UNIVERSITY OF
MARYLAND

OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT

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October 2, 2019

James D. Fielder, Jr.
Secretary of Higher Education
Maryland Higher Education Commission
6 N. Liberty Street
Baltimore, MD 21201

Dear Secretary Fielder:

I am writing to request approval for a new Bachelor of Arts program in Religions of the Ancient Middle East. The proposal for the new program is attached. I am also submitting this proposal to the University System of Maryland for approval.

The proposal was endorsed by the appropriate faculty and administrative committees, and was recommended for approval by the University Senate at its meeting on October 2, 2019. I also endorse this proposal and am pleased to submit it for your approval.

Sincerely,

Wallace D. Loh
President

MDC
cc: Antoinette Coleman, Associate Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs
        Mary Ann Rankin, Senior Vice President and Provost
        Bonnie Thornton Dill, Dean, College of Arts and Humanities

Cover Sheet for In-State Institutions
New Program or Substantial Modification to Existing Program

Institution Submitting Proposal	University of Maryland, College Park

Each __action__ below requires a separate proposal and cover sheet.

◉ New Academic Program   ○ Substantial Change to a Degree Program

○ New Area of Concentration   ○ Substantial Change to an Area of Concentration

○ New Degree Level Approval   ○ Substantial Change to a Certificate Program

○ New Stand-Alone Certificate   ○ Cooperative Degree Program

○ Off Campus Program   ○ Offer Program at Regional Higher Education Center

Payment Submitted: ○ Yes ◉ No	Payment Type: ○ R*STARS ◉ Check	Payment Amount: 850	Date Submitted:

Department Proposing Program	Meyerhoff Center for Jewish Studies
Degree Level and Degree Type	Bachelor of Arts
Title of Proposed Program	Religions of the Ancient Middle East
Total Number of Credits	120
Suggested Codes	HEGIS: 1510.00 CIP: 38.0201
Program Modality	◉ On-campus ○ Distance Education (*fully online*)
Program Resources	◉ Using Existing Resources ○ Requiring New Resources
Projected Implementation Date	◉ Fall ○ Spring ○ Summer Year: 2020
Provide Link to Most Recent Academic Catalog	URL: **https://academiccatalog.umd.edu/**

Preferred Contact for this Proposal	Name: Mike Colson
	Title: Senior Coordinator for Academic Programs
	Phone: (301) 405-5626
	Email: **mcolson@umd.edu**

President/Chief Executive	Type Name: Wallace D. Loh
	Signature: Date: 10-2-2019
	Date of Approval/Endorsement by Governing Board:

Revised 3/2019

A. Centrality to the University's Mission and Planning Priorities

Description. The University of Maryland proposes to establish a new undergraduate major focused on religion and culture of the ancient Middle East. The program will offer students the opportunity to explore the world out of which biblical Israel and ancient Judaism, Christianity, and early Islam emerged, including the wide array of other religious and culture beliefs, practices, and institutions that flourished between 1200 years before, through 850 years after, the beginning of the Christian era (1200 BCE/BC through 850 CE/AD). The major builds upon an existing academic minor in Religious Studies and is designed with a relatively light set of requirements in order to facilitate opportunities for students to double-major with other disciplines. An optional language-enhanced track offers the opportunity for training in several relevant languages such as Greek, Arabic, and Hebrew, and others that are available through partnership with the Big Ten Academic Alliance.

Relation to Strategic Goals. As the Flagship campus, the University of Maryland prides itself on providing enriching and challenging undergraduate educational experiences in the liberal arts and sciences. Its programs in the humanities are closely linked with the area's cultural resources, including the Library of Congress, the National Archives, the Smithsonian, and other local museums. Faculty in the humanities disciplines are leaders in the preservation and interpretation of history and culture. The University offers many opportunities for global engagement so that students graduate with a broader understanding of the world around them, prepared to work on some of the world's toughest problems. The undergraduate major proposed here therefore speaks directly to goals 6 and 7 in undergraduate education of the University's most recent mission statement[1].

Funding. The majority of the coursework for the major will be derived from existing courses in several other disciplines in the humanities, such as history, art history, classics, religion, and languages. As a result, very little in the way of new resources for the program are required to package the courses into a coherent plan of study.

Institutional Commitment. The program will be administratively housed in the Joseph and Rebecca Meyerhoff Program and Center for Jewish Studies within the College of Arts and Humanities, which is the home of an existing major in Jewish Studies and a minor in Religious Studies, from which much of the coursework will be drawn. It is important to note, however, that this program is quite distinct from Jewish Studies, in that its focus is geographical and historical -- it explicitly incorporates study of other languages of relevance in the Middle East, and will be delivered as a collaborative effort among faculty in several disciplines including history, classics, and languages.

B. Critical and Compelling Regional or Statewide Need as Identified in the State Plan

Need. The proposed program advances knowledge around a key set of issues about which American culture often appears to lack understanding, especially from a historical perspective. Complex political

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[1] University of Maryland, College Park. (August 1, 2018). University of Maryland Mission Statement. (p. 5). Retrieved January 28, 2019 from: https://www.provost.umd.edu/Documents/Mission-Vision.pdf.

issues rooted in the rise of Judaism, Christianity, and Islam are debated every day at the local, state and federal level and in the national media. These debates often take place on the basis of opinion or conventional knowledge, frequently based on siloed information within a specific religious community and with biases about others. The goal of this major is to foster a clearer, unsentimental, understanding of origins and the historical past as one factor in decision making, in addition to political, diplomatic, and military factors.

For the Meyerhoff Center, the proposed major represents a specific effort to enhance its ability to reach a more diverse population. Courses that are currently offered by the Meyerhoff Center—and particularly the courses that are at the foundations of the proposed BA program—have often drawn widely from across the campus and many are approved as part of the university's General Education curriculum. However, because the Center is most closely associated with Judaism, its courses end up being too tied to one sub-population to really attract a diverse student body. This proposed major intentionally actively seeks a much broader student body who are interested in Jewish, Christian, and Islamic origins. We note, for example, consistently high enrollment in ancient history courses and the number of heritage students in the DC area, especially of Iranian and Ethiopian descent.

State Plan. The proposed program aligns with the goal of innovation in the *Maryland State Plan for Postsecondary Education*, through creation of an innovative, multidisciplinary program that allows students to explore, through scholarly study, the origins and historical past of a complex set of issues that occupy political debate, diplomacy, and national security on a daily basis. The major promotes diversity and inclusion through its broad appeal to a wide diversity of students.

C. Quantifiable and Reliable Evidence and Documentation of Market Supply and Demand in the Region and State

As a liberal arts major, labor statistics do not readily associate religious studies, classics, or ancient history degree programs with specific career objectives. The major is anticipated to provide graduates with important preparatory work in museums, in secondary education, and in various aspects government work associated with the Middle East. Those students who choose to pursue the language track will have unique training in less commonly taught languages. Generally, employment rates for graduates from the College of Arts and Humanities are above 90% upon graduation. The most recent [Humanities Indicators Report](http://humanitiesindicators.org)[2] showed that unemployment rates for humanities degree recipients are not substantially different than the total U.S. average for bachelor's degree recipients, and humanities graduates find significant job satisfaction.   Moreover, the program proposed here is specifically designed to be achievable as a double-major with another degree program.

D. Reasonableness of Program Duplication

At present, six institutions in the state offer majors in Religious Studies (Towson University, Hood College, Goucher College, McDaniel College, St. Mary's College of Maryland, and Notre Dame of Maryland University), while another handful (including UMD) offer minors in the field (UMBC, Morgan

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[2] http://humanitiesindicators.org

State, Salisbury University, and Stevenson University; students at Morgan State University can also complete a major in Philosophy that incorporates a religious studies track). Other relevant offerings in the state include a major in Near East Studies (Johns Hopkins University); minors in Arabic and Middle Eastern Studies, Medieval Studies, and Renaissance Studies (Hood College); and a minor in Book Studies (Goucher College).

The proposed program is in conversation with each of these other areas of study, but it overlaps directly with none of them. It will be the only program in the state to focus on the study of religion and culture in the ancient and the Near East in late Antiquity. As such, it will also be the first program in the state to introduce students to the integrated study of Judaism, Christianity, and Islam, in both their origins and their extended historical development.

E. Relevance to Historically Black Institutions (HBIs)

This program is most comparable to the offerings of Morgan State University, whose department of Philosophy and Religious Studies offers a minor in Religious Studies and a Major in Philosophy with a Religious Studies track. However, while the program at Morgan State offers general instruction in Religious Studies (comparable to the general Religious Studies minor already offered at UMD), the proposed program is more specifically focused in terms of geography, time period, and culture. Other Maryland HBIs, including Coppin State University, Bowie State University, and the University of Maryland, Eastern Shore, include Religious Studies courses in their catalogs but do not provide specific programs in Religious Studies.

F. Relevance to the identity of Historically Black Institutions (HBIs)

UMD has already established itself in the field of religious studies, as our Jewish Studies bachelor's program has been offered for many years. UMD has also offered undergraduate coursework in the religions, history, and languages of the ancient Middle East for a number of years. Accordingly, the proposed program would not have an impact on the uniqueness or institutional identity of any Maryland HBI.

G. Adequacy of Curriculum Design, Program Modality, and Related Learning Outcomes

Curricular Development. The University of Maryland has been offering a credential (first, a "citation;" later, a "minor") in Religious Studies since 2001. For most of that time, it has been administered by the Meyerhoff Center for Jewish Studies. While the major in Jewish Studies has experienced a decline in enrollment in recent years, classes in "biblical studies" more broadly conceived (Hebrew Bible/Old Testament, Ancient Near East, Early Christianity, etc.) continue to enroll well. To facilitate the expansion of offerings, the Center has partnered with an expert Islamist from the History department, as well as with archeologists, art historians, and classicists who have expertise in related chronological and geographical fields. Student surveys indicated strong interest in this broader curriculum, and most specifically there was an indication of interest in specific related languages such as Hebrew, Greek, or Aramaic. As a result, the design of the curriculum incorporates an optional enhanced language track for interested students. A steady state enrollment of about 30 students in the major is anticipated.

Faculty Oversight. The program will be overseen by the Meyerhoff Program and Center for Jewish Studies, which also houses the Religious Studies minor. As an interdisciplinary unit, the Meyerhoff Center has a mechanism for granting "Core Faculty Status" to faculties not appointed in Jewish Studies. The faculty oversight committee will initially consist of three faculty from Jewish Studies and one from History, and may be extended as the program matures.

Appendix A has a listing of faculty involved in the program along with their credentials.

Educational Objectives and Learning Outcomes. The program's primary objectives are to provide students with a deeper understanding of the history of the Middle East within the context of the development of its three most prominent religions, Judaism, Christianity, and Islam. The major aims to provide a framework for the study of the emergence of these traditions in a broad historical, cultural, and comparative context. The program endorses the view that as *academic* teachers about religion, we encourage students to be "critics"—to cultivate the distance, and to develop the analytical tools to separate their own prior understanding based on their own knowledge or beliefs from those of the people they study, and to question the assumptions and practices of ancient founders and practitioners—rather than to be "caretakers" whose analyses must always be measured against the traditional values of the religious groups including those of contemporary leaders and practitioners.

Program learning outcomes are the following. Successful Majors in Religions of the Ancient Middle East (RAME) will:

- Demonstrate an understanding of fundamental methodological, historical, and/or comparative approaches to the study of religion and culture in the ancient Near East and apply this understanding to specific relevant examples. [Demonstrated through written work or final exam in one of the approved I-series courses]
- Describe and illustrate the development of at least two chronological, geographical, or cultural sub-areas. [Foundations]
- Formulate and defend an argument about religion and culture in the ancient near east informed by the modern scholarship and amply illustrated with reference to ancient evidence. [Demonstrated through written work, potentially including a major research paper, in the capstone course]

In addition to the above, Language track students will demonstrate the ability to use the languages they have studied as a tool for deep engagement with ancient source material.

An Honors track is also anticipated, and in addition to the above outcomes, Honors students will be expected to apply knowledge and approaches to investigate a high-level research question and to defend a thesis that is methodologically informed, makes ample use of ancient textual and/or non-textual evidence as well modern scholarly work, and present the results in clear and well-organized academic prose.

The degree to which the RAME program is meeting its goals will be assessed by means of its Learning Outcomes Assessment Plan (Appendix B).

Institutional assessment and documentation of learning outcomes. Undergraduate programs complete annual assessments, with each learning outcome evaluated at least once in a four-year cycle. Programs report findings each fall in summary form following a template structure and are informed by a "best practices" guide and a rubric. Assessment summary reports for each college are collected by the College Coordinator, who works to promote high standards through support and guidance to programs and with continuous improvement practices.

Course requirements. The RAME major will consist of 120 credits, with 30 credits that are specific to the requirements of the major. This is the minimum standard for an undergraduate bachelor's program, and by design is intended to be relatively light to allow students to double major in this cultural and historical area along with another discipline in the humanities in addition to completing their general education requirements. The major includes foundational courses comprising of one I-Series course (3 credits) and three courses (9 credits) in two or more geographical, chronological, or cultural sub-areas; 15 credits of electives, of which four courses (12 credits) must be at the upper level, and a capstone seminar. Students who wish to pursue the language track will complete an additional six credits in Hebrew, Greek, Arabic, or another relevant language beyond the first-year level. A prerequisite for the language track is 6-12 credits of prior instruction in the relevant language. Honors track students will complete the language track and will have additional requirements based on a plan approved by the University's Honors College. Specific course requirements are as follows; course descriptions are included in Appendix C.

Foundations (12 credits)
One approved I-Series course (3 cr)
　　RELS 289I: What is Religion? (DSHU,DSCC)
　　RELS 289M: Jesus, Mani, and Muhammad (DSPS, DSHU)
　　JWST 289J: Jerusalem in Antiquity: The History of Sacred Space in a Holy City (DSPS, DSHU)
　　JWST 230: Inventing Tradition: The Making of Rabbinic Judaism (DSPS, DSHU)

Three courses in two or more geographical, chronological, or cultural sub-areas (9 cr)
　　HIST120: Islamic Civilization (DSHU)
　　RELS264: Intro to New Testament (DSHU)
　　JWST225: Religions of the Ancient Near East (DSHU)
　　JWST231: Jewish Texts and Cultures of the Second Temple Period (DSHU, DSPS)
　　JWST262: Intro to Hebrew Bible/Old Testament (DSHU)

Electives (15 credits; four courses at the upper level)
　　CLAS305: Archaeological Methods and Practice (DSHS)
　　HIST110: The Ancient World (DSHU)
　　HIST320: Early Christianity: Jesus to Constantine
　　HIST428R: Selected Topics in History; Transition to Islam: From the Ancient to the Medieval Muslim World
　　JWST324: Biblical History and Culture (3)

JWST325: Jews and Judaism in Antiquity I: Sixth Century BCE through the First Century CE (DSHS or DSHU, DSSP, DSPC)
JWST326: Jews and Judaism in Antiquity II: First through Seventh Centuries (DSSP)
JWST430: Dead Sea Scrolls (DSHU, DSSP)
JWST468: Readings in the Hebrew Bible (3-4)
JWST469: Readings in Rabbinic Hebrew (3-4)
Other courses by permission of the program director

Capstone (3 cr)
RELS408: Capstone Seminar in Religion and Culture in the Ancient and Late Antique Near East [proposed and under review]

Language Track (minimum of 6 additional credits)
Prerequisite: First year language (6-12 credits).
Six credits in Hebrew, Arabic, Greek or other relevant language beyond the first year level.
Note: Students who place directly into second year language or above need only complete six credits of language. The number of prerequisite language credits varies by language.

See Appendix C for course descriptions.

General Education. Students will complete some of their general education requirements through courses in the major as well as electives offered across the campus. The curriculum plan in Appendix D shows an example of how students will progress through the major at the same time completing the general education requirements.

Accreditation or Certification Requirements. There are no specialized accreditation or certification requirements for this program.

Other Institutions or Organizations. No contracts with another institution or non-collegiate organization for this program are anticipated.

Student Support. Students enrolled in this program will have access to all the resources necessary in order to succeed in the program and make the most of the learning opportunity. Students entering the university as either first-time college students or transfer students will learn about the program through their orientation program. Students entering the major as internal transfers will meet with an advisor in the program when they declare the major.

Marketing and Admissions Information. The program will be clearly and accurately described in the university website and be marketed at university recruiting events.

H. Adequacy of Articulation

Maryland community college students who complete the Associates degree prior to transfer to UMD are deemed to have completed their General Education requirements, with the exception of Professional Writing. There are no specific articulation agreements required for this major, but the coursework of transfer students will be evaluated with credit applied as appropriate. With the exception of the language courses, the majority of the courses do not have pre-requisites.

I. Adequacy of Faculty Resources

Program faculty. Faculty will be drawn from the Meyerhoff program and a variety of other departments within the College of Arts & Humanities.   See Appendix A for faculty biographies of those currently expected to teach in the program.

Faculty training.   The University offers numerous opportunities for faculty training and support in the classroom, through the Teaching and Learning Transformation Center, workshops by the Office of Faculty Affairs, and by the Division of Information Technology's Learning Technology Design group.

J. Adequacy of Library Resources

The University of Maryland Libraries has conducted an assessment of library resources required for this program. The assessment concluded that the University Libraries are able to meet, with its current resources, the curricular and research needs of the program.

K. Adequacy of Physical Facilities, Infrastructure, and Instructional Resources

No new instructional facilities are required – the program will make use of the campus's existing general purpose classrooms.

L. Adequacy of Financial Resources

Resources for the new program will be drawn from existing instructional resources. Most of the courses required for the major are already currently taught. The principle task will be to make sure that the Foundations course are taught on a frequent enough schedule to allow students to move through the major.
The program is also not expected to generate extensive new administrative responsibilities. The Meyerhoff Center has sufficient advising capacity to handle the anticipated number of students.

(See Tables 1 and 2 for estimated resources and expenditures)

M. Adequacy of Program Evaluation

Formal program review is carried out according to the University of Maryland's policy for Periodic Review of Academic Units, which includes a review of the academic programs offered by, and the research and administration of, the academic unit (http://www.president.umd.edu/policies/2014-i-600a.html). Program Review is also monitored following the guidelines of the campus-wide cycle of

Learning Outcomes Assessment (https://www.irpa.umd.edu/Assessment/LOA.html). Faculty within the department are reviewed according to the University's Policy on Periodic Evaluation of Faculty Performance (http://www.president.umd.edu/policies/2014-ii-120a.html). Since 2005, the University has used an online course evaluation instrument that standardizes course evaluations across campus. The course evaluation has standard, university-wide questions and also allows for supplemental, specialized questions from the academic unit offering the course.

N. Consistency with Minority Student Achievement goals

The University as a whole has many ongoing strategies to recruit and retain underrepresented minority students with participation by all academic units. Courses offered through the Religious Studies minor have been particularly attractive to students of diverse racial, ethnic, religious, gender, and sexual identities. The subject matter under discussion lends itself to broad and diverse interest, and our commitment to personal and engaged academic advising has always contributed to retention of diverse students from across the university.   Among the current course offerings of the Religious Studies minor are three I-series classes (RELS 289I "What is Religion?"; RELS 289J "Jerusalem in Antiquity"; and RELS 289M "Jesus, Mani, and Muhammad") that attract 60 to 100 students each time they are taught. These courses attract students from a wide variety of backgrounds and disciplines, not only for their contents but because they fulfill significant General Education requirements (in Humanities, Cultural Competence, I-Series). Advertisement of the new major in these courses will provide an opportunity to recruit a diverse student body to the major.

O.   Relationship to Low Productivity Programs Identified by the Commission

N/A

P.   Adequacy of Distance Education Programs

N/A

Table 1: Expenditures

Expenditure Categories	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5
1. Faculty (b+c below)	$45,220	$46,577	$47,974	$49,413	$50,896
a. #FTE	0.4	0.4	0.4	0.4	0.4
b. Total Salary	$34,000	$35,020	$36,071	$37,153	$38,267
c. Total Benefits	$11,220	$11,557	$11,903	$12,260	$12,628
2. Admin. Staff (b+c below)	$9,310	$9,589	$9,877	$10,173	$10,478
a. #FTE	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1
b. Total Salary	$7,000	$7,210	$7,426	$7,649	$7,879
c. Total Benefits	$2,310	$2,379	$2,451	$2,524	$2,600
3. Total Support Staff (b+c below)	$6,650	$6,850	$7,055	$7,267	$7,485
a. #FTE	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1
b. Total Salary	$5,000	$5,150	$5,305	$5,464	$5,628
c. Total Benefits	$1,650	$1,700	$1,750	$1,803	$1,857
4. Graduate Assistants (b+c)	$18,604	$19,162	$19,737	$20,329	$20,939
a. #FTE	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5
b. Stipend	$10,000	$10,300	$10,609	$10,927	$11,255
c. Tuition Remission	$8,604	$8,862	$9,128	$9,402	$9,684
5. Equipment	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0
6. Library	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0
7. New or Renovated Space	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0
8. Other Expenses: Operational Expenses	$10,000	$10,000	$10,000	$10,000	$10,000
TOTAL (Add 1 - 8)	**$89,784**	**$92,178**	**$94,643**	**$97,182**	**$99,798**

Table 2: Resources

The university is not anticipating overall enrollment growth as a result of this major, so no new tuition revenue is assumed in identifying resources. Resources will come from reallocation of instructional resources from the collaborating departments, as needed.

Resources Categories	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5
1.Reallocated Funds	$89,784	$92,178	$94,643	$97,182	$99,798
2. Tuition/Fee Revenue (c+g below)	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0
a. #FT Students	5	15	20	30	40
b. Annual Tuition/Fee Rate	$13,575	$13,982	$14,402	$14,834	$15,279
c. Annual FT Revenue (a x b)	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0
d. # PT Students	1	1	1	1	1
e. Credit Hour Rate	$565.40	$582.36	$599.83	$617.83	$636.36
f. Annual Credit Hours	20	20	20	20	20
g. Total Part Time Revenue (d x e x f)	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0
3. Grants, Contracts, & Other External Sources	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0
4. Other Sources	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0
TOTAL (Add 1 - 4)	**$89,784**	**$92,178**	**$94,643**	**$97,182**	**$99,798**

Appendix A: Faculty and Organization

The following core faculty will deliver the majority of the program. Other faculty from across the College of Arts and Humanities will be engaged through electives and other course work.

Maxine Grossman, Associate Professor of Jewish Studies, Director of the Religious Studies minor, and Coordinator for the new major. Ph.D., University of Pennsylvania. Scholarly expertise: Dead Sea Scrolls; Hebrew Bible; Religious Studies Methodology
- RELS 289I: What is Religion?
- JWST 262: Intro to Hebrew Bible/Old Testament
- JWST 231: Jewish Texts and Cultures of the Second Temple Period

Hayim Lapin, Robert H. Smith Professor of Jewish Studies and History; Director of the Joseph and Rebecca Meyerhoff Program and Center for Jewish Studies. Ph.D., Columbia University. Scholarly expertise: Judaism in Late Antiquity; Early Christianity; Religion in the Later Roman World.
- RELS 289M: Jesus, Mani, and Muhammad
- HIST 281: Inventing Tradition: The Making of Rabbinic Judaism
- RELS 264: Intro to New Testament
- JWST 230: Rabbinic Movement: History and Culture

Matthew Suriano, Associate Professor of Near Eastern Languages and Cultures. Ph.D., UCLA. Scholarly expertise: Archaeology, Ancient Near East, Hebrew Biblical Studies
- JWST 289J: Jerusalem in Antiquity The History of Sacred Space in a Holy City
- JWST 225: Religions of the Ancient Near East
- JWST 262: Intro to Hebrew Bible/Old Testament

Antoine Borrut, Associate Professor of History and Director of Undergraduate Studies in History. Ph.D., La Sorbonne. Scholarly expertise: Islam, Pre- and Early Islamic Arabia and the Middle East.
- HIST 120: Islamic Civilization
- HIST 428R: Selected Topics in History; Transition to Islam: From the Ancient to the Medieval Muslim World

Appendix B: Learning Outcomes Assessment Plan

Annually: Collect data from Foundations and I-Series classes, Capstone courses, and Honors theses.
- Faculty in relevant courses use rubrics to assess majors. Data compares majors to all course takers
- Faculty reports outcomes to LOA coordinator
- Rubrics are attached.

Year 1
Outcome 1: Methodological, historical, and/or comparative approaches
- Assessment based on final assignment in an I-Series Foundations courses
Outcome 2: Developments in two or more regional, geographical, or chronological sub-areas
- Assessments of individual areas based on Foundations courses
- LOA coordinator and committee will need to cross-check to verify that students are meeting expectations in two or more areas.
Year 2
Outcome 3: Formulate and defend an independent argument about religion and culture in the ancient
      Near East
- Assessment based on final work product in Capstone/Thesis

Language track: Use the primary languages as a tool for deep engagement
- Assessment based on final work product in Capstone/Thesis

Honors track: Apply knowledge and approaches to a high level research question
- Assessment based on final work product in Capstone/Thesis

Outcome 1: Successful Majors will ***demonstrate an understanding of*** fundamental methodological, historical, and/or comparative approaches to the study of religion and culture in the ancient Near East and will ***apply this understanding*** to specific relevant examples. [Demonstrated through written work or final exam in one of the approved I-series courses]

	Exceeds Expectations	Meets Expectations	Does Not Meet Expectations
Understanding of method/theory	Demonstrates a sophisticated understanding of the historical backdrop and major innovations of the approach. Shows a deep understanding of key terminology and an integrated sense of the relationships of concepts within the approach.	Demonstrates an understanding of the historical backdrop and major innovations of the approach. Shows some understanding of key terminology and begins to integrate concepts within the approach.	Has difficulty demonstrating an understanding of the historical backdrop and major innovations of the approach. Can identify key terminology but may have trouble integrating concepts within the approach.
Application of method/theory to relevant examples	Identifies a relevant example for which this approach is appropriate. Applies the approach to the example in a consistent, thorough, and descriptive manner. Coherently integrates this application into a larger understanding of the approach.	Identifies an example for which this approach may be appropriate. Applies the approach to the example and provides some description. Provides a context for integration of this application.	Identifies an example for assessment of this approach, without attention to appropriateness. Applies the approach to the example. Has some difficulty providing a context for integration of the application.
Critique and analysis of method/theory	Understands the limits of the approach and can suggest contexts in which it might be especially valuable or in some way problematic.	Can identify limits for the approach and some of its potential benefits or shortcomings.	Has difficulty identifying the limits of this approach and its potential benefits or shortcomings.
Extrapolation from findings	Extrapolates in creative, interesting, and novel ways from this work to its larger possibilities.	Can extrapolates from this work to its larger possibilities.	Has difficulty extrapolating from this work to its larger possibilities.

Outcome 2: Successful Majors will ***describe*** and ***illustrate*** the development of at least two chronological, geographical, or cultural sub-areas. [Demonstrated through written work or final exam in one or more of the approved foundations courses]

	Exceeds Expectations	Meets Expectations	Does Not Meet Expectations
Description of a chronological, geographic or cultural subgroup (must be completed for two different groups)	Shows a deep understanding of the historical setting and development of the group. Demonstrates a coherent and sophisticated understanding of major social, cultural, and historical developments of the group. Uses concepts and terminology with rigor and clarity.	Shows an understanding of the historical setting and development of the group. Demonstrates understanding of some social, cultural, and historical developments of the group. Can define concepts and terminology with some clarity.	Has difficulty showing understanding of the historical setting and development of the group. Can identify some social, cultural, and historical developments of the group. Can define concepts and terminology to a limited extent.
Illustration of historical example (must be completed for two different groups)	Identifies a relevant and significant example of social, cultural, or historical significance. Engages with the example in a consistent, thorough, and descriptive manner. Coherently integrates this illustration into a larger understanding of group.	Identifies an example of some social, cultural, or historical significance. Engages with the example and integrates it into a reasonable understanding of group.	Has difficulty identifying a relevant and significant example of social, cultural, or historical significance. Engages minimally with the example and and shows a limited ability to understand it in terms of group.
Critique and analysis of the process	Understands the limits of the illustration process and can suggest contexts in which it might be especially valuable or in some way problematic.	Can identify limits for the process and some of its potential benefits or shortcomings.	Has difficulty identifying the limits of this process and its potential benefits or shortcomings.
Extrapolation from findings	Extrapolates in creative, interesting, and novel ways from this work to its larger possibilities.	Can extrapolates from this work to its larger possibilities.	Has difficulty extrapolating from this work to its larger possibilities.

Outcome 3: Successful Majors will ***formulate*** and ***defend*** an argument about the ancient near east informed by the modern scholarship and amply illustrated with reference to ancient evidence. [Demonstrated through written work, potentially including a major research paper, in the capstone course]

	Exceeds Expectations	Meets Expectations	Does Not Meet Expectations
Formulation of argument	Thinks creatively about the possibilities for cultivating a research question that is significant and responsible. Sets appropriate limits for the range and content of the argument to be defended.	Develops a reasonable research question and sets some limits on the range and content of the argument to be defended.	Has difficulty developing an independent research question and setting limits on the range and content of the argument to be defended.
Research in support of argument	Identifies relevant and appropriate primary and secondary sources. Reviews sources using a coherent approach, and records findings in responsible detail.	Identifies a limited number of primary and secondary sources. Reviews sources with relative thoroughness and records findings in some detail.	Has difficulty identifying relevant and appropriate sources. Reviews sources without a coherent approach, and does not fully record findings in responsible detail.
Presentation and defense of argument	Generates a convincing argument, supported by copious primary and secondary sources. Presents final paper with proper attention to style, mechanics, and annotation.	Generates an acceptable argument, supported by primary and secondary sources. May have some shortcomings in style or mechanics, but not in annotation.	Generates an argument, not fully supported by sources. Presents final paper with significant problems in style or mechanics. (Failure demonstrate proper annotation may be an honor offense).
Scholarly sophistication and creativity	Presents work that reflects scholarly creativity and insight.	Presents work in which some scholarly independence is evident.	Has difficulty working independently.

In addition to the above, Language Track students **demonstrate** the ability to use the languages they have studied as a tool for deep engagement with ancient source material.

	Exceeds Expectations	Meets Expectations	Does Not Meet Expectations
Support a thesis or argument that depends on use of extended source material in the original language	Claims based on the reading of the source material are always correct and conclusions drawn always appropriate to the source material.	Claims based on the reading of the source material are usually correct and conclusions drawn usually appropriate to the source material.	Claims based on the reading of the source material are frequently incorrect and/or conclusions drawn inappropriate to the source material.
Support a thesis or argument with analysis of specific grammatical, morphological, or syntactic data from the source material.	Analysis is always correct and conclusions drawn always appropriate to the source material.	Analysis is usually correct; conclusions drawn are usually appropriate to the source material.	Analysis may be substantially incorrect and/or conclusions drawn inappropriate to the source material.

In addition to the above, Honors students **apply** knowledge and approaches to **investigate** a high level research question and to **defend** a thesis that is methodologically informed, makes ample use of ancient textual and/or non-textual evidence as well modern scholarly work, and present the results in clear and well-organized academic prose.

	Exceeds Expectations	Meets Expectations	Does not Meet Expectations
Assembly and critical assessment of bibliography	The student is always able to recognize appropriate source material.	The student is able to recognize appropriate source material.	The student is not able to recognize appropriate source material.
Clarity and coherence of writing	The student's writing is consistent in its organization and lucidity, displaying a clear objective.	The student's writing is organized and/or displays a clear objective.	The student's writing is not well organized and displays a clear objective.
Articulation of a thesis and extended argument	The student is able to identify a problem in research and organize a strong argument around this problem.	The student is able to identify a problem in research and organize an argument around this problem.	The student is not able to identify a problem in research and organize a argument around this problem.
High level research question	Research question and use of sources critique and/or extend current research in the field.	Research question and use of sources correctly and fully represent scholarship without extensive critique or extension.	Research question and use of sources may not show correctly or adequately reflect current research. Student is unable to critique current approaches.

Appendix C: Course Descriptions

HIST 120 (or RELS 120) – Islamic Civilization (3 credits)
Prerequisites: N/A
Introduction to society and culture in the Middle East since the advent of Islam: as a personal and communal faith; as artistic and literary highlights of intellectual and cultural life; and as the interplay between politics and religion under the major Islamic regimes.

RELS 264 – Introduction to the New Testament (3 credits)
Prerequisites: N/A
A historical and literary introduction to the New Testament focusing on the context of the authors and the development of earliest Christianity.

CLAS305 (or ANTH305, ARTH305) – Archaeological Methods and Practice (3 Credits)
Prerequisites: ANTH240, ARTH200, or CLAS180.
A team-taught, interdisciplinary course discussing theories, methods, and ethical issues in the practice of archaeology.

HIST110 - The Ancient World (3 Credits)
Prerequisites: N/A
Interpretation of select literature and art of the ancient Mediterranean world with a view to illuminating the antecedents of modern culture; religion and myth in the ancient Near East; Greek philosophical, scientific, and literary invention; and the Roman tradition in politics and administration.

HIST320 (or JWST331) - Early Christianity: Jesus to Constantine (3 Credits)
Prerequisite: Must have completed one course in ancient history at the 200 level.
Social and religious history of early Christianity from its origins in the first century to the reign of Constantine.

HIST428R – Selected Topics in History (3 Credits)
Prerequisites: N/A
Transition to Islam: From the Ancient to the Medieval Muslim World

JWST225 – Religions of the Ancient Near East (3 Credits)
Prerequisites: N/A
Introduction to ancient Near Eastern religious systems and mythology, from the third millennium BCE through the fourth century BCE. Particular emphasis on Mesopotamia and ancient Israel.

JWST230 (or HIST281) – Inventing Traditions: The Making of Rabbinic Judaism (3 Credits)
Prerequisites: N/A
Introduces the dramatic literary and cultural (as well as political and demographic) innovations that reshaped Judaism in late antiquity. Examines the fundamental works and genres of rabbinic literature

and the religious movement that produced them. Special emphasis on the rabbinic uses of "tradition" to enhance authority and legitimacy, and to foster group identity.

JWST231 – Jewish Texts and Cultures of the Second Temple Period (3 Credits)
Prerequisites: N/A
An introduction to the literature, history, and culture of Jews in the period between the sixth century BCE and the second century CE. Special topics may include the rise of the formation of the biblical canon, scriptural interpretation, sectarian and revolutionary movements, and growth of the diaspora.

JWST262 – Introduction to the Hebrew Bible/Old Testament (3 Credits)
Prerequisites: N/A
Origins of the Hebrew Bible (Old Testament), with attention to literary formations, archaeology, and social-political settings. Explorations of major questions, including who wrote the Bible, and when; relationships of the biblical tradition to the mythology and religious structures of ancient Israel's near eastern neighbors; and dynamics of politics, religious leadership, and law.

JWST289J (or RELS 289J) – New Explorations in Jewish Studies (3 Credits)
Prerequisites: N/A
Jerusalem in Antiquity: The History of Sacred Space in a Holy City.

JWST324 (HIST331) – Biblical History and Culture (3 Credits)
Prerequisites: N/A
Study of the political, social, and religious development of the Jewish nation from its inception to its return from exile in Babylonia around 536 C.E. Focus on biblical texts, archeological finds, and source materials from neighboring cultures to reconstruct political history and the development of religious concepts.

JWST325 (HIST 370) – Jews and Judaism in Antiquity I: Sixth Century BCE through the First Century CE (3 Credits)
Prerequisites: N/A
Political, social, and religious history of the Jews from the Persian Period to the Judean Revolt of 66-70CE. Special attention to the rise of sectarian and revolutionary movements.

JWST326 (or HIST331) – Jews and Judaism in Antiquity II: First through Seventh Centuries (3 Credits)
Prerequisites: N/A
Political, social, and religious history of the Jews from the destruction of the Jerusalem Temple in 70 CE to the Muslim conquests. Special attention to the political transformations in Judaism under late Roman Christianity, and the rise of the Rabbinic movement.

JWST430 (or RELS430) – Dead Sea Scrolls (3 Credits)
Prerequisite: Must have completed one JWST course or one RELS course; or permission of ARHU-Meyerhoff Program & Center for Jewish Studies.
A study of the Dead Sea Scrolls in their ancient and modern settings, and in terms of contemporary scholarly interpretations of their meaning. Interpretations of the historical significance of these

documents, their connections to ancient Jewish sectarian movements, and their implications for our understanding of Judaism, Christianity, and the history of the Bible.

JWST468 – Readings in the Hebrew Bible (3-4 Credits)
Prerequisite: HEBR313; or permission of instructor
Readings in the Hebrew text of the Bible. Emphasis in close reading, grammar analysis, and modern interpretations of the Bible. Language of instruction English; all texts in Hebrew.

JWST469 – Readings in Rabbinic Hebrew (3-4 Credits)
Prerequisite: HEBR313; or permission of instructor
Readings in classical rabbinic texts and related corpora. Emphasis on grammar and reading skills as well as critical analysis of the material. Language of instruction: English; all texts in original language.

RELS289M – New Explorations in Religious Studies (3 Credits)
Investigation of critical and innovative responses in Religious Studies.
Jesus, Mani, and Muhammad

RELS408 – Capstone Seminar in Religion and Culture in the Ancient and Late Antique Near East
Prerequisites: N/A
A capstone seminar for majors in Religion and Culture in the Ancient and Late Antique Near East , designed to provide the intellectual framework for a substantial, interdisciplinary research project. Course topics will be thematic and students will be encouraged to explore comparative or interdisciplinary approaches.

Appendix D: Sample Four Year Plans with Benchmarks

The general major requirements are designed such that students may double major with another humanities program. The sample plan includes particular courses from the list of requirements, but substitutions are possible as long as the requirements are met. Students in the language track may substitute electives in years 1 and 2 for 6 credits of language pre-requisites. The College of Arts & Humanities has requirements of ARHU158 and a Global Engagement requirement that may be satisfied through upper-level language, Education Abroad, or another approved global experience. See next page for the guide to the major and UMD General Education requirements and codes.

Fall			Spring		
Year 1					
ENGL101 (FSAW)	Academic Writing	3	Gen Ed Math (FSMA)		3
ARHU158 (DSSP)	(College Requirement)	3	HIST120 (MFC; DSHU)	Islamic Civilization	3
RELS189I (MFC; SCIS)	What is Religion?	3	Gen Ed (DSHS)		3
Gen Ed (DVUP)		3	Gen Ed (DVUP)		3
Elective		3	Gen Ed (SCIS)		3
	Total credits	15		Total Credits	15
Year 2					
RELS264 (MFC; DSHU)	Introduction to the New Testament	3	JWST225 (MFC; DSHU)	Religions of the Ancient Near East	3
Gen Ed (FSAR)		3	Gen Ed (DSNS)		3
Gen Ed (DSSP)		3	COMM107 (FSOC)	Oral Communication	3
Electives		6	Electives		6
	Total Credits	15		Total Credits	15
Year 3					
Major Elective (MEC)	(Any level)	3	Major Elective (MEC)	(300-400 Level)	3
Major Elective (MEC)	(300-400 Level)	3	Major Elective (MEC)	(300-400 Level)	3
Gen Ed Lab (DSNL)		4	ENGL39X (FSPW)		3
Global Engagement	(College Requirement)	3	Gen Ed (DSHS)		3
Elective		3	Elective		3
	Total Credits	16		Total Credits	15
Year 4					
RELS408 (MCC; DSSP)	Capstone Seminar	3	Major Elective (MEC)	(300-400 Level)	3
Electives		11	Electives		12
	Total Credits	14		Total Credits	15
Total Credits: 120					

Major and General Education Overview

Category	Credits	Code
Major Requirements: 30 Credits		
Major Foundations Courses	12	MFC
Major Elective Courses	15	MEC
Major Capstone Course	3	MCC
Courses may be used to fulfill General Education requirements (see below).		
General Education Requirements: 40 Credits Minimum		
Fundamental Studies: 15 Credits		
Fundamental Studies Academic Writing	3	FSAW
Fundamental Studies Professional Writing	3	FSPW
Fundamental Studies Oral Communication	3	FSOC
Fundamental Studies Mathematics	3	FSMA
Fundamental Studies Analytic Reasoning[2]	3	FSAR

[2] If a student passes an Analytic Reasoning course that requires a Fundamental Studies Math course as a prerequisite, then the Fundamental Studies Math course is considered to be fulfilled (e.g., students who place into and pass a calculus course, which counts for FSAR, do not need to take a less advanced Math course to fulfill the FSMA requirement).

Category	Credits	Code
Distributive Studies: 25 Credits		
Distributive Studies Natural Sciences	3	DSNS
Distributive Studies Natural Science Lab Course[3]	4	DSNL
Distributive Studies History and Social Sciences	6	DSHS
Distributive Studies Humanities	6	DSHU
Distributive Studies Scholarship in Practice[4]	6	DSSP

[3] A second DSNL course can fulfill the DSNS course requirement.

[4] Students learn and practice skills of critical evaluation and participate in the process of applying knowledge in the pursuit of a tangible goal. At least one course must be outside of the major.

I-Series Courses: 6 Credits[5]

The signature courses of the UMD General Education program, I-Series courses investigate a significant issue in depth and demonstrate how particular disciplines and fields of study address problems.

Category	Credits	Code
I-Series Course	6	SCIS

[5] I-Series credits may be double-counted with courses taken for the Distributive Studies requirement.

Diversity: 4-6 Credits[6]

Category	Credits	Code
Diversity Understanding Plural Societies[7] Courses examine how diverse cultural and ethnic groups co-exist.	3-6	DVUP
Diversity Cultural Competence Courses help students develop skills to succeed in a diverse world.	0-3	DVCC

[6] These credits may be double-counted with courses taken for the Distributive Studies requirement.

[7] Students may take either two DVUP courses or one DVUP course and one DVCC course.