foster student engagement and learning. In particular, credit is given to faculty whose courses are structured in ways that cultivate curiosity, creativity, and critical acumen in their students. Courses that connect students with other university programs and resources that take advantage of opportunities created by our campus location in Atlanta and the Southeast will also be viewed as evidence of successful teaching. Particularly in lower-level classes, the Department encourages faculty to design courses that enable students to engage course materials and be evaluated in a variety of ways, so as to allow faculty to identify students who are struggling and to provide those students with an opportunity to improve their performance as the semester unfolds. The Department recognizes that teachers might use a variety of methods. Candidates evaluated as meeting or exceeding promotion expectations, however, demonstrate a sustained interest in encouraging student interest in the material and designing assessments that foster the mastery of significant skills and concepts.

b. **Development of new courses or development of new teaching resources that meaningfully improve existing courses:** Evaluations will consider the effective development and execution of new courses, significant involvement in the development of new teaching programs, and the use of new teaching techniques and practices, if these are part of the responsibilities of the faculty member. The design of courses with a travel component and the subsequent successful recruitment of students to study abroad or domestic field schools is another laudable potential achievement. The
Department values efforts to develop new courses and resources, particularly those that positively affect significant numbers of students or sufficiently impact individual students so as to result in significant achievements such as the presentation or publication of undergraduate and/or graduate research.

c. Student evaluations: The review of candidates’ materials will include overall student evaluation scores, which are useful indicators of student perceptions of instruction. Evaluation scores will be considered in the context of the normal range of scores for specific courses and for similar level courses (i.e., 1000, 2000, etc.) within the Department, but the Department will not rely upon these scores exclusively when determining minimum qualifications for ratings. The review will also consider other important variables such as class size, whether the course is required or an elective, the response rate on the evaluations, and number of students enrolled in the course. In addition to average scores, the Department will also be attentive to mean and median scores and to the impact of any outlying scores on averages. Qualitative evidence offered by the students’ written comments on the student evaluation forms will receive serious attention from the Department as a meaningful supplement to the quantitative data from the evaluation instruments. In light of these contextual elements, successful candidates for promotion normally earn consistently strong evaluations and high scores, as defined below.

d. Direction of students: The Department will assess the extent and quality of faculty efforts in the direction of student projects and academic activities at GSU, such as independent studies, honors theses, student research or creative work presented at GSURC, as well as individual student engagement in academic projects or programs hosted by other institutions or communities. Such efforts might also include faculty time spent offering direction as a member of honors or masters thesis committees. Faculty members’ willingness to write letters of recommendation for undergraduate and graduate students might also be viewed as evidence of significant effort in this category of teaching effectiveness.

e. Development of new skills: The Department encourages faculty to continue to develop skills in order to improve teaching. Candidates evaluated as meeting or exceeding expectations for promotion might exhibit an ongoing willingness to adopt new practices in the classroom. Faculty who undergo formal training to gain new certifications and competencies may present such achievements to the Department as evidence of their commitment to stay abreast of current research in religious studies pedagogies. The Department recognizes that new skills need not involve technology; for example, the incorporation of more interactive classroom exercises geared toward fostering critical conversation and writing might contribute to a faculty member’s assessment as excellent in teaching.
2. Evaluation of Service

As stated in the college manual, contributions in the area of service include high-quality instructional service; contributions to the Department, college, or university; professional service; and community and public service. Service for lecturers varies depending on the individual's core mission as defined by the Department, but it is generally at the Department or college level. Contributions to service in the Department for Religious Studies typically fall into the following categories: assigned service roles, such as administrative roles or other service duties that are ongoing assignments; instructional service, such as developing teaching materials and curricula, organizing or presenting seminars on teaching methodology, or supervising or mentoring faculty and graduate teaching assistants; assistance to colleagues, such as guest-lecturing, consulting about educational and teaching issues, and providing advice about or reviews of manuscripts or grant applications; contributions to the Department, college, and university, such as student advisement and mentoring, advising of student groups, memberships on Department/college/university committees, and development of teaching and service programs; professional service (if appropriate), such as memberships on professional societies and advisory boards; community and public service (if appropriate), such as giving lectures, speeches, presentations, performances, short courses, and assistance to government agencies.

The Department’s review of candidates’ records in service will consider the wide variety of tasks that the Department Chair might assign to particular faculty members. Candidates should document any arrangements made upon or after their initial appointment for them to take on special administrative duties or unusually heavy service loads. The degree to which assigned service responsibilities are made available to the candidate will also be part of the consideration of their service record.

3. Additional Considerations

Other factors and contributions that may be considered as part of the lecturer review include the following:

Professional Development Contributions:

It is expected that lecturers will manifest in their classes a rich intellectual background and a familiarity with current trends and methods in the discipline. Though not required for promotion, one way of achieving such proficiency is through a program of scholarly or creative activities. Other ways include attending or participating in panels at professional conferences, and remaining current on scholarship and readings in the field.

Since a lecturer’s professional development is evaluated as a secondary element to the overall record in instruction, the scholarly or creative work included in candidates’ dossiers should be clearly related to their fields of instruction. The specific forms of professional development that a lecturer may produce are identical to those described in the Department promotion and tenure guidelines for tenure track faculty:
publications, editorial work, book reviews, digital media, lectures, involvement with academic conferences, awards and grants, and so forth. Scholarship focused on pedagogy and curriculum should be included in the Instruction section of the dossier rather than under a Professional Development section.

Role within the Department:

Since needs of the Department often change, the role of the lecturers also may change. For example, if student enrollments shift, the college or Department may need to offer more sections of a course, or fewer. The review will include the role of the lecturer within the context of the mission of the Department and the ability of the lecturer to fulfill the changing needs of the Department.

C. Criteria for Promotion

As stated in the college manual, candidates will be evaluated based on the evidence submitted as having met or not met the standards for promotion in teaching and service relative to the evaluative terms outstanding, excellent, very good, good, fair, and poor. The single measure for achieving the standard for promotion in each category for each rank is defined in this section. The complete scale of evaluative terms that may be referenced in evaluations is included as an appendix to this document.

1. Promotion from Lecturer to Senior Lecturer

For promotion to the rank of senior lecturer, candidates must demonstrate a level of competence and effectiveness in teaching that is evaluated as at least excellent, according to the college manual. Additionally, candidates must provide a level of assigned service to the Department, college, university, and/or to the professional and practice community that is evaluated as at least very good, which meets the university standard for promotion to senior lecturer.

a. Teaching

To meet the standard in teaching for promotion to the rank of senior lecturer with a rating of excellent, candidates’ records show consistently high levels of achievement in the five categories for assessing teaching detailed in Section III.B.1 above. Their course materials illustrate a trajectory of accomplished teaching and demonstrate creative and reflective pedagogy. Normally, they earn scores on student evaluations that fall in the mid-4-out-of-5 range or higher, or in the 4-out-of-5 range as appropriate to the course size and level. Additionally, they demonstrate a track record of developing new courses or protocols for existing courses and successfully mentoring undergraduate or graduate students.

b. Service

To meet the standard in service for promotion to the rank of senior lecturer with a rating of very good, successful candidates diligently and effectively fulfill their assigned
roles. Rather than merely attending committee meetings or holding the requisite
advisement sessions, they actively participate and contribute concretely to the work of
the committees and to the overall goals and mission of the Department.

2. Promotion from Senior Lecturer to Principal Senior Lecturer

Promotion from Senior Lecturer to Principal Senior Lecturer is only awarded to a small
percentage of candidates, and the standards for promotion are high. For promotion to
the rank of principal senior lecturer, candidates must demonstrate a sustained level of
competence and effectiveness in teaching that is evaluated as \textit{excellent}, according to
the college manual. Additionally, candidates must provide a level of assigned service to
the Department, college, university, and/or to the professional and practice community
that is evaluated as \textit{excellent}, which meets the university standard for promotion to
principal senior lecturer. Successful candidates for promotion to principal senior lecturer
will demonstrate continued growth in both teaching and service during the time period
since the last promotion.

a. Teaching

To meet the standard in teaching for promotion to principal senior lecturer with a rating
of \textit{excellent}, candidates show consistently high levels of achievement in the five
categories for assessing teaching detailed in Section III.B.1 above. Their course materials
illustrate a long-term trajectory of accomplished teaching that demonstrates a creative
and reflective pedagogy. Their student evaluations are consistently strong, normally
earning scores that fall in the mid- to upper 4-out-of-5 range. They demonstrate a
sustained track record of successfully mentoring undergraduate and/or graduate
students, as well as developing new courses or protocols for existing courses. In addition
to continued growth in the areas of teaching described above, the candidate’s growth as
a teacher should also extend into areas beyond those normally associated with one’s
teaching responsibilities at GSU. Successful candidates will tend to have contributed at
the national level or have made a demonstrated impact on community based programs.

b. Service

Candidates will be judged as meeting the standard in service for promotion to principal
senior lecturer with a rating of \textit{excellent} if they have diligently and highly effectively
carried out assigned responsibilities and contributed significantly to the mission of the
Department over a sustained period. The \textit{excellent} candidate at this level normally
exhibits a track record of providing assistance to Department advising efforts or to
graduate teaching assistants and/or other non-tenure track instructors. In addition to
continued growth in the areas of service described above, the candidate’s growth in
service should take one or more of the following forms: highly effective service as a
Department program Chair or in a role with a similar level of responsibility; recognition
as a campus leader; significant service to the profession or community.
D. Other Lecturer Reviews

The annual, third-year, promotion, and post-promotion cumulative reviews are all distinct from one another. Because these different evaluations cover different time periods and may involve different evaluating bodies, the results of these reviews may diverge. Therefore, a reliable inference cannot necessarily be made from the conclusions of one of the reviews to those of the others.

1. Annual Review of Lecturers

Along with tenure track and other non-tenure track faculty, all lecturer track faculty are evaluated on an annual basis. The evaluation will be based on the materials supplied by the faculty member, including her/his updated CV, annual report covering the prior calendar year, teaching portfolio, and any other appropriate materials. In consultation with the Department executive committee, the Department Chair will evaluate the lecturer track faculty member’s service and teaching and service using the criteria described in the Appendix.

2. Third-Year Review of Lecturers

The third-year review for lecturers is designed to assess the faculty member’s effectiveness and progress toward promotion to senior lecturer. The Department NTT Promotion Review Committee (composed of all the tenured faculty) will be joined by any principal senior lecturers or senior lecturers. Together they will prepare an evaluation of the lecturer’s record. The Department Chair will provide an independent assessment before forwarding both evaluations to the Dean’s Office for further evaluation of the record. The third-year review will employ the terms of the six-point scale used for promotion reviews. However, the spirit of the third-year review is different from that of the fifth-year review; it is meant to review the lecturer’s achievements to date and provide mentoring regarding possible deficiencies that should be addressed before the fifth-year review.

3. Post-Promotion Review of Senior Lecturers and Principal Senior Lecturers

The post-promotion five-year cumulative review is designed to ensure that senior lecturers and principal senior lecturers remain effective and current in their pedagogy and accomplished in their service profiles. The review will cover the faculty member’s teaching and service records over the last five years and will be based on the criteria listed in the Appendix. Faculty under review will present their dossiers (as described in the college manual) for evaluation by the department P&T committee, as well as any lecturers at the rank of principal senior. The department chair will provide an independent assessment and will then pass on both evaluations to the Dean’s Office for response.
APPENDIX: Complete Ratings Scale for Evaluations of Lecturer-Track Faculty to be used in Annual, Third-Year, Promotion, and Post-Promotion Cumulative Reviews

A. Teaching

**Poor:** Candidates judged to be poor in instruction display an unacceptable record of teaching as evidenced through student evaluations, ineffective course materials, and little to no student mentoring.

**Fair:** Candidates judged to be fair in instruction display a minimally acceptable record of teaching as evidenced through student evaluations, ineffective pedagogical techniques, and only occasional student mentoring.

**Good:** Candidates judged to be good in instruction manifest a teaching performance that barely exceeds adequate, as evidenced through student evaluations, course materials that fail to demonstrate competent pedagogical skill, and generally satisfactory but limited effort as a mentor of students.

**Very Good:** Candidates judged to be very good in instruction are competent teachers whose supporting material includes evidence not only of diligent preparation and instruction but also of some mentoring of students, thoughtful and reflective pedagogy, and a commitment to the instructional mission of the Department. Class assignments are creative and methodologically varied and pedagogically appropriate, resulting in proficient student learning. While these candidates are effective teachers, their teaching records may lack the level and extent of involvement in the supervision of individual student work that is typically expected for a rating of excellent, as described below, and/or the candidate’s student evaluations show inconsistencies or regularly fall short of Department expectations.

**Excellent (Promotion to Senior Lecturer):** Candidates judged to be excellent teachers show consistently high levels of achievement in the five areas identified for assessing teaching detailed in Section III.B.1. These candidates’ course materials illustrate a trajectory of accomplished teaching that demonstrates a creative and reflective pedagogy that may include a substantial variety of activities related to instruction. Normally, these candidates’ student evaluation scores fall in the mid-4-out-of-5 range or higher. Additionally, they demonstrate a track record of developing new courses or protocols for existing courses and successfully mentoring undergraduate or graduate students.

**Excellent (Promotion to Principal Senior Lecturer):** In addition to the stated expectations for a rating of excellent in teaching above, successful candidates for promotion to the rank of principal senior lecturer will demonstrate growth as a teacher that also extends
into areas beyond those normally associated with one’s teaching responsibilities at GSU.

For example, candidates might engage in the following activities: production of a publication suitable for use in the kinds of classes that the faculty member teaches; production of an article or other publication on pedagogy; successful pursuit of internal and/or external funding for pedagogical initiatives; teaching awards/recognitions; student awards or other accomplishments of mentored students.

**Outstanding (Promotion to Senior Lecturer):** Candidates judged to be outstanding in instruction manifest an impact on students that is of the highest level. In excess of the expectations for a rating of excellent in teaching appropriate to their rank, as described above, outstanding teachers command a mastery of instruction in their area as evidenced by the following: successful pursuit of external funding for pedagogical initiatives; teaching awards/recognitions; student awards or other accomplishments of mentored students.

**Outstanding (Promotion to Principal Senior Lecturer):** In addition to the stated expectations for a rating of outstanding in teaching above, candidates for promotion to the rank of principal senior lecturer will be evaluated as outstanding if they have achieved more than one of the following: production of a publication suitable for use in the kinds of classes that the faculty member teaches; production of an article or other publication on pedagogy; successful pursuit of internal and/or external funding for pedagogical initiatives; teaching awards/recognitions; student awards or other accomplishments of mentored students.

**B. Service**

**Poor:** Candidates judged to be poor in service do not fulfill assigned service obligations and are not responsible citizens of the Department.

**Fair:** Candidates judged to be fair in service ineffectively fulfill assigned service obligations or are not responsible citizens of the Department.

**Good:** Candidates judged to be good in service do not always effectively fulfill assigned service obligations or are not consistently responsible citizens of the Department.

**Very Good:** Candidates will be judged to be very good in service if they conscientiously and effectively fulfill their assigned roles. Rather than merely attending committee meetings or holding the requisite advisement sessions, such faculty actively participate in a way that contributes concretely and constructively to the goals and mission of the Department, particularly in terms of the goal to achieve positive results for undergraduate and graduate students.

**Excellent:** Candidates will be judged to be excellent in service if they have been diligent
and highly effective as they carried out assigned responsibilities and contributed significantly to the goals and mission of the Department over a sustained period. The *excellent* candidate at this level normally exhibits a track record of providing assistance to Department advising efforts or to graduate teaching assistants and/or other non-tenure track instructors. In addition to continued growth in the areas of service described above, the candidate’s growth in service should also take one or more of the following forms: highly effective service as a Department program Chair or in a role with a similar level of responsibility; recognition as a campus leader; significant service to the profession or community.

**Outstanding:** In excess of the stated expectations to achieve a rating of *excellent* in service, candidates will be judged to be *outstanding* in service if they have not only fulfilled their assigned responsibilities but also taken considerable personal initiative to contribute concretely and constructively to the goals and mission of the Department. Faculty members judged to be *outstanding* in service will have been recognized by their peers, students, or university administrators as having established a long track record of success in improving campus life in measurable or noticeable ways. Highly effective service as a Department program Chair or in a role with a similar level of responsibility, as well as extraordinary service to the profession or community, are also indications of outstanding service.