

# **Senior Thesis Guidelines**

for Students in Religious Studies  
at Skidmore College

the writing requirement for RE 375 (normally 20-25 pages). What this means is that thesis writers will take RE 375 and participate fully, but the writing and research you do will relate to your thesis rather than the theme of RE 375.

### **How do I do this?**

Normally, students choose to revisit a topic from an earlier Religion course or from a previous independent study, having laid some foundation upon which build, rather than starting out entirely from scratch. But whether one is capitalizing on previous studies or striking out into newer areas, consultation with faculty is key for identifying a viable topic.

***Phase Two: Research.***  
Fall of Senior Year

Set up weekly or bi-weekly meetings with your thesis advisor (and with the Scribner bibliographer for LI 371) to develop your research agenda.

*Here the research process begins in earnest: the librarian helps you compile a strong bibliography, and your thesis advisor works with you to sculpt your interests and questions into a workable thesis. You read a great deal, and you define the methods and theorists you will employ in your analysis.*

By around the third week of October, you should have a preliminary draft of your annotated bibliography.

By the first or second week in November, a proposal should be shown to the thesis advisor. The proposal delineates one's thesis and methodology, providing a chapter-by-chapter outline and a timeline for completion. If relevant, it also identifies the second reader (who may be inside or outside the department or college). The annotated bibliography is included with the proposal as an appendix.

A finalized version of the proposal should be submitted to the full faculty of Religious Studies prior to Thanksgiving Break. Approval to proceed to the next phase, along with any feedback as to how you can improve your argument, will be communicated before the end of the semester.

Length wise, it is expected th( N)6(o)4d0.43 353.09Tm7(en.o2)13( )r2, wi3( )ri(h)-3(a)

***Phase Three: Writing & Rewriting.***  
Spring of Senior Year

If your proposal has been approved, you are now enrolled in RE 376.

Weekly meetings with thesis advisor allow you to discuss your writing and rework drafts, carefully crafting and refining your argument.

Regular meetings with your second reader help you to develop your bibliography and refine your research plan and argument.

The week after Spring Break, a completed draft of your entire thesis should be ready for your advisor and second reader, as revisions continue.

Before the end of classes or during the exam period, you submit your finished thesis to the faculty and make a presentation, open to the public, in which you discuss what you have written.

Drafted by G. Spinner,  
Aug 2017  
Ratified by Religious Studies Faculty,  
April 2018

