

MA Religions and Cultures
Rules and Regulations
As of September 2017

The MA program is designed to prepare students to see religious phenomena in a broad perspective and to develop religious and cultural literacy enabling them to move into various careers in a globalized world. The goal is to qualify students for an academic or applied path.

Students who wish to go on to do advanced study in particular religious traditions are advised to begin language study as soon as possible. Language credits are not considered as part of the MA program unless they are advanced language and textual studies.

PROGRAM REQUIREMENTS

Students take two required courses, RELI 609 (3 credits) – Theories of Religion and RELI 610 (3 credits) – Methodological Problems in the Study of Religion, as well as seven elective courses (four electives in the thesis option). All students are required to write either a guided research paper (GRP) or a thesis. **All students must meet with the Graduate Program Director (GPD) at least once per year for advising, registration, and progress update.**

COURSE INTENSIVE WITH GUIDED RESEARCH PAPER (GRP) OPTION

When students enter the program, the GPD will guide them in selecting a mentor. This faculty member normally becomes the supervisor of their GRP. (Changes may be made during the program depending on the interests of the student and availability of the faculty.)

COURSEWORK (CREDITS: 6 core + 21 electives)

In addition to the 6 credits of core courses, RELI 609 and 610, seven three-credit elective courses (21 credits) are required in the Course Intensive Option. These electives are selected in consultation with the Graduate Program Director (GPD).

Upon completion of coursework (or even earlier), it is the student's responsibility to make an appointment with their mentor to discuss their Guided Research Paper project. It is advisable to bring a written preliminary subject description, brief outline, and initial bibliography for approval to this meeting. When the student and mentor agree on the proposed project the mentor becomes the student's supervisor.

GUIDED RESEARCH PAPER PROPOSAL - RELI 604 (3 CREDITS): The student must then prepare a Guided Research Paper (GRP) proposal in consultation with the GRP supervisor. The proposal of approximately 1,000 words must clearly define the project and the approach to be taken. It should present 5-15 bibliographic sources. The final approval of the GRP proposal will be determined by the supervisor and also the GPD.

GUIDED RESEARCH PAPER - RELI 680 (15 CREDITS)

The Guided Research Paper is a substantial academic research paper. It is the product of focused primary research yielding a scholarly paper of a caliber such that it could be considered for publication in an academic journal. It should **not** be a general statement of or a survey of the field; rather **the GRP must contain a definite hypothesis and well-developed argumentation and analysis**. It should, further, give a clear indication of the contribution or relation to a specific field of study. The student might select a relevant scholarly journal as a model for the approach and style of their GRP. Normally the GRP should be about 30-40 pages or about 8,000–10,000 words.

Final approval of the GRP depends on the supervisor and, in some instances, the GPD or other members of the Graduate Committee, as appropriate. The title of the GRP will appear on the student's transcript.

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THESIS OPTION

In addition to the core courses RELI 609 and 610, four three-credit elective courses are required in the Thesis Option. These electives are selected in consultation with the Graduate Program Director (GPD).

THE FIRST STEP

In order to transfer from the course intensive option to the thesis track, a student must discuss her/his intention with the faculty member best suited to supervise the project.

Having secured supervisory support, the student should be prepared to discuss their thesis request and research topic with the GPD to determine whether or not the thesis is a feasible option. Please note that students who wish to transfer to the thesis option must have a **3.7 GPA** or higher.

Students who want to write a thesis should normally formulate a written précis of the thesis project that they can then share with the supervisor and GPD. It should contain:

- 1) A brief (500 word) statement of the thesis project, including key issues or questions to be developed and methodology to be used.
- 2) A sample bibliography (between 15 and 30 items).

THESIS PROPOSAL – RELI 655 (3 credits)

When the thesis project is approved by the supervisor and GPD, the student may move forward to prepare a complete thesis proposal. The proposal may range from 1,500 to 3,000 words and should be undertaken in consultation with the supervisor. This proposal will have the following components:

1. Project statement
2. Methodology and theoretical orientation
3. Outline of the chapters
4. Bibliography

Once the complete proposal is approved by the supervisor and GPD, it is forwarded to the Department of Religions and Cultures' Graduate Studies Committee for their feedback and final approval. Transfer from the course-intensive to the thesis option takes place after approval of the thesis proposal by the Department of Religions and Cultures' Graduate Studies Committee.

Note:

M.A. students must present a complete thesis proposal within 6 months after completing their last course otherwise, they will remain in and complete the non-thesis/course intensive program.

THESIS - RELI 600 (21 credits)

Please refer to the Thesis preparation handbook at:

<http://www.concordia.ca/content/dam/sgs/docs/handbooks/thesispreparationguide.pdf>