

CATALOG

2022-2025

RESPECT | GRADUATE
SCHOOL

RESPECT GRADUATE SCHOOL

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1. Mission, Goals and Commitments

Our Mission

Respect Graduate School (RGS) is an academic institution which specializes in Islamic studies aiming at excellence in learning, teaching, and research. With genuine appreciation and study of traditional Islamic disciplines, RGS applies interdisciplinary approaches to respond to evolving opportunities and challenges of global social contexts. In addition to offering students and faculty an academically excellent and stimulating environment, RGS develops critical engagement with broader intellectual complexities and furnishes service toward social concerns.

Our Goals

1. To endow students with broad and deep knowledge in Islamic Studies from both traditional and modern perspectives.
2. To prepare students to conduct research in Islamic studies and related fields by providing them with the necessary analytical, critical, methodological, and interpretive skills.
3. To provide the broader society with life-long learning opportunities and meaningful services.

Our Commitments

Respect

The name of our school expresses our foundational commitments in the present and for the future. Respect for persons, ideas, and differences are essential for everything we do at our institution. Respect begins with relationships among students, faculty, and staff. We endeavor to center decisions, plans and actions on our students to stimulate their intellectual growth, personal well-being, social responsibility, and positive social interactions.

Respect Graduate School is to be an academic institution in which people of diverse backgrounds put their varying and at times opposing ideas into respectful dialogs. We are committed to providing equal educational opportunities to all persons in each program. Therefore, the school's policies, and programs will be administered without discrimination against any person based on actual or perceived race, color, sex, religion, ancestry, genetic information, national origin, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, familial status, marital status, age, veteran status, mental or physical disability, use of guide or support animals and/or mechanical aids, or any other basis protected by applicable federal, state, or local laws.

Graduate Level Education

Respect Graduate School provides a graduate level of education in Islamic Studies. RGS expects its faculty and students to engage successfully in the rigors of graduate level study and research, to be knowledgeable about traditional positions as well as recent developments in the relevant subject areas, and to communicate their understandings effectively. As freedom of expression is

essential in stimulating genuine thought, our school encourages the exchange and critique of ideas as fundamental to a graduate education. The aims of our graduate education include gaining broad and deep knowledge of the central fields of Islamic studies, demonstrating capabilities in research and further learning, and formulating positions and perspectives that withstand analysis and critical engagement.

2. Federal Policies and Respect Graduate School Mandates

Federal Policies

Nondiscrimination Policy

1. Respect Graduate School complies with all applicable federal, state, and local nondiscrimination laws in the administration of its educational programs, services, and employment relationships. We are committed to equality. Continued and responsible growth of our school results from enhancing and utilizing the abilities of all individuals to their fullest extent practicable within the framework of our environment. All employment decisions advance the principle of equal employment opportunity. In addition, personnel activities such as recruitment, interviewing, selection, promotion, training, benefits, transfers, lay-offs, demotion, and discipline are administered according to good business practices, the Equal Employment Opportunity Act of 1972, Executive Orders concerning equal employment opportunity, and Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) regulations and guidelines. All of which require that all persons have equal employment opportunities and strictly prohibit discriminatory and harassment practices.
2. The participation of women and minorities in management by employment and promotion will continue to be emphasized so that they may be given the opportunity to contribute to the success of the school. All employees of Respect Graduate School will continue to approach this responsibility with the sensitivity and human concern they have in the past.
3. The Vice President of Operations is charged with the responsibility to maintain the necessary programs, records, and reports to comply with all government regulations, and with the goals and objectives of our equal employment opportunity program. Any employee, student, or applicant of this school who feels that he or she has been discriminated against in employment or recruiting should contact the Vice President of Operations to pursue the proper discrimination complaint procedure.

Harassment Policy

1. Respect Graduate School strives to maintain an environment where all employees and students are free from harassment. The school will not tolerate harassment of any type. No employee or student will be discriminated or retaliated against for bringing alleged issues of harassment to the attention of the school, and employees and students are encouraged to do so. Employees of the school are encouraged to consult with the Vice President of Operations in determining if they have grounds for an EEOC or sexual harassment complaint. Students are encouraged to consult the Dean of Students or Dean of Academic Affairs for assistance. These individuals have been trained in issues involving EEOC and sexual harassment.

Respect Graduate School (RGS) Mandates

1. Students, administrators, and staff of RGS are free to express their views in private or public contexts, so long as this expression is conducted in a manner that is respectful of other (and possibly, opposing) views and without conveying an impression that these views might represent the official stance of RGS. However, only the President, the Board Chairperson, and the Director of Outreach may speak publicly on behalf of RGS. On the other hand, the faculty of RGS should not engage in any public advocacy that might disturb the educational mission of RGS, that is, an RGS instructor may not express positions in any form of public media that might compromise his or her pedagogical neutrality and integrity. The only acceptable means for an RGS faculty to express his or her views and positions are peer-refereed professional journals and conferences.
2. The RGS community is to be free from all forms of conduct that can be considered harassing, coercive, or disruptive. Sexual harassment, including sexual violence within the community, is immoral and unlawful, as is harassment based upon race, color, religion, national origin, disability, age, or membership in any other group.

3. Respect Graduate School Community Standards

Respect Graduate School Community Standards

Respect Graduate School has a Mission and Vision that maintains that all faculty, staff, and students are expected to be respectful members of the Lehigh Valley and Bethlehem communities and to conduct themselves in a way that always represents the institution in a positive fashion. Respect Graduate School is a welcoming community. We embrace and value the diversity of all members of the campus community as stated in the RGS statement on Non-Discrimination:

The Institution's policies, programs and staff benefits will be administered without discrimination against any person based on actual or perceived race, color, sex, religion, ancestry, genetic information, national origin, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, familial status, marital status, age, veteran status, mental or physical disability, use of guide or support animals and/or mechanical aids, or any other basis protected by applicable federal, state, or local laws.

Respect Graduate School takes its name seriously. Respect extends beyond the classroom to all relationships among the faculty, administration, staff, and RGS students. The school has set standards by which we believe the RGS community should operate. This expectation includes relationships with all members of the institution and in its relationships with the wider community as well as in scholarly contexts.

Our basic assumption is that the members of RGS are responsible, law-abiding adults who are engaged in professional and academic studies. The following policies are to be interpreted broadly to meet the spirit and intent of the document and should not be viewed as all-inclusive in nature. It is every individual's responsibility to acquaint himself or herself with these standards. RGS is committed to the fulfillment of the spirit and letter of these community standards.

Respect for Student Freedom of Expression

The following commitments are based on the relevant section of *Joint Statement on Rights and Freedoms of Students* (see American Association of University Professors, page 382). The Joint Statement was endorsed by the American Association of University Professors, United States Student Association, Association of American Colleges and Universities, National Association of Student Personnel Administrators, and the National Association of Women Deans and Counselors (see page 381).

1. In the classroom, advising, discussions and programs, RGS faculty and administrators are to encourage free discussion, inquiry, and expression. Student performance is to be evaluated solely on an academic basis, not on opinions or conduct in matters unrelated to academic standards; and
2. Respect Graduate School students are free to take reasoned exception to the data or views offered in any course of study and to reserve judgment about matters of

opinion, but they are responsible for learning the content of any course of study for which they are enrolled.

Respect for Individuals

Members of the RGS community are expected to conduct themselves in a manner that acknowledges and demonstrates respect for other individuals. Actions that harass, demean, or subject others to any form of physical threat, psychological stress, or humiliation are unacceptable. Basic honesty is expected at all times, both within academic pursuits and in all other interactions that take place elsewhere on campus, and in the wider community. While exercising respect for all individuals, community members are responsible for asserting their own rights and for communicating feelings and concerns to others by appropriate means.

Respect for Academic Honesty

Academic integrity is an essential and foundational RGS principle. RGS expects students and faculty to carry on their academic work honestly and fairly. In addition, they should neither hinder nor unfairly assist others in completing their work. The boundaries of what is or is not acceptable work may not always be clear; thus, if at any point in their academic work at the institution, they are uncertain about their responsibilities as scholars or about the propriety of a particular action, the instructor or the Dean of Academic Affairs should be consulted. However, as a general guideline, all students and faculty members should strictly refrain from any unacknowledged adoption, in a submitted work, of the ideas, words, or works of another.

Respect for Safety

It is expected that all members of the community will recognize their obligation to ensure the health and safety of all other members of the community. No individual is to endanger the health or safety of another. This extends from jokes and pranks to extreme situations involving firearms, other weapons, dangerous chemicals, explosives, fireworks, and fire. Failure to respect safety considerations includes, but is not limited to, tampering with, or abusing fire safety equipment, such as alarms, alarm protectors, sprinklers, or fire extinguishers.

Respect for Property

Every member of the RGS community is expected to show respect for property, both personal and institutional, on campus and within the surrounding Bethlehem community. Failure to respect property includes, but is not limited to:

1. The destruction of or damage to personal or institutional property
2. The misuse or unauthorized use of the institution's electronic information and telecommunications systems, including violations of the Computing Resources Policy
3. Unauthorized downloading of copyrighted materials
4. The use of telephone or cable service in an unauthorized manner

5. The misuse or unauthorized use of institutional or private property or equipment
6. The duplication of materials in an unauthorized manner
7. Possession, use or duplication of keys without authorization
8. Possession or use of a student identification other than one's own
9. The theft or misappropriation of property owned by the institution or by members of the community or their guests
10. Embezzlement or misuse of institutional or student organization funds

Respect for Alcohol and Drug Laws and Policies

Unlawful possession, use or distribution of illicit drugs or alcohol by students, staff, employees, as well as by contractors and workers within RGS buildings or on RGS premises, is prohibited and is a violation of local, state, and federal laws. RGS observes all local, state, and federal laws relating to drug and alcohol abuse, including referral to local authorities for arrest or prosecution. The courts will determine penalties for violations of these laws. In addition, violators may be subject to institutional action. The presence and use of alcoholic beverages and controlled substances on the RGS campus and its buildings are prohibited except when prescribed by a physician. Persons who are prescribed such medication are to provide the Dean of Students with an official copy of the physician's authorization. In addition, the use of tobacco products and vaping is prohibited in all RGS buildings.

Respect for Policies Concerning Weapons

RGS promotes a healthy, safe, and secure environment for all students, faculty, staff, and those who are on its premises. To that end RGS prohibits all students, faculty, staff, administrators, independent contractors, and other guests to possess or use firearms on its property, including all related buildings, grounds, and parking areas, and any RGS-owned or leased property, including vehicles, even by those who may possess a valid concealed carry or other permit. If RGS retains on-duty security officers, they may carry their service weapons, or other defensive devices which they are trained to use, when conducting official business on campus.

RGS prohibition of weapons includes but is not limited to firearms; ammunition; bombs; grenades; fireworks and other explosive devices; blackjacks and brass knuckles; knives; swords; razors; box cutters; daggers; and other cutting instruments the blades of which can be exposed in an automatic way by a switch, push-button, spring mechanism, or otherwise; stun guns and tasers; batons and clubs; paintball and pellet guns; and any other harmful instruments and devices. Any questions concerning a questionable item or any other questions about the campus weapons policy is to be directed to the Vice President of Operations.

Respect for a Safe and Productive Work Environment

RGS promotes a safe and productive work environment. Irresponsible and/or illegal behaviors include, but are not limited to, acts such as stealing; dishonesty; harassment of any kind; possession, use and sale of drugs and alcohol while on campus; working while under the influence of drugs or alcohol; physical violence; verbal insults; and deliberate violations of safety practices. The Institution will discipline faculty and staff members when they exhibit

behaviors that need correction. Discipline may include oral or written reprimands, demotion, suspension and/or termination, according to processes to be determined by the board on the recommendation of the faculty, Student Government Association, and administration.

Respect for the Judicial System and Legal Authority

All members of the RGS community are expected to follow all institutional regulations and policies, as well as all local, state, and federal laws. They also are expected to cooperate fully with all agents of the institution in the performance of their duties, to uphold the expectations of the community through their behavior, and to refuse to shield others from the consequences of their illicit actions.

4. President's Welcome

Dear Reader,

Respect Graduate School (RGS) is an academic institution which specializes in Islamic Studies. Our mission is to achieve excellence in teaching, learning and research, which naturally leads us to a continuous quest for betterment on the journey of acquiring knowledge. As Blondel says “we cannot stop at an object in the middle to make absolute truth of it without falling into the idolatry of the understanding; every premature affirmation is illegitimate.” Being aware of the opportunities and challenges of our global social contexts, we believe that an important way of achieving this excellence in knowledge is to engage both classical and interdisciplinary methodologies into our studies. With this model, we aim to be a contemporary academic institution with genuine appreciation and application of the traditional wisdom.

For us, the quest for excellence in knowledge is a defining feature not only for our students and faculty, but also for all humanity. Therefore, an academic institution should be able to open channels for the broader society by providing intellectual opportunities and services. In this regard, our name Respect indicates the value that guides our everyday practices. We believe that every individual and every being deserve respect regardless of their orientation and current position. Thus, we respectfully welcome the members of the broader society who sincerely like to be a part of our journey at Respect Graduate School.

Suleyman Eris

President

5. Greetings from the Dean of Academic Affairs

Dear Students,

I am thrilled to announce that RGS is expanding its rich and colorful educational offerings with the addition of a new Master of Arts in Islamic Studies (MAIS) program. At RGS, we have designed a comprehensive and thorough curriculum that allows our students to become well-versed in many fields of Islamic Studies in as little as two years. We are devoted to providing our students with learning skills and resources that will make them conversant with both analytical and traditional approaches to Islamic Studies. In addition to knowledge in the classical Islamic disciplines, students at RGS can gain skills for religious leadership through courses specifically designed for them.

As the Dean of Academic Affairs, I want to make it clear that RGS is not a place where students passively consume information. Rather, we recognize our students as growing scholars in the field who actively participate in scholarly conversations and are actively involved in contributing best practices and shared experiences.

Dr. Halim Calis

Dean of Academic Affairs

6. Program Overview

Master of Arts in Islamic Studies (MAIS)

The Master of Arts in Islamic Studies (MAIS) at Respect Graduate School offers the best of analytical Western scholarship in Islamic Studies. Students will have the opportunity to read from key texts of the classical Islamic disciplines and they are introduced to the classical and more recent theories and methods of the history of religions (also known as "religious studies"). They also study theories and methods of the rapidly growing field of interreligious studies, including the sub-fields of the theologies of religious pluralism and comparative theology.

The required courses are designed to provide with a strong background in traditional Islamic disciplines on one hand, and with an ability, on the other, to evaluate the tradition with an analytical mindset necessary for today's very fast changing world. The MAIS program at RGS fully prepares its graduates for the pursuance of several different goals, such as continuing their graduate education in Islamic studies or a related field, seeking training for a career in the ministry, conducting research, embarking on a profession in a nonprofit organization, or simply engaging in further learning for the sake of acquiring more knowledge.

The MAIS is a 36 credit-hour program. The program is divided into three key areas:

1. Introductory Courses – five (5) **required** courses
2. Selection of **one** Concentration/Cognate to be selected from four possible areas of concentration **or** 12 credit hours of electives
3. Final Research Project – three (3) **required** courses

A. Introductory Courses

All students are required to complete the following set of introductory core courses:

Course Number and Name	Credit Hours	Prerequisite
*MAIS 501 - Qur'anic (Classical) Arabic Reading Competence I: Morphology (<i>Sarf</i>)	3	Knowledge of Arabic Script
*MAIS 502 - Qur'anic (Classical) Arabic Reading Competence II: Grammar (<i>Nahw</i>)	3	MAIS 501
MAIS 503 - Introduction to Qur'anic Studies	3	None
MAIS 504 - Introduction to Hadith	3	None
MAIS 505 - Survey of Islamic Thought	3	None

***Important Note:** Students can be exempt from the required courses MAIS 501 and MAIS 502 if they pass the Exemption Exam. The Exam is available to students who already have fluency in classical language. Students who have passed an Exemption or Competency Examination at another institution must still take the RGS examination.

Students who do not pass the Exemption Exam must pass MAIS 501 and MAIS 502. If they do not pass the courses or the Exemption Exam by the time they complete the introductory courses, they may not become official candidates in the graduate program and will not be permitted to continue into a Concentration Area or Comprehensive Research Project/Paper.

The Introductory set of courses for the MAIS program at Respect Graduate School is significant to Islamic Studies and they are key to the program's excellence.

1. The most important Islamic sources including the Qur'an and Hadith, two foundational sources of Islam, are in Arabic. Therefore, without a thorough understanding of the Arabic language, it is impossible to appreciate the essence of Islamic Studies. We designed a highly effective teaching approach for Qur'anic Arabic with the goal of providing our students with the ability to understand Islamic texts in their original Arabic language in two semesters. To achieve this aim, we provide intense Qur'anic Arabic lessons that focus solely on reading skills.
2. The Qur'an and Hadith, which are widely believed to be the authoritative sources of Islamic knowledge and worldviews, play a significant role in the core study. Both are examined from a variety of perspectives, including their history, structure, content, and how they have been interpreted.

3. It is intriguing to observe how past and present Muslims generated such a diverse range of views based on their various readings of the Islamic scriptural sources, the Quran and the Hadith. Students are introduced to four intellectual traditions within Islam through a survey: Islamic Theology, Islamic Philosophy, Islamic Jurisprudence, and Islamic Spirituality. They then can learn more about each of these traditions by enrolling in elective self-contained courses based on their interests.

B. Concentration Areas or Electives

In order to complete the 36-credit hour requirement of the program, students must complete 12-credit hours of electives and/or independent studies. This should be done in consultation with their advisor. The 12-credit hour requirement may be satisfied through the selection of one of the four concentrations shown below.

Choosing a concentration area is optional. However, having a concentration can be significantly useful and effective for professional career growth. Because Islamic Studies is such a large field with so many subfields and subjects, a graduate program cannot possibly cover all concentration fields.

However, the student may choose the 12 credit hours freely from the list of all elective courses listed on page 23 or from any of the courses listed in the concentrations below.

1. Theoretical Disciplines (MAIS 509, 510, 511, 520)

Course Number and Name	Credit Hours	Prerequisite
MAIS 509: Islamic Theology (Kalam)	3	MAIS 505
MAIS 510: Islamic Philosophy	3	MAIS 505
MAIS 511: Islamic Spirituality	3	MAIS 505
MAIS 520: Islamic Ethics	3	None

2. Practical Disciplines (Pick four from MAIS 512, 513, 514, 520, 521, 522, 527)

Course Number and Name	Credit Hours	Prerequisite
MAIS 512: Islamic Jurisprudence (Fiqh and Usul al-Fiqh)	3	MAIS 505
MAIS 513: Islam and Contemporary Issues	3	MAIS 505
MAIS 514: Islam and Gender Issues	3	MAIS 505
MAIS 520: Islamic Ethics	3	None
MAIS 521: Skills for Islamic Ministry	3	None
MAIS 522: Introduction to Islamic Banking and Finance	3	None
MAIS 527: Islam and Global Politics	3	None

3. Historical Disciplines (MAIS 515, 516, 517, 526, 529)

Course Number and Name	Credit Hours	Prerequisite
MAIS 515: History of Islamic Civilization I: From Beginning Until Pre-Modern	3	None
MAIS 516: History of Islamic Civilization II: From Pre-Modern Until Today	3	MAIS 515
MAIS 517: Sira: The Life of the Prophet	3	None
MAIS 526: Science and Civilization in Islam	3	None
MAIS 529: History of Christian-Muslim Relations	3	None

4. Intercultural and Dialogical Disciplines (Pick four from MAIS 518, 519, 521, 524, 525, 529)

Course Number and Name	Credit Hours	Prerequisite
MAIS 518: Islam in America	3	None
MAIS 519: World Religions	3	None
MAIS 521: Skills for Islamic Ministry	3	None
MAIS 524: Dialogue in the World of Diversity	3	None
MAIS 525: CPE: Clinical Pastoral Education	3	None
MAIS 529: History of Christian-Muslim Relations	3	None

Additional Electives:

MAIS 523: Reading Islamic Texts in Classical Arabic (3 credit hours - Prerequisite: MAIS 501 and 502)

MAIS 528: The Near East (3 credit hour - Prerequisite: None)

MAIS 530: Independent Study (3 credit hour - Prerequisite: None)

C. The Final Research Project

Studying in our MA program entails more than just reading and learning about Islamic Studies. Researching and presenting the results in scholarly writing is an equally significant element of the study. As a result, the curriculum provides our students with the essential research and writing abilities. They have the opportunity to practice these abilities by writing essays for each course under the supervision of the professors.

In addition, students must write a comprehensive research paper to fulfill a 3-credit hour requirement to complete the program. They should ideally write their paper on the field of concentration that they have chosen or set of electives and give an oral defense of the paper before it is officially submitted. While students may begin their research early in the program, they must complete their research paper during the last semester of their studies.

Course Number and Name	Credit Hours	Prerequisite
MAIS 506: Research Techniques in Islamic Studies and Resources	3	MAIS 501 and 502
MAIS 507: Theories and Methods in the Study of Religion	3	None
MAIS 508: Research Paper	3	All required and elective courses.

7. Admissions and Application Procedures

Admission Requirements

Students seeking admission to the Master of Arts in Islamic Studies (MAIS) program are to meet the following requirements:

1. A bachelor's degree or its equivalent, preferably with a concentration in the humanities or social sciences.
2. A minimum GPA of 3.0 on a 4.00 scale during the last two years of their bachelor's degree. Applicants who do not meet the GPA requirement may be required to take the Graduate Record Examination (GRE) and normally will be expected to score a minimum of 600 on the combined verbal and analytical sections.
3. Applicants from non-English speaking countries will be required to submit a score of not less than 80 on the computer-based Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL), or by an equivalent test.
4. Students who do not meet the GPA, GRE, or TOEFL standards outlined above may be granted provisional admission to the program at the discretion of a special Faculty Review Committee.
5. A personal statement that includes the applicant's educational background, work/professional experience, and reasons for applying to MAIS program.

Special Application Cases

RGS faculty and administration are aware that there may be extraordinary circumstances in which official transcripts of undergraduate and graduate studies may not be available. In such cases a copy of a diploma or degree may be acceptable. However, such students must request a meeting with a faculty advisor to discuss possible provisional admission.

General Matters

1. Prospective applicants are advised to visit RGS to discuss with faculty and students their potential programs. The Deans welcome such opportunities.
2. Applicants interested in transferring credits from previous graduate level studies may request up to 9.0 credits, provided they fit into the requirements of the program. Graduate coursework taken at another institution with a grade of B or better may be included in the MAIS program with the approval of the Dean of Academics.
3. Applications are considered incomplete until all documents are received by the Registrar's Office. Applicants who complete the application procedure will receive a

letter from the Dean of Academic Affairs regarding the decision by the Admissions Committee in a timely manner.

NOTE: Applicants who plan to apply for the Financial Aid Program are to follow the procedure at the Financial Aid page on the RGS website. Requests for scholarships and tuition discounts are to be made when the person submits the Application of Admission.

Note that **requests to the Financial Aid Program involve a procedure in addition to the application process** to be accepted to the MAIS program.

Application Procedure for Degree Students

Persons who plan to enroll in the MAIS program as a degree student are required to submit the following documents:

1. Degree Student Application Form that includes a non-refundable \$50 application fee
2. Two letters of recommendation: one preferably from a current or former instructor. Letters of recommendation must be submitted by the recommenders. The application form asks for the email addresses of recommenders. This generates an email to recommenders containing a link to a recommendation form.
3. A personal statement outlining the following points:
 - Educational background of the applicant
 - Goals for applying to MAIS program
4. Official transcripts of undergraduate and graduate studies. If such transcripts are unavailable, a copy of a diploma or degree may be acceptable under egregious circumstances.
5. Applicants who are not native speakers of English or who have not received a higher education degree in an English-speaking country are required to submit a valid TOEFL IBT score of no less than 80.
6. Students who do not meet the GPA, GRE, or TOEFL standards outlined above may be granted provisional admission to the program at the discretion of a special Faculty Review Committee.

Upon completion of the application, the applicant will receive an email stating the status of their application and the expected period of time for a final decision.

Application Procedure for Non-Degree Students

Persons who plan to register for courses offered by RGS without seeking the MAIS degree are required to submit a Non-Degree Student Application Form. Please note that non-degree students are responsible for completing the requirements of the courses they take, and they receive credit for courses when they finish them. Non-Degree Student Application Form includes the following items:

1. Non-refundable \$50 application fee

2. A personal statement outlining the following points:
 - Educational background of the applicant
 - Purpose of taking courses at RGS
3. Official transcripts of undergraduate and graduate studies. If such transcripts are unavailable, a copy of a diploma or degree may be acceptable under egregious circumstances.

Once the application has been submitted, the applicant will be notified regarding their application with further instructions if necessary.

If non-degree candidates decide to become degree candidates, they are to complete the balance of their applications (letters of recommendation), update their personal statements and present their applications to the Admissions Committee. If admitted to degree status, the course credits already earned will be applied to their programs.

Application Procedure for Auditors

Auditors normally are to provide the Registrar with a transcript or other appropriate evidence (e.g., a diploma) indicating they have a bachelor's degree or its equivalent. Auditors are not required to fulfil the course requirements and they receive neither grades nor credit for the courses. A transcript filed with the Registrar will indicate the designation AU. The designation is given for auditors who have attended at least one third of the class sessions. They are expected to do any readings and may participate in class discussions. The following costs, including access to the RGS Library, are:

- Each Course: \$400
- Alumni: \$300
- Seniors (60+) \$300

Auditors may apply online. The number of auditors enrolled in each class is limited and is also subject to instructor approval. Please contact our Registrar if you have any questions via email at registrant@respectgs.us or you may contact by phone at (610) 419-1751.

Note: The RGS administration will consider this limitation on a case-by-case basis as applications are evaluated.

8. Graduation Requirements

Graduate Program Requirements include the following Program Objectives and Student Learning Outcomes:

Program Educational Objectives

1. **Information Literacy and Communication:** Access and evaluate information critically, be willing to further enhance their education, being able to work individually and/or in diverse teams, having communication skills, and possessing high academic integrity.
2. **Religious Literacy:** Demonstrate an understanding of the core tenets and practices of the Islamic religious traditions and the various roles in both historical and contemporary cultural and inter-religious contexts.
3. **Methodological Proficiency:** Understand a variety of theoretical and methodological approaches to the study of Islam and Religious Studies generally and to incorporate these as appropriate in their research and writing.
4. **Global Citizenship:** Demonstrate an awareness of the diversity of religious ideas and practices and appreciate the ways in which respect for diversity can inform and encourage global citizenship.

Student Learning Outcomes

1. Demonstrate a broad understanding of the world's religious traditions, teachings, and practices.
2. Demonstrate a broad understanding of the Islamic traditions.
3. Demonstrate an understanding of the Quran and approaches to its study.
4. Demonstrate an understanding of the Hadith and approaches to its study.
5. Demonstrate the ability to interpret primary Muslim religious texts in Arabic and English.
6. Demonstrate the ability to think critically and to write independently about religious and theological issues.

Early in a student's final semester, the Program of Study must be submitted. A Diploma Request Card must also be submitted at that time. Students seeking to complete the program for Master of Arts in Islamic Studies (MAIS) are to meet the following requirements:

General Requirements

1. A minimum of 36 credits of graduate work beyond a bachelor's degree is required.
2. The student must have a cumulative GPA of at least 2.75 in those courses to be credited towards the MAIS degree.
3. No more than 6.0 credits of independent study may be included in the MAIS program.
4. To maintain full-time status in RGS, students must register for 9.0 credits per semester. Part-time students must complete at least 3 credits per academic year.

5. Core Courses

The following courses are the core courses of the program, and all students must include them in their program of study:

- MAIS 501 Qur'anic (Classical) Arabic Reading Competence I: Morphology (*Sarf*)
 - MAIS 502 Qur'anic (Classical) Arabic Reading Competence II: Grammar (*Nahw*)
 - MAIS 503 Introduction to Qur'anic Studies
 - MAIS 504 Introduction to Hadith
 - MAIS 505 Survey of Islamic Thought
 - MAIS 506 Research Techniques in Islamic Studies and Resources
 - MAIS 507 Theories and Methods in Study of Religion
 - MAIS 508 Research Paper
6. The minimum passing grade for the required courses of the program is 2.7 (B-). Any student scoring below this grade must repeat the course.
 7. Late in the first semester, students who wish to complete a concentration, must fill out a preliminary program of study and choose their concentration for the rest of their study.

Computation of Grades

At the completion of a course, each student is assigned a letter grade based upon the appropriate scale below: A = 4.0 (94-100); A- = 3.7 (90-93); B+ = 3.3 (87-89); B = 3.0* (83-86); B- = 2.7 (80-82); C = 2.0 (73-79); F = Failure (72 and below).

Exemptions

Students can be exempt from the courses of MAIS 501 (Qur'anic (Classical) Arabic Reading Competence I: Morphology) and MAIS 502 (Qur'anic (Classical) Arabic Reading Competence II: Grammar) if they pass the Exemption Exams as described under "Program of Study" in the Catalog.

Transfer of Credits

1. A maximum of 9 transfer credits of graduate coursework related to the field of Islamic Studies taken at another institution with a grade of B- or better may be included in the MAIS program.
2. A maximum of 12 credits taken at RGS before being officially admitted to the program may be included in the MAIS program provided the student has scored a grade of B- or better.

9. Registration

Respect Graduate School reserves the right to change its admission, registration, or financial requirements, as necessary. Every effort will be made to provide advanced information regarding such changes. Attendance at RGS is a privilege, not a right. By registering, the student concedes to the school the right to require his or her withdrawal, if at any time it is deemed necessary to safeguard the ideals of character and scholarship to secure compliance with regulations.

Effective Catalog

Graduate students are subject to the course requirements contained in the catalog that are in effect when they are accepted by Respect Graduate School. Students may request to follow the course requirements in the most recent catalog. Students who interrupt their schooling for more than one calendar year must reapply to the school and are subject to the requirements in the most recent catalog.

Adding and Dropping a Course

Students may add a course with their advisor's approval up to the second week of the semester by completing an Add/Drop form and submitting it to the Registrar's Office. In the third week of the semester students can add a course with the approval of both the advisor and course instructor.

Withdrawal from a Course

Students may withdraw from courses at any time before a course ends. The student will consult with his or her academic advisor prior to withdrawing from the course. There are financial and academic consequences to withdrawing from a course. Note the following:

Academic Consequences

- Withdrawal before 25% of classes occur: None
- Withdrawal after 25% of classes occur and up to and including 50% of classes: A "W" will be posted to the student's transcript. A "W" has no effect on the student's grade point average.
- Withdrawal after 50% of classes and up to and including the last class: Faculty member will be asked to assign a grade of either "WF" (Withdraw Fail) or "WP" (Withdraw Pass). A "WF" is counted in the student's grade point average as a failure. A "WP" has no effect on the student's grade point average.

Financial Consequences

- Students who withdraw from a course before 25% of the classes have taken place are entitled to a full refund of any money that they may have remitted.

- Students who withdraw after 25% of a class has taken place are charged for the full tuition of that course.
- Refunds to the student will be made within 30 days of the date that the school determines the student has officially withdrawn.

A student who needs to withdraw for health reasons may petition the Dean of Academic Affairs for a waiver of the above penalties and must provide documentation from a medical professional. A student who fails to complete the requirements of the class receives a failure. Notification of intent to withdraw must be made in writing to the Registrar's Office. Failure to attend classes does not constitute a withdrawal. Withdrawal after a class stops meeting is not possible without a review by the Academic Policy Committee. However, a student with a medical reason may petition the Academic Policy Committee for a "WP" and be granted a "WP" if the course's instructor agrees that the student was passing at the time of withdrawal.

Leave of Absence

Students who find it necessary to interrupt their planned program of study due to serious life difficulties (medical, family, employment, etc.) may request a leave of absence by submitting a petition through his or her faculty advisor to the Academic Policy Committee. This petition should include reasons for seeking leave and a schedule for resuming study. When the Committee has decided, the student will receive a letter informing her or him of the decision. Leaves of Absence are not granted for more than one academic year.

Students who have not registered for classes for four consecutive academic semesters and have not been granted a Leave of Absence will be removed from the program with notification. A student who has been inactive within this period may reactivate by petitioning to the Academic Policy Committee and paying any unpaid tuition or fees within 30 days.

Absentee Policy

Students are expected to maintain regular class attendance and to be prepared through completing assigned readings and other requirements to be able to participate in discussions during the class sessions. Each faculty member shall state his or her attendance policy in the course's syllabus. Students who miss a class session should contact the instructor to plan to complete any coursework.

Probation or Dismissal from the School

A cumulative grade point average of less than 2.75 may result in academic probation or dismissal.

10. Costs, Fees, and Financial Assistance

Tuition and Fees

Per-Semester Tuition

Tuition per credit hour: \$500 (normally classes are 3 credits each)

Per-Semester Fees

Administrative Fee: \$100

Other Semester Fees

Late Payment Fee: \$30

One-Time Student Fees

Library and Student Support Fee: \$25 per course

Technology Fee: \$50 per course

Audit Fees

Each Course: \$400

Alumni: \$300

Seniors (60+): \$300

Student Financial Aid

Every year, a select number of academic scholarships will be made available to full-time degree students of the Master of Arts in Islamic Studies Program (MAIS). The scholarships are merit-based and the decision for the applications will be made prior to each Fall Semester. A student must register for at least 9.0 credits per semester to maintain full-time status at RGS.

Application Procedure

Students applying for financial aid are required to submit an online financial aid application form with a statement of career goals explaining their educational background and professional objectives, and how this degree and financial aid will help them achieve their goals.

All applicants, after completing their application process, will receive a letter from the Dean of Academic Affairs regarding the financial aid decision. Applications may be submitted through the RGS website.

11. Course Descriptions

MAIS 501 - Qur'anic (Classical) Arabic Reading Competence I: Morphology (Sarf)

This course is the first part of a two-semester sequence. Arabic I and II will enable the student to read the Qur'an and classical texts by providing the tools that unlock the Arabic language – *sarf* (morphology or the study of the word) and *nahw* (grammar or the study of the sentence). This first part focuses on morphology. By accessing the basic structure of the word –the triliteral root– students can then go on to deciphering meanings based upon standard structures associated with the addition of “extra” letters to the triliteral root. Besides the derivative verbs and nouns, the students will also learn about non-derivative nouns and dependent words such as prepositions. A great deal of examples, assignments, and practices in the course enhances students' linguistic skill and competency in classical Arabic. Thus, the course provides a unique educational experience by following the traditional style of learning corroborated by modern techniques.

* Prerequisite: Knowledge of Arabic Script

MAIS 502 - Qur'anic (Classical) Arabic Reading Competence II: Grammar (Nahw)

This course focuses on grammar (*nahw*: grammar or the study of the sentence). Students will learn how the Arabic words function in a sentence. Thus, this course will enable the students to read and understand the Qur'an and classical texts. Through the course, the students will also be able to strengthen their knowledge of morphology they learned in Qur'anic Arabic I and to enrich their vocabulary. The course then will give them the opportunity of putting their theoretical knowledge into practice.

* Prerequisite: MAIS 501

MAIS 503 - Introduction to Qur'anic Studies

This course is designed to introduce the students to the Qur'an, both as the primary Islamic Scripture and as a richly complex and multi-layered text which has invited a variety of different hermeneutical approaches, both from within and outside of Muslim faith contexts. The course proceeds with a dual focus. The first focus involves familiarizing students with the content of Qur'anic teaching by direct engagement with the “major themes” of the Qur'an. The second focus involves familiarizing students with both classical Muslim exegetical and hermeneutical approaches to the Qur'an (especially the “sciences” of intra-textual interpretation, abrogation, and context-of-revelation criticism) as well as modern secular approaches to questions regarding the provenance, nature, compilation, canonization, and interpretation of the Qur'an. Specific attention will be given throughout to introducing students to the major textual resources available for Qur'an study, including the classical and contemporary Muslim commentary literature.

MAIS 504 - Introduction to Hadith

The course is designed as a comprehensive introduction to the study of the prophetic traditions as a significant branch of Islamic studies. The course begins with a survey of the history of the development of the canonical collections of hadith literature, with an eye both to traditional Muslim understandings of this process as well as to Western approaches. Special attention is given to the methodologies of classical Muslim hadith criticism for the purposes of authentication and the concomitant “sciences of hadith” developed for these purposes and to how these methods compare and contrast with contemporary secular approaches to hadith criticism. The course then proceeds to explore the function of hadith in Muslim religious scholarship, especially jurisprudence, Qur’anic exegesis, and theology before moving on to cover the major trends in contemporary Muslim hadith criticism. Throughout the course, students are introduced to the major tools of hadith studies to facilitate further study and research in this area.

MAIS 505 - Survey of Islamic Thought

The overall aim of this course is to encourage students to appreciate and critically engage the breadth and depth of the issues and genres that comprise the classical heritage of Islamic thought and literature. It surveys the most significant traditions of Islamic thought and literature. The course begins with an introduction to two of the most important extra-Qur’anic genres of Islamic literature: the so-called sira-maghazi tradition, and the hadith collections. It will then proceed to review other important trends in Islamic thought, including the juridical, theological, mystical, literary, and poetic.

MAIS 506 - Research Techniques in Islamic Studies and Resources

Research Techniques introduces students to the various modes of research and critical thinking both in Religious and Islamic Studies. The basic skills and processes associated with developing research questions, reviewing relevant literature, conducting research by using efficient tools and time management techniques are discussed. Qualitative and quantitative research methods are reviewed. The subject also covers key principles in academic writing, including referencing and citation methods. Students will be encouraged to develop their own original ideas and formulate research proposals that demonstrate their understanding of applied research. The course provides opportunities to apply various research methods to students’ own areas of interest, and to write for publication in Religious and Islamic Studies.

The course also provides students with the requisite research methods and the core genres of Islamic Studies such as biography, history, prophetic tradition (hadith), and Qur’anic exegesis. It examines a number of the great themes and personalities of the Islamic intellectual traditions with emphasis on theological, legal, mystical, and philosophical thought. The course material will focus on a substantial amount of Arabic text; therefore, the course requires Arabic proficiency.

* Prerequisite: MAIS 501 and MAIS 502

MAIS 507 - Theories and Methods in the Study of Religion

The course focuses on the nature and function of religion, which emerged in the West beginning with the Enlightenment and continues today in the Western academic scholarship. The course will include the contributions of major thinkers whose work has profoundly shaped the analysis of religion in the Western scholarship. Students will be encouraged: to appreciate the insight and creativity of leading thinkers; to map the ways in which various theories and methods either complement or conflict with one another; to evaluate both the strengths and weaknesses of the theories; to determine which elements of these theories they might integrate into their own critical thinking about religion; and to discuss the applicability of such theories to teaching about religion in more popular settings.

MAIS 508 - Research Paper

Students have the opportunity to write a large research paper independently based on the investigation of a topic of interest under the supervision of a member of the RGS faculty. The Research Paper must be prepared in accordance with the RGS instructions for the preparation of research papers and must be approved by the student's advisor. Students should also give an oral defense of the paper.

MAIS 509 Islamic Theology (Kalam)

The course introduces students to the major themes and figures of a primary non-jurisprudential discipline of classical Islamic thought: Philosophical Theology (Ar. Kalam). The course covers the period between the 2nd/8th and 8th/14th centuries, and surveys theology. Students will have the opportunity to familiarize themselves with both the content and methodologies employed in some of the significant controversies and debates that arose among Muslim intellectual circles and schools of the dominant theological discourses of the Late Antique and medieval Mediterranean and West Asian world.

* Prerequisite: MAIS 505

MAIS 510 Islamic Philosophy

This course examines the emergence and the evolution of traditional Islamic philosophy from 8th to 14th centuries. It focuses on the following key topics of Islamic philosophy: God, cosmos, God's relation with creation, knowledge, and the human good. The views of important Muslim philosophers such as al-Kindi, al-Farabi, Ibn Sina, al-Ghazali, and Ibn Rushd will be discussed during the course sessions.

* Prerequisite: MAIS 505

MAIS 511 - Islamic Spirituality

The course is a general introduction to the nature and history of Islamic spirituality through an exploration of the diverse traditions of Muslim mystical piety. It begins with an examination of the roots of Muslim spirituality in the Qur'an and Sunna and then moves to a historical and contextual analysis of the emergence of early Muslim asceticism; the development of the spiritual manual and Sufi didactic/apologetic treatise genres; controversy over the relationship between the Shari`a and the spiritual path (Ar. tariqa); mere Muslim asceticism versus Sufism; tensions between "ecstatic" and "sober" expressions of mystical devotion (i.e., sakr v. sahw); the role of Sufism in classical Islamic epistemology; and the evolution of institutional Sufism and its many dimensions. The course will conclude with reflections on the role of Sufism in contemporary Islamic renewal and reform movements, as well as the recent quasi-sectarian developments in the relationship between Sufism and neo-Salafism.

* Prerequisite: MAIS 505

MAIS 512 - Islamic Jurisprudence (*Fiqh* and *Usul al-Fiqh*)

This course introduces students to Islamic law and legal theories. It first discusses the history of formation and development of Classical Islamic law and its sources. It also examines the implementation of Islamic law as a practice. The course then proceeds to discuss the historical development of Islamic legal theories through two major aspects of legal theory: Fuqaha and Mutakallimun. A significant part of the course deals with the contemporary approaches and challenges to Islamic Law and developments in Islamic legal thinking in modern times.

* Prerequisite: MAIS 505

MAIS 513 - Islam and Contemporary Issues

This course addresses contemporary challenges confronting modern Muslims through a critical examination of controversial issues such as jihad, extremism, fundamentalism, and approaches to the Shari'ah. The course also includes some other important debates such as women's rights, political Islamism, environmental issues, and bioethical debates. The course aims to explore different reactions and responses of Modern Muslim people and groups to local and global developments.

* Prerequisite: MAIS 505

MAIS 514 - Islam and Gender Issues

The course surveys topics related to Islam and gender issues based on the Islamic primary texts and secondary literature. We analyze Islamic texts and consider the historical and cultural state of women's intellectual activities since the beginning of Islam, including Qur'anic narratives about women. Due consideration is given to the biographies and works on Muslim women

figures, scholars, and Sufi mystics. Sources and issues related to women in Islam will be analyzed from the perspective of its relation to the modern world.

* Prerequisite: MAIS 505

MAIS 515 - History of Islamic Civilization I: From Beginning Until Pre-Modern

This course examines the history of Muslim communities and civilization from the death of Prophet Muhammad until 19th century. Rightly Guided Caliphs, the Umayyad Dynasty, the Abbasid Dynasty, the Ottoman Empire, and other Islamic sultanates will be explored. The major historical events, as well as the intellectual, economic, social, and cultural components of Muslim civilization, will be highlighted. Muslims' contribution to science and civilization and the decline of the Muslim world will also be discussed.

MAIS 516 - History of Islamic Civilization II: From Pre-Modern Until Today

This course looks at the history of Muslim societies from the nineteenth century to today. It critically examines the important events, figures, and movements. The course provides students with a broad understanding of the political and social changes brought about by the fall of the Ottoman, Mughal, and Safavid empires, as well as the rise of national states. The consequences of Western Colonialism and Orientalism on the Muslim world in theological, political, legal, cultural, and spiritual areas will be discussed. Special emphasis will be put on Islamic Revival and Reform movements and their important representatives such as Rifa'a Tahtawi, Khayr al-Din Pasha, Jamal al-Din Afghani, Ahmad Khan, and Muhammad Abduh.

MAIS 517 - *Sira*: The Life of the Prophet

The course introduces students to the life of the Prophet Muhammad from both the perspective of its 1st/7th-century socio-historical context in the Arabian Peninsula, as well as from the perspective of the significance of the narrative of the Prophet's life for Muslims and non-Muslims living in contemporary socio-historical contexts. The course seeks to cultivate in students a critical awareness of how to relate and apply the narrative of the Prophet to the present context with intellectual and spiritual integrity. Sources include: the classical *sira* redaction of Ibn Hisham/Ibn Ishaq; contemporary biographies of the Prophet written by both Muslims and non-Muslims; documentaries and docudramas focusing on the life of the Prophet; and a variety of sermons attempting to extract lessons for contemporary living from episodes in the life of the Prophet.

MAIS 518 - Islam in America

This course will review the history of Muslim communities in North America, including the arrival of Muslim slaves from Africa during the "Middle Passage," and waves of immigration throughout the 19th/13th and 20th/14th centuries. Special attention will be given to the particular

role of religious communities within American civil society and the particular challenges faced by African American and "Immigrant" Muslim communities.

MAIS 519 - World Religions

This course will cover the content of the main world religions. We will consider Asian cyclical religions and the Western linear religions in their historical and cultural contexts. Given the realities of the increasing multi-faith character of North American society, individuals and congregations find themselves interacting with people and groups from a variety of different faiths. Visits to the sacred spaces of traditions other than Islam should be anticipated. The course will provide a chance for students to reexamine the self in the mirror of the other.

MAIS 520 - Islamic Ethics

This course aims to discuss the main Islamic ethical theories. It will cover *fiqh*, *kalam*, *falsafa* and *tasawwuf* and give a holistic picture for understanding the multidimensional nature of Islamic ethics. For a better understanding of the theories in question, there will be comparisons from the ethical theories of Western philosophy. At the end of the course, students examine some practical problems in the contemporary world, and apply the theories we have covered to them. We will survey the discussions concerning the role of the Qur'an and Tradition in shaping ethical theories, the source of morality, the moral traits of human beings and how to develop them, as well as the interrelation between ethical teaching and other disciplines that examine social and natural phenomena.

MAIS 521 - Skills for Islamic Ministry

The course aims to provide professional track students with the skill to be competent and growing leaders as imams, chaplains, counselors, financial advisors dialogue center staff and leaders, as well as spokespersons for Islam in inter-religious settings. As there are special needs for hospital and prison chaplains, the course seeks to provide guidance that will lead to accreditation by professional organizations.

MAIS 522 - Introduction to Islamic Banking and Finance

The course will give students a clear understanding of the financial system in which modern Islamic finance operates. The course's focus is on developing understandings of how Shariah rules including those concerning interest (*riba*) are applied in financial operations, products, and environments. Rules derived from historical *fiqh* rulings as well as specific faith based moral imperatives are included in modern Islamic financial concerns and procedures. Since several countries have systemized rules to allow the emergence of robust domestic Islamic banking and capital markets activities, participants will learn how and why Islamic financial products are structured to meet certain government, business, and consumer financial needs. They will learn key rules, the means to layer structures or to analyze why complex fiscal products are either successful or controversial. These products will be given context: banking or investment

banking, specific countries, and generic applications. The course will consider key standard setting bodies and their rulings such as the Accounting and Auditing Organization for Islamic Financial Institutions, the International Islamic Financial Markets, as well the Malaysian, Bahraini and American regulators. To promote understanding, the course is neutral in the analysis and application of different standards, systems, and styles. The course will follow practical case studies drawn from Muslim majority and minority markets, from conventional and Islamic banks, and environments with and without clear regulations.

MAIS 523 - Reading Islamic Texts in Classical Arabic

In this course, students will read Arabic texts from major Islamic disciplines such as Tafsir, Hadith, Fiqh and Aqaid under the supervision of instructors. As a result, they will be able to put their reading skills learned in the Classical Arabic classes to use.

* Prerequisite: MAIS 501 and MAIS 502

MAIS 524 - Dialogue in the World of Diversity

This course examines religious diversity in both religiously pluralistic societies such as the United States and largely religiously uniform societies such as India and Turkey. The course will address questions of how Muslims have historically and in the present engaged religious pluralism in both theory and practice, particularly with respect to Judaism, Christianity, Hinduism, and Buddhism. It will also examine recent developments in selected Islamist political theologies of violent resistance and exclusion, as well as recent developments in Islamic theologies of religious pluralism and the latter's relationship to Islamic principles of social justice and participatory government. Particular attention will be given to efforts that provide for inter-religious dialogue, understanding and cooperation in local communities, national organizations, and international arenas.

MAIS 525 - Clinical Pastoral Education (CPE)

CPE is an off-campus course in supervised ministry in inter-religious settings accredited by the Association for Clinical Pastoral Education. The centers include hospitals, correctional institutions, nursing homes and other agencies. Normally students are to apply for admission to a program at a center six months in advance of starting the program. The course is aimed at developing the student's self-awareness, learning ministry skills, and theological reflection on the human condition.

MAIS 526 - Science and Civilization in Islam

This course aims to give a holistic picture of the origins, accomplishments, and the so-called "decline" of Islamic Civilization by tracing the theoretical perspectives behind it. The focus is on the medieval institutions of Islamic civilization, the various sciences and arts that have been

practiced by Muslims, the background philosophies, interactions with Western civilization and the *perceived* challenges that modern science poses to the Islamic faith.

MAIS 527 - Islam and Global Politics

This course explores the interaction of Islam and democracy, civil society, and globalization in Muslim majority societies. On the basis of an anthropological approach to Islam, we recognize Islam's internal diversity while it adapts to and resists different global contexts. Consideration is given to the roles of competing Muslim authorities, such as traditional scholars, Sufi orders, and revivalist movements in diverse settings involving social change, ethnic conflict, and economic development. Among the areas of the Islamic world, discussed are India, Turkey, and the Near East.

MAIS 528 - The Near East

The course introduces students to the study of the Near East in the light of broader religious, historical, cultural, and political perspectives. Special attention will be paid to the role of religions in the region. Transformation of Islam/religion in different political settings is a significant aspect of the course. Beginning with a general overview of Near East history, politics and religion, the course moves to examining the relationship of religion and politics in four major Near Eastern countries: Egypt, Iran, Turkey, and Israel.

MAIS 529 - History of Christian-Muslim Relations

This course will review the historical encounter between Muslims and Christians since the 7th/1st century up until the end of the Ottoman Empire in the 20th/14th century. Special attention will be given to the texts written by each faith community of and about the other, as well as particular social-political contexts with the Near East.

MAIS 530 - Independent Study

Student may explore a topic of interest in depth as it relates to the field of Islamic Studies. This is an individual, independent study based upon a plan submitted by the student. Permission to conduct an independent study is dependent upon the consent of a supervising instructor and the Dean of Academic Affairs.

* This course is offered irregularly.

12. Faculty

Faculty

Aslan Adnan, Professor

B.A. Erciyes University, Islamic Studies
M.A. University of London, Islamic Studies
Ph.D. University of Lancaster, Philosophy of Religion

Specializations: Philosophy of Religion, Ethics, Critical Thinking, Logic, World Religions, Religious Studies

Dr. Adnan ASLAN was born in Turkey, educated in Turkey and England. He received his MA degree at the Department of History and Philosophy of Religion, at Kings College London, in 1990, and his Ph.D. degree in Religious Studies at Lancaster University, England in 1995. He published several scholarly articles and books both in English and Turkish generally in the field of philosophy of religion. His research interests include the issue of religious pluralism, inter-religious dialogue, Islam and modernity, Islamic Philosophy, Ethics, World Religions, Perennial Philosophy, Interfaith Relations as well as the problem of evil. He worked at the Center for Islamic Studies (ISAM) in 1996-2010. He also worked as a professor of philosophy at the Department of Philosophy in 29 Mayıs University in Istanbul in 2010-2011. He served as the Dean of Faculty of Humanities and Social Science in Süleyman Şah University in Istanbul, for five years. He was an adjunct professor at the Department of Philosophy at Notre Dame University, Holy Cross College and Southwestern Michigan College.

Bilal Sert, Assistant Professor

B.A. Gazi University, History
M.S. Gazi University, Education
Ph.D. Texas Woman's University, Sociology

Specializations: Race, Ethnicity, International Migration, Sociology of Religion, Sociological Theory, Social Data Analysis, Research Method, Mediaeval Ages History

Bilal Sert received his doctoral degree from Texas Woman's University in Sociology. His research interests include race, ethnicity, international migration, Muslims in the West, immigrant communities of the US, and identity issues for Muslim youth in the US. His academic work resulted in a book entitled "Turkish Immigrants in the Mainstream of American Life: Theories of International Migration," published in 2018. He has also authored several book chapters and peer-reviewed articles on international migration, migrant adaptation, and the sociology of terrorism. Dr. Sert has extensive experience in teaching at various institutions and colleges and presented at panels, conferences, and seminars. He taught sociology courses at Texas Woman's University, the University of Texas of the Permian Basin, Prairie View A & M University, and Collin College.

Mir Sadiq Ansari, Assistant Professor

B.A. Macquarie University, Psychological Science
M.A. University of Sydney, Islamic and Arabic Studies
Ph.D. Candidate, Charles Sturt University, Islamic Studies

Specializations: Islamic Theology, Hadith, Arabic, Clinical Pastoral Education, Islamic Studies

Mir Sadeq Ansari is a doctoral candidate in Charles Sturt University. His doctoral research is on Al-Tahawi's approach to the use of reason in text criticism. He received his master's degree in Islamic and Arabic studies from University of Sydney. He attended Arabic courses in Egypt and took Islamic Studies in Istanbul Turkey. Ansari has also completed Clinical Pastoral Education certificate program in Australia. He worked as a lecturer of Islamic Studies at Islamic Studies and Research Academy in Australia.

Adjunct Faculty

Halim Calis, Assistant Professor

B.A. Ankara University
M.A. Marmara University
M.A. Lutheran School of Theology at Chicago
PhD. The University of Chicago, Divinity School

Specializations: Qur'anic Studies, Sufism, Islamic Revivalism, Ancient Christian Theology, Islamic History, Ottoman History

Halim Calis received his BA from Ankara University, Divinity School, and his MA on Islamic Theology from Marmara University. After completing his second MA on World Religions at the Lutheran School of Theology at Chicago, he obtained his Ph.D. in Islamic Studies at the University of Chicago, Divinity School. He authored his doctoral dissertation on Molla Fanari (d. 1430), an Ottoman scholar who attempted to synthesize Akbari hermeneutics with classical Qur'anic exegesis. Besides the formal education Halim Calis has received, he has been studying the classical sources of Islam since the 1990's. He conducts research in English, Turkish and Arabic. He can also read French and Persian. He has published encyclopedia entries, book chapters and articles in scholarly journals.

Walter Wagner

B.A. Gettysburg College
M.Div. Lutheran Theological Seminary, Philadelphia
M.A. Princeton Theological Seminary
Ph.D. Drew University

Specializations: Biblical Studies, History, Qur'an, Islamic History, Inter-Religious Relations.

Dr. Wagner is an adjunct professor at Moravian Theological Seminary (Bethlehem, PA) and the Lutheran Theological Seminary (Philadelphia, PA). At Moravian Seminary he teaches courses in World Religions, History, Islamic studies, and New Testament. And at the Lutheran Seminary of Philadelphia, he teaches in the doctoral program where he deals with the history and key figures of Christianity and Islam through the 16th Century.

An ordained Lutheran clergyperson, he has served as the pastor of several congregations in addition to having been the Director for Theological Education of the Lutheran Church in America. He has taught in colleges and graduate schools for over 40 years and has won several awards for teaching excellence and service to students, especially those from international backgrounds. Dr. Wagner has been involved in Jewish-Christian and Muslim-Christian relations and dialogue for many years. He has also held administrative positions in higher education and community organizations. He has published several books including two about the Qur'an and Muslim theology titled: *Opening the Qur'an: Introducing Islam's Holy Book*; and *Beginnings and Endings: Fethullah Gülen's vision for today's world*.

Zara Khan

B.A. Hunter College (City University of New York)
M.A. The Graduate Center of the City University of New York
PhD. The Graduate Center of the City University of New York

Specializations: Comparative Politics, Political Theory and Human Rights, Secularism, Liberalism, Modernity, Religion and Politics, and Islamic Political Thought.

Zara Khan holds a doctorate with distinction in Political Science from the City University of New York Graduate Center. Specializing in comparative political theory, political economy, and religion in the public sphere, she is an educator, researcher, and social justice advocate. She currently serves as Director of Research in Contemporary Thought and Politics at Yaqeen Institute for Islamic Research.

Zuleyha Colak

B. A. Istanbul University
M.A. Marmara University
M.A. Indiana University, Central Eurasian Studies/Turkish and Ottoman Studies
Ph.D. Indiana University, Central Eurasian Studies/Turkish and Ottoman Studies

Specializations: Ottoman History and Literature, Modern Turkish Language and Literature, Arabic Language and Literature.

Dr. Zuleyha Colak is a Senior Lecturer and coordinator of Turkish and Ottoman Language program at the Middle Eastern Studies Department at Columbia University. Previously she taught at the University of Minnesota, in Minneapolis in Global Studies department between

2005-2010. She received her B. A. in Arabic Language and Literature from Istanbul University, Turkey (1998). She holds two masters' degrees, one in Arabic Literature at Marmara University, Istanbul, Turkey (2000), and one in Central Eurasian Studies/Ottoman and Modern Turkish Studies at Indiana University (2003). Her PhD dissertation is on the portrayal of women in the Biblical and Quranic Joseph Story from Indiana University in 2010. She has been a board member at Respect Graduate School and voluntarily teaching courses on Islam.

Selcuk Altuntas

B.A. Ege University

M.A. Ege University

M.A. Catholic Theological Union at Chicago

Ph.D. University of Wisconsin, Languages and Cultures of Asia

Specializations: Islam, Christianity, Christian-Muslim dialogue, and Turkish linguistics.

Prior to Respect, Selcuk has taught at Edgewood College as an adjunct instructor of Religion. His fields of interest include Islam, Christianity, Christian-Muslim dialogue, and Turkish linguistics. His research deals with diversity in the representation of Islam in the Volga-Ural region in Russia. In addition to his academic career, Seljuk is interested in pastoral care as he has done prison ministry for about a decade across three states, Illinois, Ohio, and Wisconsin. He is a member of the Central Eurasian Studies Society.

Hakan Gok

B.A. Middle East Technical University

Med. The Open University

Ph.D. Durham University

Specializations: The problems of evil and suffering, arguments for and against the existence of God, atheist philosophy, and the lives and discourse of Ghazzali, Rumi, Sirhindi and Nursi.

Dr. Hakan Gok is a Research Fellow at the Center for Governance, Leadership and Global Responsibility at Leeds Beckett University. Hakan obtained his master's and PhD in the UK. He studied atheism and theism focusing on the philosophy of Said Nursi, earning his PhD degree from Durham University. Hakan's research interests are the problem of evil and suffering, arguments for and against the existence of God, atheist philosophy, life, and discourse of Ghazzālī, Rūmī and Sirhindī. He is on the advisory board of *Mevlana International Journal of Moral and Values Education (MIJMVE)*. His previous papers are: 'Multiculturalism in Turkey: Possible solutions to the Kurdish issue from *The Risāle-i Nur*', 'Is peaceful co-existence possible? Case of Mawlānā Jalāluddīn Rūmī', 'A Comparison between Ahmad Sirhindī and Saīd Nursi' and 'Albert Camus and Saīd Nursi on the problem of evil.'

He is the author of *Atheism or Theism: The Perspective of Said Nursi*, editor of *Selected Readings from The Risale-i Nur*, and coeditor of *India-Turkey: History, Culture and Politics* books. Hakan is currently living in Leeds. He is married with three daughters.

Fatih Harpci

B.A. in Theology: Marmara University

MATS (summa cum laude): Moravian Theological Seminary

Ph.D. in Religion: Temple University

Specializations: Islamic History, Islamic Eschatology, Interpretation of the Qur'an, and Christian-Muslim Relations.

Professor Harpci is Associate Professor of Religion at Carthage College, Wisconsin, and the Chair of Religion Department. His goal is to contribute to inter-religious dialogue, especially among Christians and Muslims. In preparing to meet that goal, he wrote his master's thesis on the necessity for interfaith dialogue and earned MATS from Moravian Theological Seminary in Bethlehem, Pennsylvania. Prof. Harpci received his Ph.D. in religion (Islamic Studies) from Temple University in Philadelphia.

Prof. Harpci's research areas include Islamic history, Islamic eschatology, and Christian-Muslim relations. His Ph.D. dissertation examines the Hadiths reports of Prophet Muhammad about Jesus ('Isa in Arabic). The study focuses especially on Prophet Muhammad's statements concerning Jesus' second coming and his messianic roles toward the End Times.

Prof. Harpci presented papers at academic conferences and published articles and book chapters. He has been a frequent presenter in congregations and community groups on Islam as well as on Christian-Muslim relations and dialogue. He is the author of "The Necessity for Interfaith Dialogue" and co-author of "Prophet Muhammad: The Sultan of Hearts 2 volumes."

The complete list of RGS faculty members can be found on the RGS website.

13. Academic Resources

Respect Library (RL)

For Reference Help or General Questions: info@respectgs.us

Computer/Copier/Printer Info

The Respect Library currently provides computers for students to use. The Respect Library is also equipped with a black and white printer capable of printing, scanning, and copying.

Respect Unplugged is the wireless Internet service for the RGS community. It provides fast speed and encrypted traffic for the users authenticated with a Respect Network ID (RID) from multiple locations across campus with no limits on what the user can access.

Interlibrary Loan

If you are a student, faculty, or staff member and you cannot find a book or an article that you need within the Respect Library catalog, you may contact the librarian about ordering it through Inter-Library Loan. These materials typically take up to a week to arrive and may be checked out for 3-4 weeks depending on the loaning institution. You will be contacted by phone or E-mail when your orders arrive.

Document Delivery Fund

For journal articles the Respect Library does not own, and which may not be obtained through the library's subscription databases, the library provides a document delivery fund that assists students and faculty with the acquisition of articles and books needed for research.

Library Services

Research and Writing Assistance

Respect Graduate School offers professional writing assistance to all its students. Whether you need someone to aid in proofreading a paper or you would just like to brainstorm ideas, the head librarian of the Respect Library is available to help.

The library will host Research and Writing Workshops. Topics to be covered include, but are not limited to, using Microsoft Word, formatting papers according to the Chicago Manual of Style, searching for and evaluating scholarly resources through online databases, citing sources, and creating a works cited list. These workshops are free, and all students are highly encouraged to attend.

For those students who are unable to make it to these workshops, the library also offers online writing and reference services via e-mail, or in person, on a walk-in basis. Students may E-mail the librarian at library@respectgs.us.

Library Policies

Borrowing

All currently enrolled RGS students, faculty, staff, administration, alumni, affiliates of other area colleges, and non-affiliated members of the community may borrow items from Respect Library. See details below.

RGS Students

Students currently enrolled for classes may borrow up to 20 items (books, videos, and audio CDs, etc.) for a period of four weeks. During the summer, students who have enrolled for the fall semester also have borrowing privileges. Items may be renewed three times. Borrowers must display a valid RGS ID card to borrow materials.

Faculty, Staff, Administration

Faculty, staff, and administration may borrow an unlimited number of items for a period of four months. Items may be renewed twice. All borrowers must display a valid RGS ID card to borrow materials.

RGS Alumni

Alumni may apply for a free alumni library card to borrow materials. Alumni may borrow a total of 10 items for a period of four weeks. Items may be renewed once.

Students/Faculty at Area Colleges

Students and faculty from Moravian College who are currently enrolled for classes may borrow up to 5 items for a period of three weeks. These items may be renewed once. Both groups of borrowers (students and faculty) must display a current validated ID card from their home institution to obtain a Respect Library card and borrow materials. (Note: RGS students and faculty also have borrowing privileges at these institutions.)

Non-affiliated Community Members (paying customers)

Members of the community may receive a library card for a \$25.00 annual fee. Community members may borrow a total of 5 items at one time. Books circulate for three weeks. Items may be renewed once.

Request/Hold Resources via Library Catalog

Resources currently checked out may be placed on hold through the library's online public access catalog. The librarian will hold these resources for pickup for two days upon return. The student Interlibrary loan be notified by email when a book is available for pickup.

Inter-Library Loan (ILL) Policy

To ensure RGS students and faculty can access all the resources they need, RL participates in an inter-library loan program through OCLC's WorldShare system. The RGS Head Librarian oversees the entire ILL process. To request materials, please contact the Respect Librarian and provide as much detail as possible about the resource(s) you would like to ensure you receive the correct item. Requests are processed as they are received. Most requests will be sent within one to two days of submission. Borrowers are expected to adhere to policies, guidelines, and deadlines set by lending libraries. Interlibrary loan books cannot be renewed.

Interlibrary Loan services are free to RGS faculty, staff, students, and alumni. Materials available through interlibrary loans mainly include books and journal articles. All borrowed material is subject to recall.

A fine of \$1.00 per week will be charged for late returns. No Interlibrary Loan requests will be processed if a patron has outstanding interlibrary loan or library fines. Borrowers are also responsible for any late charges levied by a lending institution as well as those levied by RGS.

If a patron from RGS loses an interlibrary loan item, he/she must relinquish all interlibrary loan borrowing privileges until the item is returned or the lending library is appropriately reimbursed. Patrons are responsible for any interlibrary loan materials they use.

Compliance with copyright laws is required as described within Section 20, Miscellaneous Policies, located in this catalog.

Gifts

Guidelines for gifts/donations to Respect Library:

Potential donors should provide a list of materials being offered prior to sending a gift.

1. Donors are responsible for the delivery of the gift.
2. Gift materials will be evaluated using the same standards that are applied in selecting new materials.
3. Donations to the collection must be able to be integrated without the need for special facilities, control, handling, or staffing unless the cost is contained as part of the gift.
4. The library is not able to accept duplicates of materials already in the collection, unless the library copy is in a condition that warrants replacement.
5. Periodicals will not be accepted.
6. The IRS requires that the donor be responsible for gift appraisals. By law, the library is not allowed to be responsible for the appraisal of gifts.
7. The library has the right to retain or dispose of any gift according to library policy.
8. All departments of RGS must adhere to this policy in accepting potential donations for the library.
9. The library reserves the right to refuse unsolicited gifts that do not comply with this policy.

Fines and Fees

All students (RGS and non-RGS), alumni, and paying customers are subject to late fees for overdue materials.

The fine schedule is as follows:

Books, DVDs, CDs, CD-ROMs: \$10.00 each per week following the date due. The maximum fine is \$80.00 per item.

1. **Lost Item Replacement Fee:** Once an item is 60 days past due it is considered lost. A lost item fee of \$15.00 will be added to the borrower's library account. The borrower will be responsible for all overdue fines that have accrued, the \$15.00 lost item fee, and the replacement cost of the item.
2. **Suspension of borrowing privileges:** Students are permitted to carry a balance of \$80.00 before borrowing privileges are suspended.

14. Student Services

Academic Advising

The advising process provides students with specific and accurate information and enables them to develop a working relationship with their advisors and move forward to complete their academic programs and progress into their chosen fields. The academic advising of students is an integral part of RGS faculty's teaching obligations. Therefore, faculty will always be available to enrollees and prospective enrollees for consultation. Moreover, they are required to designate and publicize a minimum of two hours of "office hours" on a weekly basis, to provide advising and consultation. Furthermore, they are expected to respond positively to requests for appointments from enrollees and prospective enrollees, as a form of academic courtesy.

Academic Advising takes several forms and extends through and beyond the time students spend at RGS.

Advising Before Enrollment

RGS provides accurate, up-to-date information to prospective students about academic programs, the research interests of the faculty and degree requirements. Additionally, information on the following will be made available: the average time for the completion of a degree, the average amount of financial aid available, and employment opportunities after graduation (including the placement record of the program).

Advising New Students

New students will be advised on the courses they should take during their first year; clear maps of the requirements they must meet, including course work, languages, research tools, examinations, internships, and research; and a delineation of the amount of time expected to complete each step. For each graduate student, the Dean of Academic Affairs will assign a faculty member as an academic advisor who, in consultation with the student, will plan a program of study and conduct research in accordance with RGS guidelines. The advisor's primary duty will be to help students assess their academic strengths and weaknesses and assist them in choosing the appropriate program concentration that will lead students to their future career goals.

The Dean of Students will arrange for and implement an orientation program, which will be held at the beginning of every academic semester for new and transfer students. Faculty, administrators, the Registrar, and the Librarian are expected to attend and participate.

Advising Students Concerning Writing and Research Skills

The deans or their designee will provide counseling and assistance to students concerning researching and writing academic papers, the use of computers, and study skills.

Advising Continuing Students

Advisors should evaluate student progress and performance on a regular basis (i.e., no less than once per semester) and in an informative way. In these evaluations, advisors should inform

students about their performance in relation to the expectations of normal progress and to the norms associated with successful degree completion and placement after graduation.

Advising Graduating Students:

Students may obtain assistance in finding future employment, meeting the requirements for licensure, and/or pursuing further graduate study through career services. This assistance includes helping students prepare successful applications, including résumé-writing, building a dossier, and interviewing; providing access to information about employment and/or study opportunities; helping students obtain letters of recommendation from faculty; and encouraging student participation in, or awareness of, networking possibilities.

Advising of Research Students:

The research advisor should take reasonable measures to ensure that each graduate student initiates thesis research; schedule regular meetings with their advisees to discuss their research and return comments on written work in a timely manner; clarify co-authorship publication practices; and should assume primary responsibility for ensuring that the student receives academic advising.

Career Advising and Counseling

RGS places an exceptional value on career counseling for its students because it believes that its institutional reputation will be created through the success of its students. Therefore, RGS aims to develop and continually improve an efficient and target-oriented career service plan. The Dean of Students will lead in career counseling efforts that will involve developing community contacts and institutions, as well as providing the resources listed below:

- a) **Doctoral Workshops:** These workshops are designed for students who intend to enroll in doctoral degrees. These workshops will be facilitated through seminars given by invited speakers and visits to doctorate-granting institutions. The goal of these workshops will be to provide guidance for PhD acceptance and to create awareness about the nature of academic life. RGS hopes that these doctoral workshops will also create internships and voluntary work opportunities for students.
- b) **On-Campus Experience:** RGS realizes that finding a job is not always solely achieved through having a high GPA. Sometimes, actual work experience plays a crucial role in a career search as well. Therefore, RGS will work with students to identify work opportunities on the RGS campus that will help them cultivate real world experiences relevant to their career goals.
- c) **Alumni Experience:** One of the best resources RGS has for placing its graduates in academic and professional positions is the RGS alumni body. Recognizing this, RGS will create a close and active network between alumni and current enrollees through all current means of communication and through annual gatherings to prepare current enrollees for their future careers.

- d) **Personal Networks:** In today's complex society, personal networks play a vital role in career planning and placement. Aware of this fact, RGS will use all possible means to involve the Board of Trustees, faculty members, staff members, administrative personnel, parents, and the employers of alumni in the career searches of RGS students. In this respect, the diversity of the RGS board members will serve the interests of RGS graduates well.

Physical Health Counseling and Services

The Dean of Students will assist students with health insurance needs to obtain suitable coverage. For emergency care, injuries, and illnesses, RGS students will be immediately directed to the Airport Road Emergency Center (AREC) to receive urgent medical attention. AREC is nearby, 1.7 miles from the RGS campus, and is open year-round, seven days a week. The Center serves both as an urgent care center and a treatment facility for all types of non-life-threatening illnesses and injuries. The AREC internet address is www.cedarcrestemergicenter.com. Lehigh Valley Hospital and St. Luke Hospital have locations within one and three miles, respectively, of the RGS campus.

15. Extracurricular Activities and Student Government

Extracurricular life

Extracurricular activities greatly enhance the value of the RGS experience. The rewards of involvement are many: making new friends, exploring new interests, developing talents, learning by doing, establishing valuable contacts, contributing to RGS and the greater community, and combining social and academic interests in ways that are personally rewarding. Students are encouraged to develop interest groups and other associations that do not conflict with the RGS mission, vision, and mandates. The Dean of Students is to be informed about, and to approve, the formal establishment of any such group.

Student Government Association (SGA)

The major student organization will be the SGA. The purpose of the organization is to foster leadership skills, develop positive relationships among RGS students, organize social and service activities for members, and encourage student-faculty cooperation. All students enrolled at RGS will be members of the SGA and will be eligible to vote on matters presented to the student body. Officers, elected annually by the members, will lead the organization to fulfill its objectives.

Student Participation in Institutional Governance

As constituents of the RGS community, students are free, individually, and collectively, to express views on issues of RGS policy and on matters of general interest to the student body through the governance organizations established to participate in the formulation and application of RGS policies, regulations, and procedures. Students are welcome to share their views on RGS policies with their representatives on faculty committees and the Board of Trustees.

Student Publications

Student publications and the student press are a valuable aid in establishing and maintaining an atmosphere of free and responsible discussion and of intellectual exploration on the campus. They are a means of bringing student concerns to the attention of the faculty and other RGS authorities, as well as of formulating student opinion on various issues on the campus and in the world. The board has ultimate responsibility for all activities undertaken with the financial support of RGS. The following general concepts shall guide the relationship between RGS and student publications:

- Student publications shall be free of censorship and advance approval of copy, and its editors and managers shall be free to develop editorial policies subject to the responsibility to abide by established principles of journalistic ethics and practice and to avoid violating the rights or liberties of persons by defamatory expression, undocumented allegations, harassment, invasion of privacy, or violation of the community.

- Editors and managers of student publications shall be protected from suspension and removal because of student, faculty, administrative or public disapproval of editorial policy or publication content, so long as the standards set forth in the previous paragraph are met. Editors and managers shall be subject to removal only in accordance with the established policies, regulations, and procedures of RGS.
- All RGS-published or financed student publications shall state on their editorial page(s) that the opinions therein expressed are not necessarily those of RGS or the RGS community.

Student Recreational and Cultural Opportunities

RGS encourages students to participate and/or make use of recreational facilities in the Lehigh Valley. Allentown and Bethlehem have excellent free public park systems replete with walking trails, bicycle paths, basketball courts, and soccer fields. And the Lehigh Valley in general, is a significant cultural area. The Bethlehem and Allentown Public Libraries are free and open to student memberships. Excellent art museums and galleries can be found, both as free-standing institutions and institutions affiliated with the area's colleges and universities.

16. Non-Discrimination Policy

Respect Graduate School (RGS) is a welcoming community. We embrace and value the diversity of all members of the campus community. RGS does not discriminate against any person based on actual or perceived race, color, sex, religion, ancestry, genetic information, national origin, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, familial status, marital status, age, mental or physical disability, use of guide or support animals and/or mechanical aids, or on any other basis protected by applicable local, state, and federal laws.

17. Student Rights

The responsibility to secure and to respect the conditions conducive to the freedom to learn is shared by all members of the community. The admission policies of RGS are designed to provide for a diverse student body consistent with the RGS mission, goals, and commitments. For the sake of clarity and emphasis, the RGS statement on Non-Discrimination bears repeating here:

The Institution's policies, programs and procedures are administered without discrimination against any person based on actual or perceived race, color, sex, religion, ancestry, genetic information, national origin, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, familial status, marital status, age, veteran status, mental or physical disability, use of guide or support animals and/or mechanical aids, or any other basis protected by applicable federal, state, or local laws.

By enrolling in RGS, the student signifies agreement to abide by the established institutional policies, regulations, and procedures. Students also agree to abide by and to support the orderly processes established by RGS for the resolution of disputes and the violation of policies, regulations, and procedures.

A complete list of Student Rights is detailed in the Catalog.

18. Student Rights Related to Educational Records

This section covers general regulations related to the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) of 1974 and its amendments. Information on other policies and regulations of the institution can be found in other sections of this catalog. Respect Graduate School has a retention schedule, which is based on the American Association of Collegiate Registrars and Admission Officers' (AACRAO) Retention of Records: Guide for Retention and Disposal of Student Records (2000 Edition). Respect Graduate School retains written documents submitted to its archives.

Student Records

The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) of 1974 and its amendments are federal laws that afford students certain rights with respect to their educational records. RGS will maintain the confidentiality of student educational records in accordance with provisions of the

Act and will accord all rights under the Act to current and former students of RGS who are declared independent.

Educational records are those related to students and maintained by RGS. They do not include the following:

- Records of instructional, supervisory, and administrative personnel and ancillary educational personnel that are in the sole possession of the creator and are not accessible or revealed to any other individual except a substitute who may temporarily perform the duties of the creator
- Records relating to those employed by RGS that are made and maintained in the normal course of business relate exclusively to personnel in their capacity as employees and are not used for another purpose. *Note:* Records of persons employed solely because of RGS attendance, e.g., tutors and work-study students, are educational records
- Records, including student health records, created and maintained by a physician, psychiatrist, psychologist or other recognized medical or counseling professional or paraprofessional, to be used solely in connection with the provision of treatment to the student and not to be disclosed to anyone other than for treatment purposes, allowing that such records may be disclosed to physicians or professionals of the student's choice (*Note:* Treatment in this context does not include remedial education activities or other activities that are part of the program of instruction at RGS)
- Records of the institution that contain only information relating to persons after they are no longer students at the institution, e.g., the accomplishments of alumni
- Records of the institution relating to violations of state, federal or institutional regulations pertaining to alcohol or drugs

Rights of Inspection

The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act provides students with the right to inspect and review information contained in their educational records; to challenge the content of those records that students consider to be inaccurate, misleading or in violation of their privacy or other rights; to attend a hearing if the outcome of the challenge is unsatisfactory; and to submit explanatory statements for inclusion in their files if they deem the decisions of the hearing panel unacceptable. The registrar has been assigned to coordinate the inspection and review procedures for student educational records, which include admissions, personal, academic, and financial files, and academic, cooperative education and placement records.

Request for Review

Students wishing to review their educational records must make a written request to the RGS Registrar, listing the item(s) to be reviewed. Only those records covered by the Act will be available for review. The items requested shall be made available no later than thirty calendar days following receipt of the written request. A copy of the academic record may be refused if a hold has been placed for non-payment of financial obligations. Copies may be made at the student's expense. Students have the right to receive a copy of the educational record when

failure to provide a copy would prevent the student from inspecting and reviewing the record, e.g., when distance prevents the student from having ready access to campus.

Limitations on Student Rights

There are some limitations to the rights of students to inspect records, in the following instances:

- Confidential letters and recommendations that are placed in the records to which the student has waived the right of inspection and review and that are related to the student's admission, application for employment or job placement, or receipt of honors
- Educational records containing information about more than one student; however, in such cases, the institution will permit access to any part of the record that pertains only to the requesting student.

Waiver of Student Rights

Students may waive any or all their rights under FERPA. RGS does not require waivers, and no institutional service shall be denied to students who fail to supply waivers. All waivers must be in writing and signed by the student. Students may waive their right to inspect and review either individual documents (e.g., a letter of recommendation) or classes of documents (e.g., an admissions file). The items or documents to which students have waived the right of access shall be used only for the purpose(s) for which they were collected. If used for other purposes, the waivers shall be void and the student may inspect the documents. The student may revoke the waiver in writing, but revocation does not establish the right to inspect and review documents collected while the waiver was in force.

Consent Provisions

No person outside of RGS shall have access to, nor shall RGS disclose any personally identifiable information from any student's educational records without the written consent of the student. Consent must specify the records to be released, the purpose of the disclosure, and the party or class of parties to whom disclosure may be made. Consent must be signed and dated by the student.

Exceptions to the Consent Policy

RGS reserves the right, as allowed under FERPA, to disclose educational records or components thereof, without written consent, to:

- Personnel within RGS who demonstrate a need to know and who act in the student's educational interest, including faculty, administration, clerical and professional employees, and other persons who manage student records
- Officials of other institutions in which the student seeks to enroll, on the condition that RGS makes a reasonable attempt to inform the student of the disclosure. In most

instances, if the student initiated the request to transfer, permission to transfer educational records is implicit in the request

- Officials of other schools in which the student is currently enrolled
- Persons or organizations providing student financial aid, to determine the amount, eligibility, or conditions of an award and to enforce the terms of an award
- Accrediting organizations carrying out their functions
- Authorized representatives of the Comptroller General of the United States, the Secretary of the U.S. Department of Education, and state educational authorities, for information necessary for audit and evaluation of federal- or state-sponsored programs
- State and federal officials to whom disclosure is required by state statute adopted prior to November 19, 1974
- Organizations conducting studies to develop, validate and administer predictive tests, to administer student aid programs, or to improve instruction, so long as there is no further external disclosure of personally identifiable information and provided the information is destroyed when it is no longer needed for the project
- Persons in compliance with a judicial order or a lawfully issued subpoena, if reasonable effort is made to notify the student
- Appropriate personnel in a health or safety emergency, so long as there is a serious threat to the student or others, the knowledge of the information is necessary to meet the emergency, time is of the essence, and the persons to whom the information is disclosed are able to deal with the emergency

Institutional Records of Disclosure

RGS will keep a written record of all such exceptional disclosures, and the student has the right to inspect such records, which will include the names of the parties or agencies to whom disclosure was made, the legitimate reason for the disclosure, and the date of the disclosure. No record of disclosure shall be required for requests made by students for their own use, for disclosures made with a student's written consent, for those made to RGS officials, or for those specified as directory information.

Disclosure of Educational Record Information

RGS will obtain written consent from students before disclosing any personally identifiable information from their educational record (with exceptions as noted under Exceptions to Consent Policy). Such written consent for disclosure must specify the records to be released, state the purpose of the disclosure, identify the party or class of parties to whom disclosure may be made, and be signed and dated by the student. All such consents shall be maintained in the student's educational record.

Challenges to the Content of Educational Records

Students who believe their educational records contain information that is inaccurate or misleading, or that otherwise violates their privacy or other rights, may discuss their concerns informally with the Dean of Students. If the dean agrees with the student's request, the appropriate records shall be amended, and the student shall be notified in writing of the amendment(s). If the dean disagrees, the dean must notify the student within fifteen calendar days that the records will not be amended, and that the student has the right to a hearing on the matter.

A request for a formal hearing must be made in writing within thirty calendar days from the mailing of the notice from the dean. Within thirty days of receipt of the written request, the dean shall inform the student of the date, time, and place of the hearing. The student shall be afforded a full and fair opportunity to present evidence relevant to the issue(s) raised. The student may be assisted or represented at the hearing by one or more persons, including an attorney (at the student's expense). The hearing may be conducted by any party, including an official of RGS, so long as the person does not have a direct interest in its outcome. The panel that settles such challenges is made up of the Dean of Academic Affairs, the Vice President of Operations, and a faculty member not involved in the challenge. The hearing panel shall base its decision solely on the evidence presented at the hearing. Its decision shall be final and in writing, summarizing the evidence and stating the reasons for the decision. The written report shall be mailed to the student and any other concerned party within fifteen calendar days of the hearing.

If the panel determines that the information at issue is inaccurate or misleading, or violates privacy or other rights, the student's record shall be amended in accordance with the decision and the student so informed in writing. If the decision is unsatisfactory to the student, a statement or statements commenting on the information in the record or setting forth any reason for disagreeing with the decision may be placed by the student in the educational record. The statement(s) shall be maintained as part of the record and released whenever the record in question is disclosed to an authorized party.

Note: Rights of challenge cannot be used to question substantive educational judgments that are correctly recorded (e.g., course grades with which the student disagrees).

Students who believe that the adjudication of their challenge was unfair, or not in keeping with the provisions of FERPA, may request, in writing, assistance from the President of RGS to aid them in filing a complaint with the Family Policy and Regulations Office, U.S. Department of Education, Room 1087, 400 Maryland Avenue S.W., Washington, D.C. 20202.

Complaints of Institutional Non-Compliance

Students may file complaints in writing concerning an alleged failure of the institution to comply with FERPA with the Family Policy Compliance Office, U.S. Department of Education, 600 Independence Avenue S.W., Washington, D.C. 20202-4605.

Destruction of Records

Once a student has requested access to educational records, these records shall not be destroyed until inspection and review have been conducted. The following items shall not be destroyed or removed from the record: (1) explanatory statements placed in the record by the student (see the section on Challenges to the Content of Educational Records, above); and (2) records of disclosure and requests for disclosure. RGS reserves the right to destroy information contained in student records and files when the information on file is no longer valid or useful (e.g., letters of recommendation, once they have been used for their original purpose).

19. Student Rights Related to Violations and Grievances

Student Grievance Policy

Respect Graduate School (RGS) encourages the promotion and informal resolution of grievances as they arise and provides recourse to orderly procedures for the satisfactory resolution of complaints. A grievance can include, but is not limited to, a complaint, misinterpretation, or inequitable application of stated or implied policies, regulations, or expectations.

A grievance procedure shall be as follows: If a student has a grievance against another person, she or he should first speak directly to that person and then, if the matter is not resolved, he/she may refer the matter to that person's immediate superior and, if necessary, to proceed through the chain of responsibility all the way up to the Dean of Students' office.

If it is necessary to file a written complaint and to process a grievance through the formal chain of responsibility, the process shall be as follows:

The student shall prepare and submit a formal grievance to the Dean of Students. The Dean of Students shall meet with the individual(s) involved and shall make a ruling on the complaint. Once the ruling has been rendered, it will be given to the student orally, and later in written form. If the student ascertains that satisfactory resolution was not made, the Dean of Students shall appoint and convene an ad hoc committee composed of the Dean of Academic Affairs and two faculty members (a faculty member involved in the complaint will not be appointed to the committee). This committee shall conduct its hearings and report its actions within 60 days of the initial report of the grievance.

Once the committee is appointed, the members will be given a copy of the student's written complaint and a summary of the meeting(s) convened by the Dean of the Students in order to resolve the complaint satisfactorily.

Once the committee members have had an opportunity to review the materials provided in step three, a meeting shall be arranged with the individual(s) involved. The Dean is to arrange and chair the meeting(s). At the meeting, the student may present evidence supporting his or her grievance. It is the responsibility of the committee members to ask the students and the other persons involved in the complaint questions to clarify the information provided in the written complaint and/or the summary of the previous meeting(s).

Once all the evidence has been reviewed, the committee, using a simple majority vote, will make a ruling on the complaint. If the grievance involves a grade rendered by a faculty member, the committee cannot rule on a grade change without agreement by the faculty member involved. Decisions made by the committee will be given to the student orally and, later, in written form.

If the student perceives that a satisfactory resolution of the complaint has still not been resolved, a complaint may be filed with the President of the Institution. The President can involve any appropriate school personnel in the process to resolve the complaint. The decision of the President and/or the assigned designees is final. The final resolution is to be filed with the Dean of Students' office.

Grievance Process

The grievance process for any student complaint involving a non-academic matter (e.g., inappropriate language, preferential treatment, misuse of funds) not covered by existing institutional policy is as follows:

- 1) The complainant communicates his or her grievance to the Dean of Students (or to the President if the complaint is about the Dean of Students).
- 2) The Dean begins the process of mediation or, at his or her discretion, defers the process of mediation. In the latter case, the grievance may be referred directly to the Grievance Panel.

The process of mediation may take any of the following courses:

- The individuals involved meet and determine a resolution.
- The individuals meet, together with a mediator assigned by the dean. With the assistance of the mediator, they may determine a resolution. If a resolution is not achieved, the grievance may be resubmitted to the dean, with a mediation report from the mediator and a written response from the target of the grievance. From this point on, the grievance is referred to the Grievance Panel.
- The individuals refuse mediation and submit a written mediation refusal to the dean. The dean reviews the mediation refusal and either refers the grievance directly to the Grievance Panel or refers the grievance back to a mediator assigned by the dean.
- When the grievance is referred to the Grievance Panel (composed of one administrator, one faculty member, and one student selected by the student government president), the panel conducts a hearing. It may investigate and interview the persons concerned. The Grievance Panel then renders a judgment, which may take the form of dismissal of the complaint or the imposition of disciplinary measures. In the case of disciplinary action, the person on whom it is imposed may appeal to the appropriate dean.

Harassment and Inappropriate Conduct

Respect Graduate School is committed to providing a campus community in which all members are treated with respect and dignity, and which is free from all forms of discrimination and conduct that can be considered harassing, coercive, or disruptive. Sexual harassment within the community is unlawful, as is harassment based upon race, color, religion, national origin, disability, age, sexual orientation, or membership in any other protected group. It is also unlawful to retaliate against a member of the campus community for filing a complaint or for cooperating in an investigation of harassment.

This policy applies to all members of the community, which for the purposes of this policy includes, but is not limited to, employees, students, independent contractors, consultants, leased employees, visitors, and others working on institutional premises or with institutional employees or students. The scope of this policy includes, but is not limited to, all settings in which members of the campus community may find themselves in connection with their employment, education, or other institutionally related activities, such as off-site meetings, conferences, social events, etc., including time spent traveling and socializing on the way to and from, and while at, such events. It also extends to other interactions between or among members of the campus

community, to the extent that a community member's right to a campus community free from harassment or other inappropriate conduct is involved.

The institution will not tolerate harassment of, or retaliation against, its employees, students, or any other member of the campus community by anyone, including other members of the community. Furthermore, the institution will also attempt to protect its community members from harassment by others who may be encountered within the community, such as vendors, customers, and service employees.

The Vice President of Operations is responsible for overseeing the implementation of this policy in the case of administrators and support staff. In the case of faculty, the Dean of Academic Affairs will provide oversight.

Definition of Harassment and Inappropriate Conduct

Harassment consists of unwelcome conduct, whether verbal, physical, or visual, including stalking or cyber-stalking, based on a person's protected status, such as race, color, sex, national origin, religion, disability, age, or on any other basis prohibited by local, state, or federal law; and which has the effect of interfering unreasonably with another's work or academic performance, or creating an intimidating, offensive or hostile environment.

Harassing conduct includes, but is not limited to, slurs; negative stereotyping; ethnic jokes; offensive written or graphic material; display of offensive objects; or threatening, intimidating, or hostile acts that denigrate or show hostility or aversion toward an individual because of membership in a protected group, or toward a group with protected status.

Sexual Harassment Policy

Respect Graduate School is committed to creating and maintaining a community in which students, faculty, and administrative and academic staff can work together in an atmosphere free of all forms of sexual harassment or other types of harassment based upon membership in other protected categories, including those related to race, color, national or ethnic origin, ancestry, physical handicap, medical condition, sexual orientation, marital status, gender, or age.

Definition of Sexual Harassment

Sexual harassment is prohibited. This includes unwelcome or unwanted sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and other verbal, physical or visual conduct of a sexual nature when: submission to such conduct is made, explicitly or implicitly, a term or condition of a community member's employment, education, or other participation in the community. It also includes if submission to or rejection of such conduct is used as the basis for decisions affecting employment, education, or other participation in the community; or such conduct has the purpose or effect of unreasonable interference with work or academic performance or creates an intimidating, hostile or offensive work or academic environment.

It is not possible to list all the circumstances that may constitute sexual harassment. However, the following are examples of conduct that, if unwelcome, may constitute sexual harassment, depending upon the totality of the circumstances, including the severity of the conduct and its frequency or pervasiveness:

- Unwelcome sexual advances or propositions (whether or not they involve unwelcome physical touching)
- The explicit or implicit conditioning of any terms of employment or education (e.g., continued employment, wages, evaluation, advancement, assigned duties, on-call assignments, grades) on provision of sexual favors
- Inquiries into another's sexual experience, discussions of one's sexual activities, comments on an individual's body or about the individual's sexual activity, deficiencies, or prowess
- Stalking, cyber-stalking or general intimidation of a sexual nature
- Sexual innuendo, sexually suggestive comments, or the use of sexually explicit or vulgar language
- Sexually oriented teasing or practical jokes; "humor" about gender-specific traits
- Suggestive body language or gestures
- Displays or transmission of sexually suggestive objects, pictures, posters, cartoons or other printed or visual material,
- Leering, whistling or physical contact, such as unwelcome touching, patting, pinching, or brushing against another's body
- Continued requests to socialize, on or off duty, on or off campus, when a community member has indicated rejection or lack of interest
- Continued writing of sexually suggestive notes or letters when it is known or should be known that the addressee does not welcome them
- Derogatory or provocative remarks relating to an employee's sex or sexual orientation

Procedures

Procedures shall be as follows: Within two (2) weeks of the beginning of each academic year, the President shall form a Sexual Harassment Hearing Team to address any complaints of sexual harassment that may arise. At least one member of the Hearing Team will be female. The list containing the names of the members of the team shall be distributed to all members of the Institution's community within the first three weeks of the new academic year.

1. Several options are available to an individual to informally address an incident of alleged sexual harassment.
 - A. The individual may attempt to resolve the matter directly with the alleged harasser. Should the individual not be comfortable initiating a discussion on her or his own, she or he may discuss the issue confidentially with any member of the Sexual Harassment Hearing Team and receive guidance and support for attempting to resolve the matter directly with the alleged harasser.

- B. The individual may report the incident of alleged harassment to the supervisor (in the case of students, to the Dean of Students) in an effort to resolve the matter.
 - C. In the event that these informal efforts to resolve the complaint by the individual may not be wise, appropriate, or successful, the individual may request that the Sexual Harassment Hearing Team attempt to resolve the issue informally. A record of the complaint and its resolution will be maintained in the minutes of the Hearing Team, which shall be kept confidential and on file with Human Resources.
2. Formal Proceedings: If an informal resolution does not seem possible or is not successful, and if the matter is not settled within fifteen (15) working days, the complainant and the Sexual Harassment Hearing Team will institute formal proceedings immediately. These will include the following steps:
- A. Gather oral and written statements from the parties involved in the alleged harassment, and from others who may have pertinent information, such as witnesses, qualified professional consultants, etc. The respondent may appear before the Hearing Team and present witnesses on his or her behalf.
 - B. Determine actions appropriate to resolve the matter; these may include the following:
 - 1. If the finding is that sexual harassment has occurred, calling upon the appropriate body or officer of the school to act accordingly. Such action may include one or more of the following:
 - a. A formal reprimand, with defined expectations for changed behavior
 - b. Recommending or requiring remedial action, such as, but not limited to, psychological or psychiatric assessment, counseling or treatment, and education
 - c. Probationary standing, with the terms of the probation clearly defined
 - d. Suspension or dismissal from the Institution
 - 2. If the finding is that no sexual harassment has occurred:
 - a. The supervisor, if involved and members of the Hearing Team, shall contact only those persons whose participation is necessary to investigate the complaint and shall otherwise keep the facts of the investigation confidential.
 - b. A written summary of the Hearing Team's proceedings will be maintained in their minutes, which shall be always kept confidential

3. Appeal Process:

- A. If the complainant or respondent is not satisfied with the disposition of the matter by the Hearing Team, he or she has the right to appeal in writing, within 30 days, to the President of the school, who may review and affirm or alter the disposition.
- B. The President will resolve the matter, with the discretion to consider any further evidence that he may deem necessary before making its final determination. The decision of the President is final.

Racial Harassment Policy

Respect Graduate School is committed to creating and maintaining a community in which students, faculty, and administrative and academic staff can work together in an atmosphere free of all forms of racial harassment or other types of harassment based upon membership in other protected categories, including those related to race, color, national or ethnic origin, ancestry, physical handicap, medical condition, sexual orientation, marital status, gender, or age.

Definition of Racial Harassment

Racial harassment is racial prejudice expressed as inappropriate social behavior. It is intended to coerce, manipulate, intimidate, take advantage of, or demean people who belong to a particular race. This includes verbal behavior (e.g., racial slurs, demeaning remarks, and jokes); physical behavior (e.g., assault, impeding or blocking movement or any interference with normal work or movement, and stalking); and visual behavior (i.e., derogatory posters, cartoons, or drawings). Incidents of racial harassment may occur that are not covered by this list. Not every act that might be offensive to an individual or a group will necessarily be considered racial harassment. It is recognized, and must be dealt with appropriately, that racial insensitivity may have the same effect as actual harassment. In determining whether an act constitutes racial harassment, all circumstances pertaining to the occurrence and its context must be carefully reviewed and ample consideration given to the protection of individual rights, freedom of speech, academic freedom, and advocacy. All terms contained herein shall be construed according to the standards of a reasonable person within the school's community.

Retaliation

No community member shall be subject to retaliation for making a complaint of harassment or inappropriate conduct, cooperating in the investigation of such a complaint, or otherwise opposing unlawful harassment or other inappropriate conduct.

Complaints of Harassment or Retaliation

Because RGS takes allegations of harassment or retaliation seriously, it will respond promptly to complaints of such behavior. RGS strongly encourages any members of the community who believe they have been the target of harassment or inappropriate conduct to report the incident promptly, in writing. In addition, every member of the community is strongly encouraged to report, in writing, any such conduct observed, no matter who the target is. A timely written

report will enable the institution to respond rapidly in investigating the allegations and, where it is determined that harassment or inappropriate conduct has occurred, take the necessary steps to eliminate the objectionable conduct or conditions and impose corrective action, where appropriate.

Should any community members believe that they are being harassed or subjected to inappropriate behavior, they may notify the offender directly and immediately that the behavior is unwelcome and offensive and must stop. However, if for any reason a community member does not wish to discuss the matter directly with the offender, or if the discussion does not successfully end the behavior, it is the community member's duty to report the conduct immediately. RGS is committed, and may be required by law, to take action if it learns of potential harassment or inappropriate conduct, even if the aggrieved party does not wish to file a formal complaint.

Depending on the identities of the complainant and the alleged perpetrator of prohibited conduct, the report should be made to the appropriate individual or office. If for any reason complainants are not comfortable reporting the conduct to the designated individuals, they may contact the Vice President of Operations or the President.

Investigation

A complaint of harassment will be investigated promptly and fairly. To the extent practicable, care will be taken to protect the identity of all parties to the complaint, consistent with a thorough and appropriate investigation.

An institutional investigation will include private interviews with the person reporting the incident, any witnesses, and the person alleged to have engaged in harassment or inappropriate conduct. It is vital for all parties involved in the investigation to refrain from discussing any and all aspects of it, on or off campus. If the investigation determines that harassment or inappropriate conduct has occurred, the institution will act promptly to eliminate the offending conduct and impose corrective action, where appropriate. After the decision, the person who filed the complaint and the person alleged to have committed the offense will be informed of the results of the investigation and any corrective action to be taken. However, the complainant may not be informed of the specifics of any disciplinary action imposed upon the perpetrator, to the extent that revealing this information might constitute an invasion of privacy.

False statements made by any party in connection with a complaint of harassment or inappropriate conduct or during an investigation will constitute an occasion for appropriate corrective action, up to and including termination of the person's relationship with the institution.

Reporting Incidents of Harassment and Inappropriate Behavior

Students should report incidents of harassment and inappropriate behavior. While this policy sets forth institutional goals of promoting a community free of harassment and other inappropriate conduct, it is not intended to limit the institution's authority to discipline or take remedial action for conduct it deems unacceptable. It does not constitute a term or provision of any contract of employment or implied contract of employment between RGS and its employees, nor does it

create contractual obligations on behalf of the institution to any person. Likewise, it does not constitute a guarantee of continued student status to any person or otherwise create any obligation on the part of the institution.

Corrective Action

Employees: If it is determined that harassment or inappropriate conduct has occurred, corrective action may range from a verbal warning and counseling to termination of employment and may include such other forms of corrective action as the institution deems appropriate.

Students: If it is determined that harassment or inappropriate conduct has occurred, corrective action may range from a written warning to expulsion and may include other forms of corrective action as the institution deems appropriate. Generally, but not always, the "go-to person" is the Dean of Students or the Vice President of Operations.

Disciplinary Proceedings: General Information

Students are expected to abide by the tenets of the Community Standards. Violations of the Community standards are not limited to those that have been outlined in the Community Standards section of this handbook. Students should interpret the scope of Community Standards in the broadest sense.

Jurisdiction of the Institution

Disciplinary action may be taken if off-campus behavior adversely affects the institution in the pursuit of its objectives or violates existing local, state, or federal laws or ordinances.

If the activities of students result in violations of law, students are responsible for their actions and for any consequences imposed by authorities outside the institution. When student behavior is in violation of law and of Community Standards, the institution reserves the right to take disciplinary action independent of, and in addition to, any action by civil or governmental agencies. The institution may elect to delay on-campus disciplinary action pending resolution of criminal charges.

Judicial Authority

Responsibility for administration of the disciplinary process rests with the Dean of Students. Upon a complaint or allegation of student misconduct, a judicial body may be appointed by the Dean of Students or an authorized designee to investigate the charge and recommend sanctions if a violation has occurred.

The term "judicial body" shall be used to identify any person or persons authorized by the Dean of Students to determine whether a student has violated the Community Standards and to determine sanctions. In most cases, the judicial body used to hear a case shall be a Discipline Review Committee appointed by the Dean of Students consisting of a faculty member, an administrator and a student appointed by the president of the SGA.

In cases where a violation is admitted, a clear precedent exists, and there are no complicating factors, a decision shall be issued by the Dean of Students or an authorized designee. Cases involving denial of responsibility or conflicting evidence will be heard by a Discipline Review Committee. In some cases, the individual accused may elect to have a hearing before a Discipline Review Committee, or an administrative hearing.

In all cases, the purpose of the judicial body is to determine whether a violation has occurred, and, if so, to assign responsibility and determine the nature of the sanction.

At the time a complaint is received, or at any time thereafter, during, or at the termination of the proceedings, RGS may drop disciplinary proceedings and leave the complainant to pursue remedies through criminal or civil authorities.

Rights of the Accused

If the need for a hearing arises, accused students have the right:

- To have the hearing within a reasonable period of time after a charge is filed
- To receive notice of the time and place of the hearing and of specific charges
- To appear in person and present information on their own behalf, to call witnesses, and to ask questions of anyone present at the hearing. In determining responsibility for the alleged violation, RGS will permit witnesses of fact, but not of character
- To elect not to attend a hearing; in such cases, the hearing shall be conducted solely on the basis of the evidence available
- To refuse to answer or make a statement; however, decisions will be based on the evidence available
- To have at the hearing a member of the faculty, administration or SGA who may provide support but not participate in the hearing; individuals other than those listed above, such as family members and attorneys, will not be admitted
- To receive written documentation of the outcome of a hearing and any sanctions imposed
- To request an appeal of the outcome of a hearing

Rights of the Accuser

In a case involving one student bringing charges against another, the complainant also is afforded certain rights; these consist of the right

- To be treated with dignity and seriousness
- To be free of intimidation that may occur because of a case
- In a case of sexual assault, to be informed of the status and outcome of the case
- To have at the hearing a member of the faculty, administration, or student body, who may provide support but not participate in the hearing; individuals other than those listed above, such as family members and attorneys, will not be admitted
- To receive or be referred to appropriate support services

Charges and Hearings

Any member of the RGS community may file charges against any student for misconduct. Charges shall be prepared in writing and forwarded to the Vice President, the Dean of Students, or their designee. Any charge should be submitted as soon as possible after the event occurs.

The Dean of Students or designee shall determine the appropriate judicial body for hearing the case.

The hearing process shall include:

- Written or other appropriate notice of the hearing for the accused student
- Notice of the charges
- The opportunity for the person charged to defend against the charges and to present witnesses having direct testimony concerning the charges
- The opportunity for the person charged to be accompanied by a faculty, administrative or student member of the RGS community, who may support the accused student or accuser but not participate in the hearing
- A recorded version of the proceedings, if deemed appropriate

Deliberations and Decisions

A finding of responsibility for a violation must be supported by the majority of the members of a disciplinary panel or by the sole member of an administrative hearing. The criterion of "preponderance of the evidence" shall be used to determine responsibility when the evidence suggests that the alleged violation was more likely to have occurred than not.

Upon reaching a verdict of responsibility, a judicial body shall determine the sanction.

Students will receive written notification of any decision and the sanction to be imposed. Copies of disciplinary letters will be placed in the student's file.

RGS is required (because of the Higher Education Act of 2008), upon written request, to disclose to the alleged victim of a crime of violence or a non-forcible sex offense, or to the alleged victim's next of kin (if the victim dies as a result of the crime or offense), the final results of any institutional disciplinary proceeding dealing with that crime or offense.

Sanctions

The following pages suggest the range of official actions that may be imposed for violation of RGS regulations or expectations. One or more sanctions may be imposed in any given case. A statement concerning suggested minimum sanctions for specific violations has been prepared by RGS and is updated periodically.

It should be noted that the RGS refund policy directs that when a student has been suspended or expelled from RGS for disciplinary reasons, refunds are not available. The definitions of terms are as follows:

- **Warning:** a notice in writing that a regulation has been violated.
- **Restitution:** compensation for loss, damage, or injury, in the form of appropriate service, monetary or material replacement, or both.
- **Developmental Sanctions:** work assignments, service to RGS, reflection papers, counseling sessions, etc.
- **Suspension:** separation of the student from RGS for a specified period of time during which the student will not be allowed to participate in RGS-sponsored activity and will be barred from all RGS-owned property. Notification of suspension will not be maintained on the student's transcript during the period of suspension.
- **Interim Suspension:** separation of the student from RGS during which the student will not be allowed to participate in RGS-sponsored activity and will be barred from all RGS-owned property until a review hearing is conducted or a judicial board hearing is conducted for a case.
- **Expulsion:** permanent separation of the student from RGS. Notice of expulsion shall not appear on the student's transcript. The student will not be allowed to participate in any RGS-sponsored activity and will be barred from all RGS-owned property.

Appeals

The student and RGS have the right to request an appeal for a hearing decision. Students wishing to appeal must make their request in writing. Appeals must be received by the Dean of Students within five class days of receipt of the original hearing verdict. The Dean of Students shall evaluate the written appeal to determine whether grounds exist (as stated below).

Appeals of cases for which grounds have been recognized by the Dean of Students are heard by an Appeal Board, who are appointed by the Dean of Students. The Appeal Board can modify a sanction or call for a re-hearing of the case. The decision of the board in these instances is final, except in cases involving suspension or expulsion from RGS, in which case a final appeal may be made to the President of RGS.

Appeals shall be limited to a review of the record of the hearing and its supporting documents for one or more of the following purposes:

- To determine whether the original hearing was fair in its proceedings,
- To determine if a decision was made contrary to the evidence presented
- To evaluate the appropriateness of the sanction
- To consider new evidence that may alter the outcome of the case; in this instance, only the new evidence may be heard by the Appeal Board

Procedure for Student Appeals Concerning Grades

In the event a student believes that an instructor has improperly evaluated a test, paper and/or course grade, the following steps constitute the process to be undertaken,

The process for appeal of a course grade is as follows:

1. The student is to confer with the faculty member who gave the grade. That discussion is to be a face-to-face opportunity unless circumstances warrant a mutually agreed upon exception.
 - (a) If the discussion results in the student's accepting the faculty member's evaluation(s), the evaluation(s) will be sustained.
 - (b) In the event the faculty member agrees that the evaluation was not proper and merits a change, then s/he makes the appropriate changes. If the issue involves a change of an already submitted course grade and the faculty member agrees to an adjustment in the course grade, the faculty member is to inform the Dean of Academic Affairs and to state the reasons for requesting such a change. The Dean of Academic Affairs will inform the Registrar of such a change.
 - (c) If the faculty member decides that the original evaluation(s) is to stand, and the student contests that decision, the student is to submit a written appeal to the Dean of Academic Affairs.
2. The student's appeal is to include the course syllabus, a clear statement of the assignment(s), reasons for appealing the instructor's decisions, and presentation of any paper(s), and tests that are relevant to the appeal. In order for reviewers of the appeal to come to appropriate conclusions, the paper(s) are to be both un-annotated copies by the instructor's comments and annotated by the instructor.
3. Following the submission of the materials indicated above, the Dean of Academic Affairs will appoint a Review Committee that will consist of two RGS faculty members (full time or adjunct), and a non-RGS faculty/staff member who is conversant with the appropriate academic field and research techniques. The members of the Review Committee will review the submitted materials.
4. Upon completion of its examination of the materials, the Review Committee will interview both the student and the faculty member to discuss the evaluation(s) and the materials as they relate to the evaluation(s).
5. Within 14 days after the interview(s) the Review Committee will inform the student, the faculty member, and the Dean of Academic Affairs in writing of its decision to either sustain the evaluation(s) or grant the appeal.
6. If the student contests the Review Committee's decision, s/he may petition the Dean of Academic Affairs for a decision. The student is to furnish the Dean with the same materials given to the Review Committee and reasons for rejecting the decision of the Review Committee. The Dean's decision will be final.

* If an appeal involves an evaluation(s) by the Dean of Academic Affairs, the President shall step into the roles noted above for the Dean of Academic Affairs.

Procedures for Resolving Student Allegations of Discrimination

Student complaints that discrimination has occurred will be reviewed as follows:

Informal Procedures

- Students who believe that academic discrimination has occurred should discuss the matter with their advisor
- Students who believe that discrimination of a non-academic nature has occurred should discuss the matter with the Dean of Students.

It may be that discussion at this level, supplemented by the gathering of appropriate information, will result in a resolution of the matter to the students' satisfaction

Formal Procedures

If the matter is not resolved within a reasonable period of time to the satisfaction of the student, formal procedures may be instituted.

- Cases of an academic nature should be submitted with documentation to the Dean of Academic Affairs for resolution by the Academic Standards Committee
- Cases of a non-academic nature should be submitted to the Dean of Students for resolution by one of RGS adjudication forums

20. Miscellaneous Policies

Drug Policy

Respect Graduate School is committed to providing a drug-free workplace and academic environment in compliance with The Drug-Free Schools and Communities Act Amendments of 1989 (Public Law 101-226). The unlawful manufacture, distribution, possession, or use of controlled substances on Institution's property, or off-site while on Institutional business, is strictly prohibited. Violations of this policy will result in disciplinary action up to and including dismissal and/or mandatory participation in and successful completion of a drug assistance or rehabilitation program approved by an appropriate health or law enforcement agency.

Alcohol Policy

No person shall possess, purchase, or consume alcohol on campus.

Smoking Policy

Respect Graduate School is a smoke-free environment. The entire campus is designated as non-smoking.

Weapons Possession Policy

The possession, use or sale of weapons is prohibited in all areas of the Institution's campus. Weapons include, but are not limited to, firearms, ammunition, explosives, fireworks, and hunting knives.

Campus Law Enforcement

The Vice President of Operations serves as the campus security official. While there is no official law enforcement authority designated to this position, the Vice President of Operations serves as the liaison to local and state law enforcement agencies and is the key contact for campus crimes, fires, and related safety issues.

Standards of Confidentiality of Student Records

Respect Graduate School has a retention schedule, which is based on the American Association of Collegiate Registrars and Admission Officers' (AACRAO) Retention of Records: Guide for Retention and Disposal of Student Records (2019 Edition) (<https://community.aacrao.org>).

Respect Graduate School retains written documents submitted to the archives until they are due for disposal. Electronic documents are kept on the RGS computer systems until they are due for deletion.

Standards for Student Conduct

Respect Graduate School expects students to commit themselves to high standards of academic and community life. Honesty, respect for others and care for the quality of community life are

expected in all matters. For the sake of clarity, the standards for student conduct are divided into two categories: Academic Honesty and Personal Conduct.

Academic Honesty Policy

Respect Graduate School assumes and expects that students will be honest on examinations and in acknowledging sources used in all assignments. With respect to academic work and other Institution business, the Institution expects students to represent themselves and their work honestly to their instructors and other Institution representatives.

Breaches of the Institution's standards for Academic Honesty include but are not limited to cheating on examinations or papers; plagiarism; misrepresenting the nature and extent of one's own research; offering work done by others as one's own; employing words and/or ideas originating with others without proper acknowledgment]; and/or submitting the same work for more than one course without the clear prior consent of all instructors. Further details on "Consequences of Violating the Academic Honesty Policy" are provided in the Faculty and Student Handbooks.

Personal Conduct Policy

The Institution expects persons to show respect for one another. Such respect includes care for the personal well-being and faith development of others. It involves sensitivity to personal differences, including racial, sexual, ethnic, and religious diversity. Such respect also extends to respect for the property and privacy of others.

In order to maintain the standards of this community of learning and to ensure just and fair dealings with all persons, the following procedures will be followed:

1. Whenever possible, individuals are strongly encouraged to negotiate the resolution of any problem directly with the person(s) involved.
2. When direct negotiation is unable to resolve an issue, individuals are encouraged to seek informal institutional help or advice. The Dean of Academic Affairs, the Dean of Students, and other faculty and staff are available for such assistance.

If an issue cannot be resolved informally, the aggrieved person may bring it to the Dean of Students.

When appropriate, the Dean of Students will convene a meeting of the student(s) involved and any other appropriate persons, including persons chosen by the student(s).

The goal of this meeting will be to negotiate a consensus regarding appropriate action.

If no consensus can be reached, either the Dean of Students or any of the parties directly involved may make a written request to the President, for the convening of the Standards Committee.

Standards Committee

The Standards Committee is appointed annually by the President and consists of faculty members (excluding the President and the Dean of Students) and two students.

When called, the Standards Committee meets as soon as possible, usually within 48 hours after receiving a referral. In most cases, the Committee will request pertinent information, meet with the student(s) involved and any other appropriate persons.

If the committee concludes that disciplinary action is appropriate, it will formulate a motion for faculty action. The faculty's action may include any of the following:

1. **Formal Admonishment:** A formal admonishment consists of a written statement that becomes a part of a student's permanent file. The Dean of Students will report the decision of the faculty to the student.
2. **Suspension:** Action to suspend a student includes a recommendation of steps the student should take to be permitted to resume studies. The Dean of Students will report the decision of the faculty to the student. A student may apply to the Dean of Students for removal of the suspension after satisfactory completion of recommended steps. Removal of suspension will be done by the Dean of Students in consultation with the faculty.
3. **Dismissal:** Students dismissed from the Institution may not resume studies without re-applying and being re-admitted.
4. **Recording of dismissal:** Dismissal will be recorded on the student's transcript, and a copy of the dismissal action will become a part of the student's permanent file.
5. **Other actions** deemed appropriate to the circumstances.

Copyright Infringement

All students should recognize that information obtained through electronic methods might be protected by copyright laws of the United States (Title 17 U.S. Code), the Digital Millennium Copyright Act (H.R. 2281), and the World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO). As such, any student in violation may be prosecuted under the terms of the law. It is the student's responsibility to understand the laws pertaining to copyright infringement.

Computer Use Policies

Respect Graduate School is committed to providing computing services to support the needs of students, faculty, and staff of the Institution.

The policies below are: (1) to ensure the security and integrity of computer resources available on campus, (2) to ensure that users have reasonable access to the facilities, and (3) to ensure that the action of any one user will not adversely affect any aspect of the work of another. The

Institution reserves the right to control, evaluate and monitor all student computers and electronic telecommunications, except as may be prohibited by federal or state laws.

The following activities constitute unauthorized use of computer resources and are expressly prohibited.

1. Unauthorized access: Attempting to gain access to another user's programs or account without that user's express permission.
2. Passwords: Sharing student ID or password with any other person.
3. Harassment: Using the Institution's computer resources to harass or annoy others or prevent them from legitimately using the facilities. Note: Using electronic mail to send other users unsolicited messages of obscene, demeaning, and/or menacing content constitutes harassment.
4. Changing settings on Institution computers: Altering system software or hardware configurations without authorization or disrupting or interfering with the delivery or administration of computer resources in any way. Copying, renaming, altering, examining, or deleting the files or programs of another person without permission.
5. Games: Using the Institution's computing facilities for non-academic purposes. Academic work always takes precedence over recreational use. An individual must desist from playing computer games, writing non-academic email, using the Internet or any other non-academic computer activity when any person is waiting to use any computer intended for student/public use.
6. Compliance with federal, state, and local laws: Using any part of the computer resources of the Institution for any activity that violates federal, state, or local laws.
7. Commercial use: Using the Institution's computing resources for personal business or commercial use, such as the posting of commercial web pages and the distribution of unsolicited advertising.
8. Tampering/creating viruses, worms, or other malware: Deliberately attempting to tamper with, disrupt, delay, or endanger the regular operation of the Institution's computing resources. Creating or propagating computer worms, viruses, or other malware, or distributing electronic mail or software intended to replicate or do damage to another user's account, hardware, software, or data.
9. Network Monitoring: Monitoring of any network traffic, passwords, email, or any other network communications.
10. Using or distributing pornographic material: Using the Institution's computing resources to view or transmit material with prurient content. For purposes of this document "prurient content" is defined as material unrelated to a legitimate academic purpose and intended for the arousal of the sexual thoughts or desires of the recipient and/or the sender.

Access to the Institution's computing facilities and resources is a privilege, and student responsibilities accompany that privilege.

All students affiliated with the Institution, or those guests using library services, are expected to use good judgment when using computing resources, including Internet access and e-mail. This also includes appropriate personal behavior while using the computers.

Being granted access to the Institution's computing resources does not provide the user with a guarantee or warrant of any kind regarding system reliability, nor does it guarantee or provide a warrant for the user that any information obtained from its electronic communications system is correct and free of errors. The Institution is not responsible for any personal damage as a result of loss of data, inaccuracy of data, delays in processing data or non-delivery of data over its electronic communications system.

Cell Phone Policy

Cell phones must be turned off during classes, special lectures, and in the library. In no case may cell phone communication be made in any of these contexts.

Use of the Institution's Name and Logo on Stationery, Publications and Websites

The name "Respect Graduate School" is the property of Respect Graduate School, Inc., (the "Institution") and may not be used by other individuals or organizations without its consent. Stationery used by students or student groups should not have the name of the Institution printed on letterheads or envelopes, unless this is preceded by the name of the student or student organization or by some other indication that this is not the official stationery of the institution. Official stationery may not be used for personal use.

The Institution's logo is important to the overall image of the Institution. Any use of the logo must be approved by the Vice President of Operations. Publications or items bearing the logo must be approved by the Vice President of Operations' office prior to printing. Graphic images of the logo are available for approved purposes. Official student organizations may use the Institution's resources to create websites for their groups. Those wishing to build a web presence must work with the appropriate RGS staff to create a site. Student organizations are to abide by the rules set forth by the policy for creating new, or updating old, websites. Maintenance of the site is the direct responsibility of the student organization. Any site in violation of other Institution policies (Computer Usage, Racial and Sexual Harassment, etc.) may be terminated.

21. Academic Calendar

Fall 2022 Semester: August 25, 2022 – January 8, 2023

August 25 – Deadline for New Student Applications – Fall Semester

August 28 – New Student Orientation

August 29 – Opening Convocation

August 29 – Begin Fall Classes

September 2 – Deadline for Fall Course Registration

September 5 – Labor Day (Federal Holiday)

September 30 – Last Day for Withdrawal from a Course without Penalty

November 21 – Begin Thanksgiving Holiday Break (Federal Holiday)

November 25 – Thanksgiving Holiday Break *Ends* (Federal Holiday)

November 28 – Classes Resume

December 10 – Last Classes of the Fall Semester (Saturday)

December 12 – Begin Reading Period, Preparation of Papers
(Weather Related Make-up Classes)

December 18 – End Reading Period, Preparation of Papers
(Weather Related Make-up Classes)

December 19 – Begin Examinations Period

December 23 – End Examinations Period

January 6 – End of Fall Semester (2023)

January 8 – Faculty Submission of Final Grades for Fall Semester (2023)

Spring 2023 Semester: January 20, 2023 – May 22, 2023

January 20 – Deadline for New Student Applications

January 23 – Begin Spring Classes

January 27 – Deadline for Spring Course Registration

February 24 – Last Day to Withdraw from a Course Without a Penalty

March 13 – Begin Spring Break, Reading Period

March 17 – End Spring Break, Reading Period

March 20 – Classes Resume

March 22 – Ramadan Start

April 21 – Eid-al-Fitr (End of Ramadan)

April 22 – Second Day of Eid-al-Fitr

May 5 – Last Class of Spring Semester

May 8 – Start of Reading Period, Preparation of Papers, Thesis Defense, Examinations
(Weather Related Make-up Sessions)

May 12 – End of Reading Period, Preparation of Papers, Thesis Defense, Examinations
(Weather Related Make-up Sessions)

May 15 – Begin Examinations

May 19 – End Examinations

May 22 – Graduation Day, Faculty Submission of Final Grades

22. Location

Respect Graduate School is located in northwest Bethlehem, Pennsylvania. Bethlehem is a part of the Lehigh Valley region, where more than three-quarters of a million people enjoy a variety of cultural and entertainment events.

The Lehigh Valley's principal cities are Allentown, Bethlehem, and Easton, comprising the Allentown-Bethlehem-Easton metropolitan area. The Lehigh Valley is located approximately 60 miles (97 km) north of Philadelphia, 80 miles (130 km) northeast of Harrisburg, and 90 miles (140 km) west of New York City. The area is home to more than 820,000 people

Transportation

The campus is close to important air and ground transportation centers. In terms of air transportation, Lehigh Valley International Airport (ABE) is five minutes' driving distance. The website of the airport can be reached at www.flylv.com



An interstate bus terminal is one minute driving distance from the campus, operated by Trans Bridge Lines. Multiple daily bus rides are available to and from New York City, Jersey City, Wall Street, Newark Airport and John F. Kennedy Airport from the terminal. You may visit their website at www.transbridgelines.com