FAQs for Incoming Students

1) How do I start finding housing?

Checking with current students about locations and landlords is probably the best place to begin the search. There are certain sections of Gainesville that are preferable because of short walking/biking distances to school, less noise, better community atmosphere, etc. There is no substitute for visiting Gainesville, although it is possible to make all arrangements over email and the internet.

Gainesville has many apartment complexes, and these tend to be easily accessible via the web. You may find http://www.gainesville-rent.com/ especially helpful, particularly the map page, as well as http://www.teamparadigm.com/. You will find the majority of apartments to be reasonably priced, although you will have to contend with excitable undergraduates at many.

Be mindful that our offices and classrooms are all in the northeast corner of campus (http://campusmap.ufl.edu/). The offices are all in Anderson Hall, and most classrooms within a close proximity. Many apartments are south and west of campus, and will be quite far from your buildings. However, there is an excellent bus system which is free for all students (with student ID) -- their routes and schedules are online at http://www.go-rts.com/. Just be sure to find out where the bus stops are located when looking at any housing, if you are not planning on walking or biking to school.

Many of the graduate students prefer to live in houses, which are quieter and offer more privacy. There are many houses for rent northeast of campus, which are quite close to our buildings. However, it may be more difficult finding houses for rent without actually being in Gainesville.

2) When am I expected to be in Gainesville, and why?

If classes begin on a Monday, a week before. If mid week, the Monday of the previous week. In general, I would strongly recommend coming sooner than later -- you may find it easier to begin school if you have already allowed time to get acclimated to your new environment, learn the campus and town, and meet your new classmates and professors. Otherwise, you may find your first few weeks of class overwhelming.

3) What is on my essential "to do" list that first week?

- Get a campus map at Transportation and Parking Services, south of Museum Road on North South Drive (the east side) of this street. You an also find one online at http://campusmap.ufl.edu/ . Most students and many faculty don't drive to campus regularly (there are many reasons not to drive including congestion, parking costs, and pollution), but if you will need to obtain a parking permit, get one at Parking Services.
- Attend orientations & training meetings both in and outside of the department. (Make sure the graduate coordinator has good email addresses for you throughout the summer

and monitor your messages.)
- Be in contact with and ready to help the professor you are assigned to for your assistantship.
- Establish Florida residency so that in subsequent years we don't have to pay as much for your tuition remission (go to the department of motor vehicles with proof of residency (bills, a lease, id) and get a license and register your automobile (if any).
- Register for classes (see below)
- Obtain a student ID (in the Reitz Union building on Museum Road, east of North-South Drive.
- Find the important campus buildings: Anderson Hall (where our offices are), Reitz Union (student ID office), Robert Marston Science Library (an interim library while the main one is under construction), Turlington Hall (where many classes will be), Marshall M. Criser Hall (financial aid office), and Ben Griffen Hill Stadium (where some of the orientation festivities will probably occur).
- Get acquainted with the library.

4) When & how do I register?

You register with Annie Newman, in the departmental office. You may do this by emailing her before arrival, or once you arrive. You will not have trouble enrolling for religion classes, but if you want to take a course outside of religion, you should ask to do so from the professor teaching that course, and what if anything special you will need to do to secure a seat in their class.

5) For what should I register?

You should consult with one or more of the faculty in your specific track, after carefully reviewing the program information and relevant courses offered both inside and outside of our department. Normally, all incoming students will take Method and Theory I or II, and at least one course in their track. You may wish to start by reviewing the graduate program overview, which is at http://web.religion.ufl.edu/graduate.html, and then the specific information from your track, Religion and Nature, Religion in the Americas, and Religions of Asia. Then find the courses offered that fall in at the course descriptions pages.

6) What are the expectations for assistantships?

They vary by assignment and will be worked out with your assigned professor. But in all cases, being available for regular communication, and communicating when you cannot be, is critical, and for teaching assistants, being available after classes until grades are turned in.

7) Where do I get good groceries from a local store that carries organic produce and/or bulk foods?

Mother Earth (13th Street, north of University): a small market, sometimes overpriced,

but with lots of veggie and vegan goodies.

Ward's Market (23rd Avenue, east of 13th St): a bit more selection than Mother Earth, carries local foods and products alongside other typical market fare, even has organic beer and wine!

Farmer's market (downtown Gainesville by the Hippodrome, Main St.): every Wednesday, very cool place to get fresh vegetables, coffee, etc.

8) What else should I know about August and September?

Its hotter than Hades and thundershowers are common, especially in the afternoon, so bikers and hikers should be prepared to get soaked, and to protect books and other items that can be damaged by rain. There is a good bike shop, "Chain Reaction," across University from the Department only about three blocks down.