

PhD Thesis Proposal Guidelines

Concordia University,
Department of Religion

Upon completion of the comprehensive examinations, one is to prepare a doctoral thesis proposal. This should be developed in consultation with the primary supervisor following the requirements outlined below. When the supervisor considers the proposal sufficiently developed, it should be circulated to the internal thesis committee members. Members of the student's thesis committee will scrutinize the proposal and provide feedback to the student and his or her supervisor. Once the proposal has been revised to the satisfaction of the entire thesis committee, the proposal goes to the Graduate Studies Committee to receive final approval (email a copy of the proposal to the Graduate Program Assistant and the PhD Program Director in .PDF, .RTF, or .DOC format). The committee may request further revisions. Once the Graduate Committee accepts the thesis proposal, one officially advances to candidacy.

A PhD thesis proposal should be a polished piece of writing that contains the following components:

- 1) A statement of the key issues or questions to be investigated, and one's hypothesis.
- 2) A statement on methodology, which may include a discussion of relevant theoretical issues. What are the primary sources? Will archival research or ethnographic fieldwork be required? Be as specific and detailed as possible.
- 3) A statement on how the thesis will contribute to the major field of research and any relevant subfields, with a brief review of key literature.
- 4) An outline of the entire thesis, with chapter descriptions of at least one paragraph.
- 5) A timeline for research, writing, and revision.
- 6) A bibliography of the key primary sources and secondary literature for the project (up to five pages).

A proposal should normally be in the range of 15–25 pages, and should be accessible to scholars of religion who are not specialists in the field of study.