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Stanton's recent work examines government management of religious broadcasts in Palestine in the 1930s and 1940s. Another recent project focuses on the emerging use of "Islamic emoticons" in online Islamic chat forums and websites. Stanton is editor of the Syrian Studies Association Newsletter

and a member of that association's board. She is also editor of H-Levant

, a Middle East-focused scholarly listserv with more than 1,000 subscribers. Her forthcoming book,

This is Jerusalem Calling: State Radio in Mandate Palestine

, will be published by the University of Texas Press in Fall 2012.

Incorporating University Mandates into MA Program Redesign

In January 2012, the religious studies department at the University of Denver was awarded a \$10,000 internal grant to support a redesign of its existing Master of Arts program in religious studies. The department has maintained a MA program in religious studies for over two decades, while serving University of Denver undergraduates with departmental majors and minors and substantively contributing to the undergraduate core curriculum. The department also collaborates with the Iliff School of Theology on a joint doctoral program in religious and theological studies, which requires a Master's degree and a separate application for admission. The MA program has a rich history and a record of placing graduates in strong doctoral programs, with partial to full funding. However, as department chair Gregory Robbins and I explained in a recent grant application, the program needed to provide depth as well as breadth to students. It also needed to better connect with the university's broader academic mandates, which include a growing emphasis on foreign language competencies, internationalization, and community engagement (and/or service learning).

These mandates have been given a tremendous level of administrative, divisional, and departmental support at the undergraduate studies level. However, there has been much less support for expanding these mandates to the university's graduate studies programs. We have been able to meet our departmental mandate for depth at the departmental level: we have developed specializations in six areas — biblical studies, theory of religion, international and

multicultural studies, philosophy of religion, Islamic studies, and world religions — to allow students to gain deeper competencies in one area of religious studies. To engage with broader university mandates and integrate them into our MA program, however, has required more creative thinking. With regard to language training and internationalization, for example, we are working to facilitate our students' ability to study abroad, starting with a compendium of external fellowships we have compiled. We are also working to increase student participation in the university's noncredit directed-study language courses, which provide language coaching and proficiency tests at minimal cost. In each case, our efforts are ad hoc and involve our looking beyond our departmental resources to find opportunities for our students elsewhere in the university or through external organizations. The result, while an overwhelmingly positive one for our students, puts us in the position of "outsourcing" crucial parts of our students' education.

With regard to the university's mandate for community engagement and service learning, we believe that we can expand that mandate to our MA program by developing in-house community engagement/service learning opportunities for our graduate students. The university's Center for Community Engagement/Service Learning (CCESL) in April 2012 awarded us a mini-grant to develop a new MA-level course, tentatively titled "Grant Writing as Research and Community Engagement." This course will serve as our pioneer effort to incorporate service learning and community engagement into our MA program. By extension, and because it will be open to students from other departments, we hope it will serve as a pilot course for expanding the University of Denver's commitment to service learning and community engagement to the graduate level.

The University of Denver operates on a ten-week quarter system, with nearly four hours of "contact" or classroom time each week. As a result, our courses are considered fairly intense by both faculty and students. This course, which will require at least ten additional (out-of-class) hours with the student's selected community partner, will require considerable commitment from students. The first iteration of this course will be taught in Spring 2013, with a cap of fifteen students. It will be taught as a 3,000-level course so that advanced undergraduates and doctoral students in our joint PhD program can also enroll, but the target population is RLGS MA students, with MA students in other programs as our secondary audience. We plan to offer this course once every two years, so that every "class" of MA students has the opportunity to enroll at least once during their time at the university. Our hope is that students leave the course having had an intellectually stimulating experience and having developed skills that will serve them well in academia or in the professional world.

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