

MA Religions and Cultures & Judaic Studies: Rules and Regulations

As of September 2019

The MA program is designed to prepare students to see religious and cultural phenomena in a broad perspective and to develop knowledge and skills that will be useful for a variety of careers in a globalized world. The goal is to qualify students for an academic or applied path. *NB the Judaic Studies MA is identical, but with different course numbering.* Students who wish to go on to do advanced study in particular religious traditions or cultural-geographic areas 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

All students begin with one required course taught every Fall semester, RELI 6001—Method and Theory in the Study of Religion. In addition, they take five or three elective courses, depending on their program option, and complete either a guided research project (GRP) or a thesis. **Every student must meet with the Graduate Program Director (GPD) at least once per year for advising, registration, and progress update.**

GUIDED RESEARCH PROJECT (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.) The GRP option is the standard path, ideal for most students.

COURSEWORK (CREDITS: 3 core + 15 electives)

In addition to the 3-credit required methodology course, RELI 6001, five three-credit elective courses (15 credits) are required in the GRP Option. These electives are selected in consultation with the Graduate Program Director.

GUIDED RESEARCH PROJECT PROPOSAL—RELI 6020 (3 CREDITS)

Upon completion of coursework (or even earlier), it is the student's responsibility to make an appointment with their mentor to discuss their GRP. 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.

The student must then prepare a Guided Research Project (GRP) proposal in consultation with the GRP supervisor. The proposal of approximately 2,500–3,000 words must clearly define the project and the approach to be taken and must outline the project. It must justify the choice of project by explaining how it builds on and enhances a student's MA coursework, how it is connected to their career or academic goals, what they hope to gain from undertaking it, and the detailed timeframe in which they will complete the project. In addition, it should present 5–15 bibliographic sources. The final approval of the GRP proposal will be determined by the supervisor and also the GPD. Before the completion of the GRP, you may be asked to provide an updated and detailed timeline and plan for completion to the GPD.

GUIDED RESEARCH PROJECT—RELI 6021 (24 CREDITS)

There are three GRP options: (1) A research paper; (2) an artistic project or performance that reflects fluency with the rituals, practices, and cultures of particular communities; (3) a technical project that focuses on the acquisition and demonstration of technical skills related to the study of religions and cultures. The research paper option should be the product of focused research and must contain a definite hypothesis and well-developed argumentation and analysis. Normally the GRP should be roughly 40-50 pages or about 10,000–12,500 words. The technical or artistic project option must include a report or analysis of 3,500–4,000 words outlining the contribution of the project and in the case of the technical project, the skills gained. For further details on what each entails, see the Graduate Calendar.

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.

THESIS OPTION

The thesis option includes taking the shared introductory methodology course (RELI 6001), three elective courses, a thesis proposal, and the thesis. Electives are selected in consultation with the Graduate Program Director (GPD). The thesis option is for those students whose research is entirely original and who will make use of the extra time afforded by taking two fewer courses specifically for the more intensive research and writing required. Students intending to apply for a PhD program requiring a thesis will likely fulfill that requirement with the GRP and should make inquiries to determine if that is indeed the case.

THE FIRST STEP

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

The student must both secure supervisory support, and 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. Consequently, students will not be considered for transfer to the thesis option before grades are in for the first term of their MA.

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 6030 (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 of approximately 2,500–3,000 words must clearly define the project and the approach to be taken and must outline the project. It must justify the choice of project by explaining how it builds on and enhances a student's MA coursework, how it is connected to their career or academic goals, what they hope to gain from undertaking it, and the timeframe in which they will complete the project. In addition, it should present 5-15 bibliographic sources. It should be undertaken in consultation with the supervisor. This proposal should be organized as follows:

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's Graduate Studies Committee for feedback and final approval. Transfer from the GRP to the thesis option takes place after approval of the thesis proposal by the Graduate Studies Committee.

Note:

MA students must present a complete thesis proposal within 6 months after completing their last course otherwise, they will remain in and complete the GRP option.

THESIS - RELI 6031 (30 credits)

The thesis is a work of primary research that normally runs to 18,000-24,000 words (about 60-80 pages). It must be defended orally. For more practical details, please refer to the Thesis preparation handbook at:

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

Note: While in the course of working on the Thesis, students may be asked to provide an updated and detailed timeline and plan for completion of the thesis to the GPD

For any clarifications, please consult with the Graduate Program Director. Thanks for helping us improve this document.