

## Guidelines and Proposal Submission Form

### Guidelines for M.A. and Ph.D. Proposals

Thesis proposals should be structured around the following six headings. Students may choose to incorporate the headings directly into their proposals, or simply to incorporate the information described under the headings without organizing the proposal explicitly under the six headings. An outline of proposed chapters is also useful.

1. Introduction
2. Research questions
3. The scholarly context
4. Material
5. Method(s)/Perspective(s)/Mode of procedure
6. Bibliography

**Introduction.** The proposal should begin by stating clearly the subject of the thesis. A brief statement of the importance of the work and its relevance for the field of Religious Studies should follow.

**Research Questions.** The proposal should make clear what questions the thesis will be posing and trying to answer. The proposal may also suggest an hypothesis that answers the questions.

**The scholarly context.** The proposal should make clear what is new in the proposed research in relation to earlier studies. The authors referred to here should be in the bibliography, but the bibliography should not be limited to works directly cited in the proposal (see below).

**Material.** In this section the student should make clear what it is that constitutes the primary data for the thesis. This may be texts or field research. In both cases the student needs to be specific. The student needs to show the committee that he/she knows what texts are important to the research or what questions will be asked in the field.

**Method(s)/Perspective(s)/Mode of procedure.** Students should be able to show that they think about what they are doing in relation to how they are doing it. Obviously, not everyone will be engaged in extensive methodological discussions, but everyone will have a certain perspective. This section will show the committee that the student is aware of the fact that he or she is studying the chosen problem/question in a certain way and not in another. It will also give the student the chance to show the committee that the perspective or method chosen is better suited than any other method or perspective to accomplish the intended goal.

**Bibliography.** The bibliography should be carefully presented, with secondary sources separated from primary sources. Sources dealing specifically with methodology may also be put in a separate section of the bibliography. This will make it easier for members of the committee to assess the value of the bibliography.

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**MA projects.** The project proposal should also address all six categories. It should describe the area chosen for research, detail the purpose of the research, and discuss the scholarship on the topic. The bibliography should be carefully selected and the proposal needs to make clear the relevance of the items in the bibliography to the project. The project proposal must also indicate what shape the final written document will take.

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\* The Graduate Affairs Committee normally meets on the last Wednesday of the month during term. Please note the "Thesis Proposal Approval" form which follows, must be completed, signed and submitted with your proposal.

**PROPOSAL SUBMISSION**  
**DEPARTMENT OF RELIGIOUS STUDIES**

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**PLEASE CHECK ONE OF THE FOLLOWING:**

Thesis Proposal Submission

Project Proposal Submission

**PLEASE CHECK M.A. OR PH.D.:**

M.A.

PH.D.\*

**\*ABSTRACT MUST BE INCLUDED WITH DOCTORAL PROPOSAL**

*Please submit this form with a copy of your proposal. All members of your committee must indicate their approval by initialling beside their printed name.*

NAME: \_\_\_\_\_

STUDENT NO.: \_\_\_\_\_

PROPOSAL TITLE: \_\_\_\_\_

**IT IS THE RESPONSIBILITY OF THE STUDENT  
TO OBTAIN THE SIGNATURE OF EACH COMMITTEE MEMBER**

CHAIR: \_\_\_\_\_  
Printed Name Initials

Member: \_\_\_\_\_  
Printed Name Initials

Member: \_\_\_\_\_  
Printed Name Initials

*All Committee changes are subject to Graduate Affairs and Departmental approval.*

Date of Approval: \_\_\_\_\_

