American University
Department of Philosophy and Religion

Guidelines for Tenure and Promotion of Tenure-Line Faculty
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American University and the Department of Philosophy and Religion require innovative and careful scholarship, effective teaching, and significant service to the Department and University from faculty members seeking to qualify for reappointment, promotion to Associate Professor with tenure, and promotion to Professor. The Department follows the general standards, timetable, and procedures for reappointments, promotion, and tenure laid down in the *American University Faculty Manual* and supplemented by instructions from the Dean of Faculty, the Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences, and the Committee on Faculty Actions. The present document seeks to make these criteria more useful for faculty members in Philosophy and Religion applying for reappointment, promotion, and/or tenure, as well as for the Department's Rank and Tenure Committee (RTC) and Chair in maintaining the Department's high standards for reappointment, promotion, and/or tenure.

<u>Scholarship</u>

The American Philosophical Association (APA)'s "Statement on Research" (1996) explains that "[r]esearch in philosophy . . . often takes the form of efforts to refine analyses, develop and advance or criticize interpretations, explore alternative perspectives and new ways of thinking, suggest and apply modified or novel modes of assessment, and, in general[,] to promote new understanding." Philosophical research may be "conceptual and methodological critique, involving the scrutiny of the basic concepts and methodologies of other disciplines, scientific as well as humanistic. Other cases involve interpretive and evaluative inquiry contributing to the enhancement of our comprehension of ourselves and our world. All of these forms of endeavor contribute significantly to the philosophical and academic enterprise." Finally, philosophical research "is highly diverse, reflecting the diversity of the array of kinds of inquiry the discipline subsumes." Given the disciplinary and cross-disciplinary work of philosophy, philosophical research may resemble "kinds of inquiry pursued in mathematics and in some of the sciences," "the activities of those who study languages, literatures, and the arts," and/or "the kind of scholarship practiced in intellectual history."

The American Academy of Religion (AAR)'s "Statement on Responsible Research Practices" (2016) states that "The academic study of religion is distinguished by theoretical and methodological pluralism, and researchers should respect this diversity of approaches." It further describes how scholars of religion "engage in diverse research practices, including but not limited to: interpreting and translating texts; excavating archaeological sites; exploring archival sources; constructing historical narratives; generating theoretical frameworks; producing

philosophical, theological, and ethical reflections; gathering statistical data; utilizing new media; doing participant observation; and conducting in-depth interviews." The AAR's statement on "[Evaluating Scholarship in Religious Studies for Promotion and Tenure](#)" (2019) further encourages institutions to consider as scholarship "activities that might have traditionally been considered service, but do contribute to the creation of new knowledge, such as editorial work, translations, bibliographies, textbooks, essays, pedagogical writings, and even exceptional teaching in nontraditional contexts like immersions and field study."

The Department of Philosophy and Religion uses diverse measures to capture the breadth of possible scholarly accomplishments among its candidates for tenure and/or promotion. The department recognizes and rewards innovative disciplinary and cross-disciplinary scholarship, as well as scholarship that is informed by and/or illuminates the values of diversity, equity, and inclusion. Whether a candidate chooses to focus on a single field or subfield and/or chooses to span fields/disciplines, candidates must demonstrate significant achievements in advancing knowledge in that field/discipline and/or those fields/disciplines. Candidates may also demonstrate significant achievements in Diversity Equity and Inclusion (DEI)-related scholarship, which may, for example, involve critically theorizing social justice, incorporating intellectual and creative contributions of historically marginalized groups (broadly construed) in theory-building, or engaging in community-based participatory research. Scholarly work that advances social justice for marginalized communities is recognized in the department's evaluation for reappointment, tenure, and/or promotion, as is community-based research. Candidates for reappointment must demonstrate progress toward meeting the standards for tenure and promotion as outlined in the following sections.

The department shall base its assessment of a faculty member's achievements on the aggregate productivity and impact of the work since degree completion, including evidence that the faculty member is productive since being hired at AU. High-quality scholarly and creative production is a fundamental criterion for tenure and promotion. Publications and other work will be read closely and carefully evaluated.

Within philosophy and religious studies, the usual format of innovative scholarship is a high-quality, refereed book (usually a monograph) with a well-respected publisher, typically a university press that submits book manuscripts to anonymous outside review. Articles in well-respected, refereed journals are also important. Edited volumes and book chapters may also play a key role in review. Solicited book chapters and journal articles, review essays, edited and co-authored publications, and presented papers and invited lectures can be important contributions to the profession as well, as are translations, critical editions, and public scholarship. Candidates submitting co-authored works for consideration should clarify their roles in these projects and detail the extent of their contributions. Candidates submitting public scholarship for consideration (e.g., collaborations with non-academic professionals and practitioners; community engagement; public education [e.g., in K-12 schools, prisons, and lifelong learning initiatives]; and/or use of public media platforms [e.g., websites, podcasts, videos, popular press]) should contextualize that work within existing public scholarship efforts in philosophy or religious studies, respectively. Works in any category will be considered published if editors of the publishers have accepted them in final form, with letters from the editors indicating as such.

The Department of Philosophy and Religion acknowledges the limitations of traditional metrics of impact in the assessment of innovative disciplinary, cross-disciplinary, and DEI-related scholarship. As such, it supports the use of multiple metrics, altmetrics, and qualitative assessments of impact. The APA's "Statement on Research" specifies, "The American Philosophical Association does not rank philosophical journals, nor does it sponsor or endorse any rankings of philosophical journals that are compiled by others." The department takes a similar caution when evaluating journals in both philosophy and religious studies. Candidates for tenure and promotion should thoroughly explain their publication venues' standing and impact. As citation indexes are rarely used in any fields of philosophy and religious studies, qualitative measures may be employed to convey the significance of scholarly work, such as the selectivity of journals, peer-review reports, published reviews, invitations to present work at conferences and academic institutions, the venue's DEI investments and community accountability practices, and the assessments of colleagues in the field, both those in the Department and those from whom outside evaluations are solicited.

The Department of Philosophy and Religion further recognizes publications in exclusively online and/or open access journals and other scholarly venues, as well as in specialized journals and/or with small presses. The AAR's "Evaluating Scholarship in Religious Studies for Promotion and Tenure" states: "In the evaluation process, scholarly evaluators should acknowledge that digital and electronic platforms for scholarly production are both legitimate and long-lasting. Scholarship that puts traditional methods and media of presentation into conversation with those methods and media that re-conceptualize religious studies merits attention." Because innovative disciplinary, cross-disciplinary, and DEI-related scholarship may be field-defining and field-challenging, high quality scholarly publications in non-traditional venues will be recognized for their contribution to knowledge. Similarly, because online and open access venues not only enhance the public standing of philosophy and religious studies, but also reflect values of the equitable distribution of knowledge, publications in online and/or open access journals and other modalities will be considered, especially in cases where the editorial and refereeing processes are demonstratively commensurate with established disciplinary standards.

Outside fellowships and grants are not plentiful in philosophy and religious studies but winning such an award generally speaks to the significance of a scholar's work in the humanities. Because fellowships and grants in philosophy and religious studies are few, such awards are not required for tenure or promotion, but candidates for tenure are normally expected to have applied for at least one external fellowship or grant.

Finally, to be recommended for tenure and promotion, a candidate should provide evidence of an ongoing research agenda beyond the work completed by the time of tenure review. This agenda could include conference papers presented, lectures invited, article or essay manuscripts drafted, grant applications, and/or a compelling description of the next book- length research project.

To be promoted to the rank of Professor, candidates must demonstrate substantial post-tenure records of excellence in scholarship and be nationally or internationally respected in their field(s) and/or across fields. Candidates' research is evaluated by their aggregate research record. Each candidate for promotion to Professor will normally be expected to have published a book (usually a monograph) beyond the book(s) written for tenure. The work written for promotion to

Professor should be complemented by additional evidence of continued scholarly productivity, which may include an edited book, a scholarly edition, articles, book chapters, translations, pedagogical publications, public scholarship, and/or DEI-related scholarship. Especially for candidates for promotion to Professor, invited presentations, articles, and chapters often carry as much weight as or more weight than uninvited versions of the same, since the invitations represent the recognition of the significance and influence of the scholarship of the invitees. Moreover, candidates advancing to the rank of Professor generally will have played significant roles in shaping their field(s) and/or shaping cross-disciplinary conversations, in addition to having made considerable scholarly contributions to their subfields. Candidates should provide evidence of being recognized leaders in their field(s) and/or across fields, as supported by awards, invited lectures, editorships of volumes, collaborations with other scholars, and/or engagements with other institutions or organizations.

Normally, two of the five external letters are from scholars who are not in the candidate's primary subfield. External reviewers are selected by the Chair, in light of relevant information offered by each candidate for action. Because the Department values the analyses of external reviewers, their letters are assured confidentiality so as to encourage prospective reviewers to accept the Chair's invitations to evaluate the Department's candidates.

Teaching Effectiveness

The result of all effective teaching is that students learn, that they achieve competence in the content of the material covered, and that they improve their critical faculties not only for further study of philosophy or religion but also for work in other areas.

All professors should be effective in lower- and upper-level courses and should be sufficiently perceptive, flexible, and knowledgeable to educate a range of students—from beginning undergraduates to advanced graduate students. The level of engagement that takes place in the classroom should be high. All professors should have a thorough, up-to-date mastery of a subfield or subfields in philosophy or religious studies and should be able and willing to teach a variety of courses within their ranges of competence. All professors should endeavor to provide substantial written comments on students' work; should criticize constructively rather than simply express satisfaction or dissatisfaction; and should provide timely, fair, and objective assessments of student performance.

Professors should endeavor, in both their classrooms and office hours, to actively help all students feel included and supported as full members of the learning community. Accessible teaching policies and practices go beyond the classroom experience, and student needs for accessibility are broader than diverse learning styles. Course policies can create barriers to accessibility for students, and we encourage faculty to consider accessibility broadly to facilitate learning while preserving equity.

Pedagogical innovations that advance social justice for marginalized communities are recognized in the department's evaluation for reappointment, tenure, and promotion. Community-based

teaching is valued, counted, and will be recognized as requiring additional labor on the part of faculty.

Professors are invited to demonstrate a commitment to diverse traditions in their pedagogy, drawing from, for example, anti-racist and critical pedagogies, non-Western pedagogies, disability pedagogies, feminist pedagogies, and queer pedagogies. This can be demonstrated by, for example:

- discussing political, historical, and economic contexts of one's discipline and its conventions
- critically examining the persistence and impact of discriminatory policies and attitudes (sexist, homophobic, transphobic, racist, ableist, etc.) on contemporary life and discourse
- diversifying course readings and materials to include historically marginalized authors and authors with expertise in, for example, critical race theory, disability theory, Eastern philosophies and religions, feminist philosophy, Global South philosophies, and queer and trans theory.
- creating an inclusive classroom environment addressing diverse learning styles
- cultivating openness to other epistemologies, traditions, cultures, and languages to reduce Eurocentrism's narrowing of the human experience and knowledge development
- practicing self-reflection and professional development by faculty
- including campus and societal engagement as part of the learning experience

(list adapted and modified from the CAS Antiracist Curriculum Development Initiative)

When developing syllabi, faculty should also be mindful of how financial constraints can affect access to educational materials, and when possible, seek to make course readings available free of charge. Strategies to make course readings more available, if not entirely free of charge, include coordinating with the AU library, utilizing Open Educational Resources (OER) Commons Hub, and assign older editions of textbooks that are more easily obtained.

The department recognizes the value of teaching the whole person (mind, body, and spirit), and purposefully facilitates critical inquiry and discourse across diverse perspectives and positionalities.

Evidence of good teaching can be demonstrated in a variety of ways. Faculty teaching portfolios, as well as Chair and RTC evaluations, should preserve and highlight that variety. Standardized student evaluations of teaching can be useful indicators. If evaluations indicate widespread dissatisfaction with a course and with its instructor, there is likely to be a serious teaching problem. However, no instructor is likely to be able to satisfy all students, and the instructor with the highest teaching evaluations may not be the best teacher. The Department values intellectually rigorous courses even if they do not achieve popularity as measured by student evaluations of teaching effectiveness. Other sources of evidence of an instructor's teaching effectiveness include students' narrative comments on teaching evaluations, classroom visits (by

peers and student observation committees), written self-assessment by faculty, and examples of feedback given to students (such as comments on their work). Course syllabi, assignments, and instruments of evaluation can serve as further evidence of a candidate's well-organized, rigorous, and professional approach to teaching.

For promotion and tenure, candidates are required to submit a teaching portfolio in accordance with the department's Beyond SETs guidelines. These guidelines are available on the department's [Microsoft Team's folder](#) and by request through email (philrel@american.edu). Further information about teaching portfolios is available on the deputy provost & dean of faculty's (DOF) website in the "Resources > Teaching Portfolios" section. Here is the [link](#). (After clicking on the link, scroll all the way down.)

For promotion to Professor, candidates should have developed one or more new courses since tenure. They must provide evidence of continued or greater effectiveness in the form of attending workshops or conferences, publishing articles about pedagogy, or otherwise working to improve teaching skills.

Service

Faculty involvement in Department and University service is essential, and the RTC and Chair will evaluate faculty service in reappointment, promotion, and tenure decisions. While too much time devoted to service by faculty may hamper their completion of scholarly projects or development of courses, so too will too little service (particularly in the Department) constitute a deficiency.

The Department expects its members to participate and share in its activities, including meetings and committee and other administrative tasks, in a constructive, effective, compassionate, and responsible manner. In addition, the Department expects each candidate for action to demonstrate good academic citizenship, which includes such things as observing one's posted office hours, submitting accurate reports on one's scholarship and other matters related to personnel decisions, and making sure that one's classes are covered in the event of being unable to cover them oneself. The Department values committee and organizational work in professional or scholarly associations and in the editing of scholarly journals. Members of the Department are encouraged to participate in such activities.

Service initiatives that advance social justice for marginalized communities are recognized in the department's evaluation for reappointment, tenure, and promotion. These initiatives, for example, might include contributing to mentoring students from underrepresented groups, working on processes, policies, and tools that promote equitable and inclusive practices, and participating in worships aimed at facilitating community discussions about DEI. In addition, those serving in elected roles in shared governance can be recognized for their efforts to gather a diverse set of perspectives from colleagues and AU community members when representing their constituents.

External service promoting DEI efforts is also recognized by the university, and it could include presenting papers relating to needs of communities historically excluded from higher education, election to office or other service to the profession that addresses disparities in higher education, and special public service activities in the community.

For promotion to Professor, candidates are expected to have increased their levels of responsibility and leadership in the Department and to have participated in wider ranges of service activities at the College and University levels. Customarily, candidates must have served the Department as Chair, RTC Chair, and/or Advisor (Undergraduate; Graduate; Ethics, Peace, and Human Rights; or Philosophy and Religion Club). Moreover, they must present strong records of having mentored junior faculty.