

Graduate Division of Religion

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Guidelines for Forming the Dissertation Committee and Preparing the Prospectus *(current practice: 2011-2012)*

Listed below are the various steps in having a dissertation committee and prospectus approved. These guidelines are intended to aid you in achieving this important goal with a minimum of problems. If you have questions, please contact your advisor or the Graduate Division of Religion Administrative Office.

1. Discuss the proposed dissertation project with the person you would like to be your Dissertation Committee Chair. Also discuss with them possible other members of your committee (normally three faculty total).
2. Speak with other GDR or Drew faculty members who are potential committee members, to ascertain their interest. In the case where a scholar from outside Drew is proposed for membership on the Dissertation Committee, *it is the responsibility of the Committee Chair to initiate contact if and when the Committee is approved.*
3. Submit a completed Dissertation Committee form to the GDR Administrative Office, from which it will be sent to the Area and, subsequently, the GDR Chair for approval.
4. Write the dissertation prospectus using the following guidelines:

A. Outline for Prospectus

1) Statement of thesis or issue and significance

What is your subject? What is your approach to your subject or argument about it? Why is your project worth doing? How will it contribute to knowledge in your field?

2) Discussion of methodology and history of scholarship

What previous scholarship has addressed this topic? What are the major debates in the field relevant to your topic? How will you go about carrying out this project?

3) Proposed outline for the dissertation

How will the dissertation be organized?

4) Selected bibliography

What resources and materials will you use?

B. Style Guidelines for Prospectus

1) **Length:** The prospectus should be no more than 10 pages of text, excluding bibliography.

2) **Format:** The prospectus should be typed (typed no smaller than 12 Pt. doublespaced, and have one-inch margins.

3) **Documentation Style:** The documentation style for the prospectus should be the version of Chicago Style that is required in your scholarly field. Consult your advisor about appropriate style.

4) **Bibliography:** The prospectus should include a selected bibliography of three to five double spaced pages including texts, monographs, articles, dissertations, manuscripts and other resources central to your project. Be sure to include non-English research when it is relevant.

5. When you and your advisor agree that the draft prospectus is ready, schedule a meeting of your dissertation committee to discuss the prospectus. Submit a draft of the prospectus to all committee members no later than 14 days prior to the scheduled meeting.

6. Following the meeting of the committee, when any required revisions have been made and the committee agrees that the prospectus is ready to go to the Academic Life Constellation for review, submit an electronic version to the GDR Chair and ask that your advisor inform the Chair that the dissertation committee has met and affirmed the readiness of the prospectus for ALC review; these communications should be cc'd to the GDR Administrative Office (gdrinfo3@drew.edu).

7. Within four weeks, you and your advisor will receive a review of your prospectus from the Academic Life Constellation. Prospectus review by the Academic Life Constellation is purely advisory. Thus, it is up to the dissertation committee to decide whether further refinement of the prospectus is necessary at that point.

8. Submit a final version of the prospectus, accompanied by a Dissertation Prospectus form signed by the committee members, to the GDR Office.

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Common problems for which prospectus revisions are requested

1) Prospectus text significantly exceeds the 10-page limit.

2) The scope of the project is either far too broad or far too narrow.

3) The subject or argument is not clear.

4) No methodology is articulated or the explanation of the methodology is inadequate.

5) Significant and relevant scholarly conversations are left undiscussed.

6) The project's significance or contribution to knowledge in the field is not adequately justified or documented.

7) The bibliography overlooks a significant body of material in the field. For example, it does not include most recent sources; it does not include foreign-language sources; or omissions from the bibliography suggest that the prospectus author is unaware of major scholarly conversations or debates in the field.

8) The prospectus contains an unusually large number of mechanical errors or writing problems. Use of the Writing Center before resubmission is recommended.