

The Master of Media Studies Handbook

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GENERAL INFORMATION

We are a unique program, one of the oldest, most rigorous, and interdisciplinary departments in the fields of Communication and Media Studies. We value our ability to support your learning and research across different program options and different approaches. This handbook is a living document to help you navigate the program.

We use **email and the COMS mailing list** to communicate important information to our students. We will add your Concordia email address to the COMSlist (an email list of students in our graduate program) at the start of term.

All communication as of the start of term Fall 2026 will be through your Concordia email address.

Departmental Organizational Chart

One of the most important things to remember about our department is that we are part of a bigger university. Many decisions happen because of wider university policies. The organizational chart below helps you understand the key units and their influence on your studies.

The [School of Graduate Studies](#) (or SGS) administers graduate programs at the university. SGS, for example, decides the format and process for thesis submissions.

The [Department of Communication Studies](#) is a member of The Faculty of Arts and Science (FAS). FAS works with our department and SGS to administer the program. FAS is the biggest faculty on campus joined by the Gina Cody School of Engineering, the John Molson School of Business, the Faculty of Fine Arts and the School of Health. Some departments are in different faculties, something to remember when thinking about taking courses from outside the department. **Different faculties have different rules for courses.**

Our program is part of the Department of Communication Studies. We offer courses at the undergraduate and graduate levels. The department has full-time faculty, part-time faculty and administrative staff and technical staff. We work together to run the program. The department is led by the Chair. Our program is run by the **Graduate Program Director**, the **MA Committee** and a **Graduate Program Assistant**. The GPD and the GPA are the two

people who will interact with you the most.

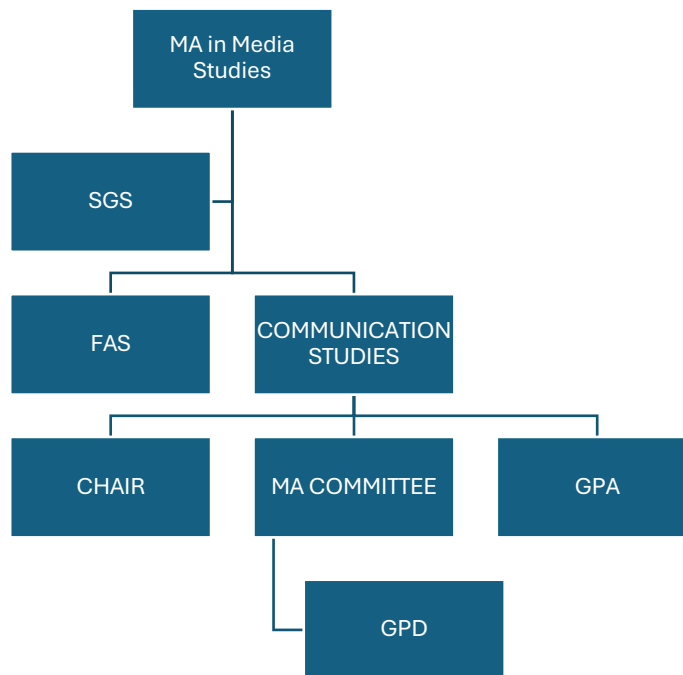


Figure 1. Who administers our program?

Student Leadership

Our program is unique in being a two-year program allowing a continuation of department culture and student mentorship. All students are encouraged to participate in student government. Students are represented by the **Communication Graduate Student Society (CGSS)**. The CGSS, as it describes itself, “is run by and for graduate students in Concordia’s MA in Media Studies and PhD in Communication Studies programs. The Society exists to bring the graduate student community together, foster strong solidarity across both programs, and ensure every student is supported throughout their academic journey.” The CGSS represents students at the Concordia University Graduate Student Association and at monthly departmental meetings. First-year students are encouraged to join especially as the CGSS needs new representatives for each new cohort. Representatives from the CGSS will be in touch with first-year students to welcome them to the organization.

All Teaching Assistants and Research Assistants are represented by the [Concordia Research and Education Workers Union \(CREW-CSN\)](#). To learn more about the CREW Union, please find your local representative. COMS 610 introduces students to key representatives on campus.

Who do I talk to?

The organizational chart only matters because it helps to understand who to talk to and how decisions are made.

If you have **academic questions**, need recommendations about courses, need advice about directed studies or generally want insight into academic life, **talk to the GPD**

If you need help with any **administrative questions** such as tuition, bursaries, course registration, service requests, and registering for a directed study, **talk to the GPA**

In serious matters **when you are not getting necessary support** or have concerns about our program and need to talk to an outside party, **talk to the Chair**

Contact information for these representatives is kept up-to-date on the Department's website.

What does a typical year look like?

The following discussion traces a year in our department. Since our program takes two-years, we have student entering and graduating at the same time. Further in the document, we show the typical pathways for completing the program. The following is more meant as a loose introduction to the life of the Department.

The year starts for most of us in September when classes begin.

Before that, over the summer, faculty members work to prepare the classes for the start of the new school year. During this period, students might want to review funding opportunities from SSHRC and FRQ in advance to prepare their applications. But summer is also a chance to rest and recharge. We work hard to make sure that everybody gets a break and is ready for the start of the school year.

September is always a busy month. Be prepared, especially in the first year, for a lot of learning and events to orientate and welcome you on campus. At this time of year, the GPD usually meets twice with students- once for orientation, and once to help prepare students for grant applications. Outside of these meetings, COMS 610 provides the necessary orientation for students to succeed in our program.

The Fall semester involves coursework for first year students, and coursework for course-based students in the second year, or research for second year students in the thesis or research-creation thesis options of our program. Students are often busy preparing grant applications during this time as well.

The winter semester is a time of beginnings and endings. For students in the first-year program, thesis and research-creation thesis options, the winter is when students begin to develop their projects and prepare to defend their thesis proposal. For students in the second year, you are looking toward completing your studies either by finishing your thesis, completing your research-creation thesis or your coursework. Usually, students finish their studies at the end of the winter or the end of the summer semesters. Please keep in mind the winter semester is a busy time for the GPD and GPA as they are dealing with admissions to the next year's cohort.

Work continues over the summer. Thesis and research-creation thesis students are recommended to defend their thesis proposal by early spring. Aiming to defend in the spring gives you extra flexibility in terms of your research timelines and allows you to defend the proposal later in the summer if writing does not go as planned.

Proposals must be defended by the start of the fall semester for second year students at the latest but remember that faculty members may be inundated with proposal defences at this time or may be busy preparing for the coming year, so it is best to defend early. After the defense, you can submit your Ethics Application at Concordia as discussed during your coursework.

For second year students, the Winter is when course-based students are continuing their studies usually finishing by the Winter or Summer. Thesis and research-creation student are busy developing their projects. Every Winter, the GPD and the GPA are finalizing admissions and connecting new students with incoming students who share the same research interests.

Our Department Members usually take holiday in July and preparations for the school year pick up again in mid-August. We are often scheduling the thesis defence for second year students at this time. Be sure to check with SGS about their important dates to submit your thesis. August is usually when we start welcoming new students and saying goodbye to students graduating or close to graduating.

Progress Reports

To help ensure a healthy relationship, the School of Graduate Studies requires students and their supervisors to submit an annual Progress Report. The Progress Report provides both students and supervisors the opportunity to summarize and assess work completed to date, to forecast future steps toward completion of the degree, and to outline any problems or ongoing conditions that may have affected (or will affect) the student's progress.

Students and supervisors are encouraged to share their reports with each other as a basis for an extended conversation about the student's work and the relationship as it has unfolded to date. Both parties should nevertheless be aware that they are not obligated to do so, and either party may choose to keep their Reports confidential.

Once submitted, the Report is considered confidential and is accessible only to the GPD (and the School of Graduate Studies, if necessary). Given the confidential nature of the Report, this annual exercise provides both students and their supervisors with an opportunity to put in writing any matter of concern that they wish to bring to the attention of the GPD, with assurance that such matters will be handled sensitively and discreetly.

Students and Supervisors should note that the submission of the annual Progress Report is mandatory. Students who do not submit their report will be blocked from registering in subsequent semesters.

FUNDING AND PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Our program supports students in the following ways:

1. Entrance awards: These awards are granted during the first-year admission process and are merit-based. We receive a fixed allocation from Concordia University. We do not offer funding in the second year of the program.
2. Teaching Assistantships: The Department offers our students chances to support our undergraduate programs. The Department will announce an opportunity to apply for TA positions over email. The chair consults with the GPDs when allocating the TA positions, but our graduate program does not have final say with these positions.
3. Research Assistantships: Faculty members in our department and across the University work to secure research funding to pay graduate students. Concordia does not have a central system to announce positions. We will share any positions through our listserv (comslist). Please speak to the GPD or your supervisor for more information.
4. The School of Graduate Studies, The Faculty of Arts and Science, and various outside organizations sometimes offer funding for graduate students. We pass on notice of these opportunities when we receive them, but you can always check the websites of these parts of the university to see opportunities.

Students are encouraged to apply for external grants. In Quebec, we have two major funding bodies that support thesis-based students in their studies. Applications are accepted at specific times in the Fall. We will communicate these dates:

SSHRC

Open to Canadian citizens, permanent residents of Canada or a Protected Person. The objective of the Canada Graduate Research Scholarships – Master's (CGRS M) program is to help develop research skills and assist in the training of highly qualified personnel by supporting students who demonstrate a high standard of achievement in undergraduate and early graduate studies. \$27,000 for one year.

<https://www.concordia.ca/gradstudies/funding/external/cgrs-masters.html>

FRQ

The objective of the Fonds de recherche du Québec – Master's Training Scholarships is to help support and spark the interest of the next generation of students in all research sectors: natural sciences, mathematical sciences and engineering (Nature and technologies), human health (Health), human and social sciences, arts and letters (Society and culture). \$20,000 per year, up to two years.

<https://www.concordia.ca/gradstudies/funding/external/frq-masters.html>

Beyond these grants, Concordia University's Awards Team supports students in pursuing other funding opportunities. To learn more about their services, see:

<https://www.concordia.ca/gradstudies/funding/how-we-support-you.html>

We will share any relevant funding opportunities when they become available.

COMPLETING YOUR DEGREE

The program has three options:

1. Thesis
2. Research-Creation Thesis
3. Course work

There is no right way through the program. Different paths have different expectations, completion times, and responsibilities.

You can switch between thesis options, but different course administration means switching from course-based to thesis, or vice-versa, carry financial consequences and

can change your residency status, and time limits. Please speak to your supervisor first before deciding to change program options.

Full time or part-time status

The program can be completed as a full-time student or as a part-time student. Your status as either full-time or part-time depends on your option.

1. For thesis or research-creation thesis students, the number of courses you take does not impact your status. For example, students registered as full-time in a thesis option are full-time students even in the summer when they are not taking any classes.
2. Course-base students are considered full-time if they are taking at least 9 credits per term.

These options also affect how Concordia charges you tuition making the transition from course-based to thesis-based more complicated.

If you require a letter to confirm your status in the program, please contact the Birks Student Service Centre, see: <https://www.concordia.ca/students/birks/assistance-requests.html>.

COURSEWORK

Our graduate program has three options for completion. Your course load and timeline vary by option. Below is the *typical* path through each option, for reference purposes only.

	Year 1 Fall	Year 1 Winter	Year 1 Summer	Year 2 Fall	Year 2 Winter	Year 2 Summer
Thesis	COMS 600; COMS 610; One or two electives	COMS 605; COMS 610; One or two electives	Finish proposal; one or two electives	Preparing and conducting thesis research; Beginning to write thesis	Finishing research and finalizing thesis writing	Defending and submitting thesis
Research-Creation	COMS 600; COMS 610; One or two electives	COMS 605; COMS 610; One or two electives	Finish proposal; one or two electives	Preparing research-creation project	Finishing research-creation project; Beginning written component	Defending and submitting research-creation thesis

Course-based	COMS 600; COMS 610; Two electives	COMS 605; COMS 610; Two electives	Two electives	Three electives	Three electives	
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Core classes

Every student must take the following core classes to complete the program. These courses are foundational to other classes in the program.

COMS 600 Communication Theory (3 Credits)

This seminar studies and evaluates the major historical and contemporary approaches to communication theory. The following approaches are covered: Processes and Effects, Functionalism; Symbolism and Cultural Studies; Institutional Studies, and Political Economy.

The goal of this course is to introduce critical concepts and theories in the field. The course is introductory, meant to cover broad themes in the field to help student understand its scholarly orientations and develop the Theoretical Framework of their studies.

COMS 605 Media Research Methods (3 Credits)

This seminar prepares students to critique literature from any of the major research traditions; to make basic connections between epistemology and problems of basic communication research; to be able to identify the research method most appropriate to personal areas of interest; to design a basic research project.

The goal is to introduce students to the fundamentals of research design, survey key methods, and the fundamentals of proposal writing. Thesis students will be able to specialize in the preparation of their Thesis Proposal.

COMS 610 Media Studies Seminar (3 Credits)

This full-year course introduces students to issues of professionalization, careers in Media Studies research and practice, applying for funding, publication and dissemination of research, and presentations of ongoing faculty research and research-creation. An annual colloquium for the presentation of second-year thesis and research-creation work is held.

The Seminar is a largely self-directed seminar course that helps you learn how to succeed as a graduate student at Concordia University. The course is mandatory for MA and Diploma students.

Courses in other departments

As a student, you benefit from being able to take courses in other departments. Please explore the interdisciplinary options across the university. The GPD must approve courses from outside the department. You may speak with your supervisor as well for recommendations about what courses to take. The GPD coordinate with other departments to share interesting courses for you. Depending on the thesis stream, you are allowed to take one (for the two thesis options) or up to three (for course option) courses outside the department although we can accommodate exceptions.

There is no one rule that determines whether your request to take a course from outside the department will be approved. In general, the GPD tries to approve courses relevant to your research interests. If you do not have the prerequisites or lack qualifications, then you might be rejected. For example, the GPD may decline a request to take an upper-level graduate course in theoretical astrophysics if the student has a BA in Creative Writing.

Speak to your supervisor or the GPD if you are uncertain about taking a class. They can also help contact the program instructor to ensure you have space and know you will be enrolling.

Steps to Enroll in a Course Outside the Department

- Contact the course instructor and obtain their approval to take the course.
- Obtain approval from the GPD.
- CC' the GPA on the email from the GPD confirming approval. This is required so that a service request can be submitted to have the course credits applied toward your current degree.
- The department offering the course will grant you access to register.

Courses at other universities

Elective classes can be from outside the University. Students can take courses up to a maximum of 6 credits in any one year, from one of Montreal's other universities without cost. Most likely you will find other courses from these universities and programs:

1. The [Department of Art History and Communication Studies](#) at McGill University;
2. The [Department of Communication Studies at the University of Montreal](#) (or UdeM) (in French);
3. The [Faculty of Communication Studies](#) at UQAM (in French).

You may find other courses available at McGill, UdeM, or UQAM, but these are some examples of where to look. Please keep in mind that if you have a problem related to a course taken at another university, these issues must be resolved via their internal structures. Concordia University professors have no authority with respect to complaints or concerns about classes taken outside our university.

We do allow international transfer credits as well though we have no formal arrangements or exchange programs as a program. Your supervisor may have recommendations or suggestions around international opportunities.

Transfer credits are a great way to learn at other institutions and take advantage of being in the city. In exceptional cases, a student may be authorized to take up to 12 credits at another university. The process involves:

- Contacting the instructor at the host university to request permission to take the course.
- Obtain approval by email from both your supervisor and the GPD.
- Send the approval emails to the Graduate Program Assistant (GPA).
- Submit the request through the BCI website under the Inter-university (AEHE/BCI) <https://aehe.bci-qc.ca/en>

All requests for registration and/or cancellation of courses are done through the BCI (Bureau de coopération interuniversitaire) website. Students are responsible for accessing the BCI website to check the status of their request on a regular basis. Requests go through several stages of processing and e-mails will not necessarily be sent to update the student on the status at each stage.

<https://www.concordia.ca/academics/graduate/calendar/current/classification-of-students-and-registration.html>

Directed Studies

A directed study is a self-lead learning program administered by a faculty member that resembles a course. Directed studies run differently from courses. Unlike regular courses, directed studies are more flexible in structure and scheduling. Meetings may occur less frequently, and the topics, and learning objectives are often developed collaboratively by the student and the supervising faculty member to align with the student's academic interests and goals.

When course selections do not fit your schedule or research interests, you can propose a Directed Study. Any faculty member at Concordia can run a directed study with as many

students as they would like. Directed Studies are voluntary, and faculty do not receive compensation for running directed studies. Please keep in mind that faculty often have to decline directed studies because their service load and teaching load does not allow them this extra time.

The process to enroll in a Directed Study involves:

1. Consult with your supervisor, and identify and secure a faculty member who is willing to supervise
2. Co-create a syllabus for a Directed Study. Please use the Directed Study form in the Appendix.
3. Submit the form to the GPD for approval, including your supervisor and GPA.

Once approved, GPA will arrange the necessary course registration. The GPD deeply appreciates faculty who are willing to take on directed studies and students who are able to prepare them. The GPD is not inclined to reject directed studies and at worst will advise on changes to the syllabus in most circumstances. The GPD looks to ensure that the course is at a graduate level, has clear ways to evaluate and that the syllabus reads like a contract that ensures both faculty and students have clear goals and accountability.

Directed Studies can last one semester and follow the University calendar. Students must adhere to the deadlines per term to discontinue the course and when to finish assignments. In short, you need to check with your supervisor whj

THESIS AND RESEARCH-CREATION THESIS

Active work on the thesis or research-creation thesis begins at the end of the first year and over the second year of the program. Completing it is a multi-step process beginning with working with your supervisor to submitting your final thesis on Spectrum.

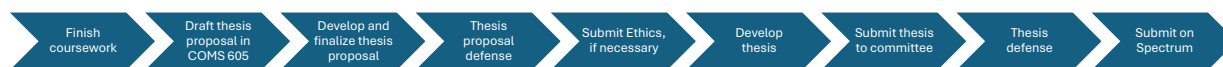


Figure 2 The steps toward submitting a thesis

What is a thesis?

The thesis is an extended written document specifically designed for students with an interest in self-led research and scholarship.

We recommend a thesis between 15,000 and 20,000 words with multiple chapters.

What is a research-creation thesis?

Specifically designed for students with significant media production experience, the Research-Creation Thesis is comprised of an original media production or prototype in any genre, and a document comprising a literature and media review, a theoretical and methodological contextualization, a critical reflection on the research-creation and its outcomes, and other areas of analysis as deemed necessary by the student and the student's Thesis Committee. The research-creation thesis can be designed in a variety of creative and artistic outputs, including multimedia installation, film and video art, artist book, performance, podcast, or any other intermedia project created in consultation with the supervisor.

The format of the research-creation thesis is established during the Thesis Proposal. We recommend a research-creation thesis to be at least 6000 words.

COMS 605 and COMS 610 aim to prepare students about how to write a thesis or a research-creation thesis.

Supervisor

The program strives to match incoming students to supervisors. The School of Graduate Studies defines a supervisor as:

Supervision is a professional relationship between one or more professors and a student with the purpose of enhancing the academic abilities of the student, leading to a university degree for him/her. The ultimate purpose of supervision is to transfer the knowledge and experience of the professor(s) in their particular areas of expertise to the student in a pre-specified period of time, making him/her ready for a profession in the field. It is important to maintain an arm-length relationship between the student and supervisor during the period of supervision.

A supervisor must be "full-time permanent faculty members holding a terminal degree at Concordia University and who hold the rank of Assistant Professor, Associate Professor, or Professor are eligible to supervise students." Limited-term appointment and extended term appointment faculty cannot supervise as they have a higher teaching load.

For more details about the role of the Supervisor, please see the Guidelines for The Supervision of Master's Students

(<https://www.concordia.ca/content/dam/sgs/docs/handbooks/Masters-Supervisor-Guidelines.pdf>).

We suggest all students to complete the School of Graduate Studies Student and Supervisor framework in the first semester of studies, see:

<https://www.concordia.ca/content/dam/sgs/docs/forms/student-supervisor-framework.pdf>

What if you want to change supervisors? Please speak to the GPD. They can advise and we can arrange for changes, a new supervisor, or other alternatives. Your supervisor is someone who holds you accountable and challenges you in graduate research. The relationship can be complex but at the foundation should be based on academic success, care, and professionalism.

If your supervisor retires, we can arrange to have them act as a co-supervisor for your project. Otherwise, we historically have not had co-supervised thesis or research-creation thesis projects.

Choosing a committee

Every graduate student has one other member of their committee, a second reader. This member is an advisor that meets infrequently with the student to advise them on the project. Students who expect frequent contact should request the second committee member become a co-supervisor.

The second reader attends the thesis proposal defence and approves the thesis proposal. The second reader also attends the thesis defence and is a voting member on the thesis, deciding to accept or reject.

Thesis Proposal

A thesis or project proposal is not a summary of work done. It is a “pitch” to the committee and a plan to help you achieve your research goals. It is called a proposal because it is propositional in nature. You are describing what you will do and not just what you have done. You will, however, show some preliminary knowledge of what has been done by others to situate your own investigations into the subject of your thesis.

For students required to produce a Thesis Proposal, our expectation is that the first-year coursework prepares you to complete this requirement.

The format for a thesis or a research-creation proposal is included in Appendix B.

What is a Defence?

Whether you are writing a thesis or a research-creation thesis, defending your thesis proposal or your thesis, the format of a defence remains the same. The word *defence* is a leftover from the more combative days of academia. The defence is really a checkpoint and a chance to ensure that your committee agrees, that the scholarship is sound and that you have time to revise the project based on discussions at these times. The final defence is often as much a celebration of the student's success as it is an evaluation of their project.

Our department has an oral defence because we believe in the importance of being able to present your work in public and to be able to ensure that scholarship involves dialogue and discussion.

A defence has the following stages:

1. The Chair, usually the second reader, convenes the meeting and establishes any rules and regulations for the proper conduct of the defence.
2. The student prepares a brief presentation about the state of their thesis project come either explaining the project to be or the project that was. Usually, this presentation lasts 15 to 20 minutes at maximum.
3. The second reader begins questions, or the third reader exceptionally, followed by other members of the committees. Questions last for two rounds, then a discussion may ensue. Questions vary but normally are a chance for you to elaborate, speculate and project different avenues and aspects of your project.
4. Following the questions, the student exits the room with any other members of the audience for the committee to confer. The committee meet privately to assess the thesis. These discussions are constructive and collegial.
5. The student is invited back into the room by the chair, and the committee delivers its decision: to accept the thesis as submitted, accept with modifications, or to reject.

Your supervisor will know when it's best to schedule a defence. Please make sure to obtain their approval before scheduling a defence. Their responsibility is to ensure the work is defensible and to ensure that the defence is a chance to celebrate your success- not criticize and find flaws in your project.

Obtaining Ethics Approval

Concordia Policy states that "All Researchers conducting research (whether funded or not) involving human participants must submit a Summary Protocol Form for UHREC review

and must obtain the UHREC Certificate of Ethical Acceptability before the research begins.” For more details, see Policy for The Ethical Review of Research Involving Human

Participants available at:

<https://www.concordia.ca/content/dam/common/docs/policies/official-policies/VPRGS-3-Sept.pdf>

If your study involves humans or animals, you most likely need an ethics certificate. You typically apply for an ethics certificate after your thesis proposal defense. For more details on obtaining an ethics certificate, see: <https://www.concordia.ca/research/for-researchers/ethics.html>

Concordia policy states that some research involving humans does not require an ethics certificate. These include:

- research that relies exclusively on publicly available information
- research involving the observation of people in public places
- research that relies exclusively on secondary use of anonymous information, or anonymous human biological materials
- quality assurance or quality improvement studies, evaluations, or testing within normal academic requirements
- creative practice activities
- research conducted by faculty members as an outside professional activity or outside employment as defined in the collective agreement between Concordia University and the Concordia University Faculty Association (“CUFA Collective Agreement”) so long as the information collected is not disseminated in the public domain in association with the University.

These categories are broad and during the first year students will learn when and how ethics applies. When necessary, an ethics review can usually take 4 to 6 weeks for approval after submission of the Summary Protocol Form.

Thesis Proposal Defence

A thesis proposal defence follows the same format over the first outlined above. To complete the proposal portion of your thesis, it must be defended. The defence involves two committee members.

Thesis Defence

The thesis defence follows the same form as any other defence. The procedure should be the same as above. The supervisor will confirm the format with the student before the defence.

The Thesis Submission Process

Our program follows the instructions provided by Concordia University. The thesis or research-creation thesis must be properly formatted and submitted to SGS. For more details, see: <https://www.concordia.ca/gradstudies/students/thesis-based/process/send-your-final-submission.html>

REGISTRATION STATUS

For planning purposes, students should keep in mind that, at Concordia, the academic year begins in May (not September). In other words, Year 2 in the program in Communication program begins in May, following the end of the student's first Fall and Winter semesters.

For further information on academic dates, visit:

<http://www.concordia.ca/events/academic-dates.html>.

Leaves of Absence

Sometimes, a student's timeline is interrupted or requires modification (e.g., for health reasons, or other personal circumstances that make it impossible for the student to complete the degree according to the 'typical progress' timeline outlined above). Students facing such scenarios are strongly encouraged to discuss their options with their supervisors and also with the GPD. One option is to request a Leave of Absence. For details, visit: <https://www.concordia.ca/students/your-sis/grad-request-leave-of-absence.html>

To apply for a leave, students must receive approval from the GPD.

Students can request a leave of absence for a maximum of 3 semesters (one year) at a time. Any student requesting additional leaves of absence (beyond 3 semesters) must appeal directly to the School of Graduate Studies, with the support of the GPD.

Time Limit Extension

Under extraordinary circumstances, students may also request a **Time Limit Extension** (TLE) to complete their degree requirements. Requests to extend the allowable time to complete the degree must be approved by the GPD, with the support of the student's supervisor. Students who choose to officially withdraw from the program without

academic penalty must submit a Withdrawal from Program Service Request by the DNE deadline and include the reason(s) for withdrawing.

Please consult with the GPA for assistance in such eventuality. Students should be aware that they will continue to be automatically registered (and billed for tuition fees) for subsequent semesters if they do not officially withdraw from their program.

Full time or part-time status

All students in a thesis or research-creation thesis are considered full-time students throughout the year no matter the number of courses currently taken. The status recognizes that students may be researching full-time in their second year without taking classes.

All students in the course-based option need to take a minimum of 9 credits per term to be considered full-time status.

Students may be able to switch between full-time and part-time in consultation with the GPD and the GPA.

Appendix A: Directed Study Form

Name of Class

Name of Faculty Supervisor

Name of Student(s)

Description (~ 500 words): Describe your course and themes in clear language for the GPD to read and review.

Learning Objectives: Provide a list of the key learning objectives for the course?

Evaluation: Describe how your grade will be evaluated for the course. What are the key assignments and outcomes? How much do they contribute to the grade? How will they be evaluated? How do these activities evaluate your success with the learning objectives?

Important Deadlines: When are assignments due? Does your course follow the academic calendar?

Required Readings / Resources: What books or other materials do you need to complete the course?

Reading / Participation Schedule: Provide a breakdown of key milestones, a reading schedule, key deadlines, and other important dates.

Other details and miscellany:

Appendix B: Thesis Proposal Template

Research Proposal Template

The basic suggested structure of the text is as follows:

1. Title and Abstract (150 words maximum)

An abstract is a short summary of the larger project. Abstracts are essential tools for indexes and journals that use the abstracts to sort and organize scholarship. OWL at Purdue states that all abstracts have these elements:

- A statement of the problem and objectives
- A statement of the significance of the work
- A summary of employed methods or your research approach
- A summary of findings or conclusions of the study
- A description of the implications of the findings

For more details, see:

https://owl.purdue.edu/owl/graduate_writing/graduate_writing_genres/graduate_writing_genres_abstracts_new.html

2. Introduction to the Project (Research Problematic)

Provide a brief introduction to the subject of your research that captures the attention of the reader, and the main research question to be investigated. Position the object (s) of inquiry within social contexts of significance and pertinence. Position the study in terms of your own interests and intellectual history. Briefly mention the key terms to be investigated in relationship to the research question.

3. Brief literature or media review

Frame and name your research question(s) in relation to what you anticipate to be the relevant literature on the subject. It is useful to think of 3 areas of inquiry into which your own research will make an intervention or a contribution. You will not have read or view all of these works, however, you should see patterns and connections that you will investigate. At the proposal stage, the expectation is to identify key literature that you will explore further in your thesis work. The literature review should not be exhaustive and rather you should be finding critical examples and key works that discussed the topic at hand.

A research-creation thesis needs a literature review as well that may include key works that approach a similar topic as well as a media review of key works that inform your own media production.

4. Brief description of the theoretical perspective

What are the assumptions you need to make in order to undertake your project? The theoretical framework is a part of the thesis proposal that orientates how you think about your problem, how you situate your work in the literature and justify why your work matters. usually, a thesis has one 2-3 theoretical perspectives that are brought together. There is no right number of theories in a framework, crucially the theoretical framework should be used and useful for the project, not the other way around.

the key difference between a literature review and a theoretical framework is that a literature review aims to review what has been Done around a certain topic whereas theoretical framework is how you intend to approach the subject.

5. Methodology

Provide a detailed discussion of the methodological program that you will follow. This includes a discussion of your research on the specific methodologies that you will employ throughout the various stages of the research.

You should answer the following critical questions:

What is your corpus of primary material, the set of subjects, or the site that you will use for your analysis of your research topic? Why have you chosen these limits?

It is often useful to ask whether your project will be singular in methodological perspective, or whether different methodologies will be used in different chapters and throughout different stages of the project or thesis to help you “triangulate” or “crystallize” your insights into the phenomena under investigation.

What interpretive strategies will you likely use? Here again, you may make reference to previous sections of the proposal, including the literature review and the theoretical section.

Are any ethical or political considerations that you need to discuss? Do you need ethics approval to complete the process.

6. Requested Resources

What resources do you need to implement this project or thesis: do you need to travel and do you require subsistence support? Do you need equipment and materials, such as

access to computers, software, audio recorders, film or video equipment, editing resources? What will the costs of this research be, if any?

7. Timetable of Research

Chart how long it will take you to do what. What is the temporal ordering of the various stages of the research program? Here is crucial to make yourself aware of the deadlines set out by the School of Graduate Studies. You may need to consider the turn around time needed for effective feedback from your supervisor (if you have one) and their schedule.

It may be important to distinguish between the timetable for doing the research, and the order in which you will produce written chapters or components of your project. The stages in which you do the research do not always correspond directly to the stages in which you will present the work.

ADVICE: Don't get stuck on your introduction, on the theoretical framework, or on the method. It is important to keep writing and to get your ideas down on paper or recorded as soon as possible so you have your own material to work from. It is also crucial to keep momentum going once you start. If you are stuck, work on what you know best. Start with what you are most passionate or knowledgeable about, but do not over-write or over-produce section. Keep moving.

8. Potential chapter breakdown or form of the project

It is often very helpful to think of the written thesis as 2 or 3 linked papers of 5–6,000 words (each) at the core (i.e. about 50–60 pages). What can you imagine the papers that you want to write being? For projects, it is important to name the anticipated elements of your project, e.g. will it primarily be presented as a website? If so, how will it be structured? Will it be a 30-minute podcast of an event? A video? A digital game? If so, how would you imagine the script or design document for such projects? For projects, it is also necessary to consider what will be in the project itself and what will be contained in the written component. In this respect, documenting the research that you do and keeping a process journal can be vital and very useful for writing a reflection on your project: these will be your field notes.

9. Bibliography and Mediography

Should be properly formatted in APA unless agreed upon by your supervisor.