

Writing an Honors Thesis in Religion: Guidelines

"Honors" in the major is available only to students who write an Honors Thesis. This is normally done in the senior year-by enrolling in Religion 86 and 87 for two consecutive terms - Fall and Winter, or Winter and Spring. In some unusual cases, students enroll for REL 86 in the Fall and REL 87 in the Spring. Together, REL 86 and 87 fulfill the culminating experience requirement in the major, and they count for two of the major's nine required courses. The procedure for writing an Honors Thesis is described below.

1. Preparation (Junior Year - Fall/Winter Term)

Plans for writing a thesis must be made during the junior year - the earlier the better. Begin by meeting with that faculty member, or faculty members, in the department with whom you expect to work. If you have already selected a topic, discuss plans for approach, do preliminary readings, and compile a tentative bibliography. If you do not have a topic, but know the general area in which you want to work, faculty will help you narrow your focus and propose possibilities for you to consider. Your main thesis advisor should be a faculty member in this department; where relevant, second readers or advisors in other departments or programs can be involved. Not all faculty are available every year to supervise work. That is why it is urgent that you consult with relevant faculty as early as possible.

2. Proposal (Junior Year - Winter/Spring Term)

To be accepted for thesis work, you must make a formal "proposal" to the department. Your proposal should be 2-4 pages in length. In your proposal you should:

- a) explain what it is you want to examine and why;
- b) note your preparation for this investigation (i.e., relevant course work);
- c) explain your approach - what methods do you plan to use?; and
- d) where possible, note and discuss anticipated results.

The proposal should be accompanied by a tentative bibliography. (A sample proposal is attached.)

Your proposal will be read and discussed by the entire faculty at a department meeting and **must be approved before the end of the Spring term of your junior year.**

3. Research and Writing (Senior Year - Fall or Winter or Spring Term)

Your course of research will be set by you and your advisor. You should have a clear plan of attack and manage your time wisely, with an exact schedule for completion of each part of the thesis that is agreed upon by you and your advisor. You should allow 2-3 weeks at the end of your work for revisions.

Learning how to revise your work based on your advisor's criticisms and suggestions is an integral part of the thesis process. "First drafts" will not be accepted as final work.

4. Presentation and Defense

When your thesis is finished, you are required to present and defend your results to the faculty of the department. In most cases, all theses are read by all members of the department. This is not done to determine your grade; that is decided by your thesis advisor. Rather, this is done to give you experience in publicly explaining your views and to give the faculty a chance to ask questions. Thesis presentations are scheduled during the first two weeks of Spring term for those majors who complete their work in the Winter, and during the last two weeks of Spring term, for those majors who write in the Spring.

DEADLINES!!!!!!

1. For Proposals – Proposals must be submitted to the Chair of the department by the end of Spring Term of your Junior Year.

2. For Completing Your Thesis – Your Thesis must be finished and ready to duplicate by the end of Winter Term of your Senior Year (for those presenting at the start of Spring Term) and by the middle of May of your Senior year (for those presenting at the end of Spring Term).

Attachments

- 1) Honors Theses in Religion - 1975-2005
- 2) Sample Proposal

HONORS THESES IN RELIGION: 1975-2005

1975	Donald L. Drakeman	The Theology of the Jesus Movement
1976	Mark P. Muth	Whitehead's Theory of Mind
1977	John Harrington	The Virgin Mary in Mexican Culture
1977	Stephen Rappaport	An Analysis of Freud's View of Religion Considering his Conception of Reason as the Prefecting Characteristic in Man.
1979	Judith Copeland	Structural Analysis and the Ugaritic Myths
1979	Alistair Jessiman	The Framework of Meaning: Synchrony and Diachrony in the Structural Anthropology of Claude Levi-Strauss
1980	Dennis Biggie	The Theology of George Berkeley
1980	Theodore Blaisdell	Schleiermacher on Protestantism and Kant
1980	Leilani Crane	The Figure of Krishna in Hinduism
1980	John Dolan	Just War, Just Occupation, and the Case of Israel: A Moral Theory with an Illustrative Application
1980	Joel Getzendanner	The Historical Jesus in the Work of Dietrich Bonhoeffer
1980	Peter Hutchins	Predestination in the Thought of Augustine and Aquinas
1980	Edith Marie Keating	The Problem of Abortion
1980	Eric Ziolkowski	Max Weber's Conception of the Transformation of Religious Ideas into Secular Action
1981	W. Thomas Booher	The Founding of the Disciples of Christ
1981	Joan Danziger	Dostoevsky and the Meaning of Life - A Study in The Brothers Karamazov
1981	Lynn Peterson	The Oneida Community
1982	Steven Levitan	A Study of the Sephardic Community in New York City
1982	Carol Mason	Scientific and Ethical Implications of in vitro Fertilization

1983	Gary Apfel	Moses as Folk Hero
1983	Amy Bloch	The Problem of Abortion
1983	Joel Hubbard	The Theology of Christian Perfection as Expressed by the Reverend John Wesley
1983	Kenneth Lehman	On Meaning and Symbolism
1983	Raymond Patterson	The Marian Implications of the Protevangelium of James
1984	Stephen Cho	From Being to Ereignis the Path of Eigentlichkeit
1984	Erin Foley	The Ethical Implications of Advancing Neonatal Technology: Spina-Bifida - A Case Study
1984	Sarah LaBudde	Quaestiones Disputatae: Revelation, Kerygma, and Dogma In the Thought of Karl Barth and Karl Rahner
1984	Deborah Schupack	Albert Camus and Existentialism
1984	Sarah Strauss	Navajo Religion: The Mythological Basis for Medicine and Morality
1984	Brad Weiss	Social Structures and Religious Systems
1985	Michael J. Ferris	Protestant Liberalism and Catholic Modernism: The Nineteenth Century Defense of Faith and Culture
1985	Adam Seessel	Radical Disquiet: A Dialectical Inquiry into Soren Kierkegaard's and Walker Percy's Insights into the Hyper-Rationality of Western Man
1986	Mary Beckman	The Search for the Historical Jesus: The Relationship of History and Theology
1986	Laurence Chang	Religion in Politics: An Essay at Conceptualizing Religion's Role in the Political Sphere
1986	Elizabeth Crawford	Brevard Childs and the Servant of the Lord: An Analysis of Canonical Criticism
1986	Jennifer Kerns	Julius Wellhausen and the Development of the Documentary Hypothesis
1986	David C. Linehan	God, Omnipotence and the Defective Newborn: Using Theodicy in Ethical Analysis

1986	M. Ian Smith	Christian Creation in a Darwinian Age: An Examination of the Creation Theologies of John Cobb and Langdon Gilkey
1987	Lindsay Bridges	As Verily as God is Our Father as Verily is God our Mother: Two Case Studies of Feminine Naming for God in Christianity
1988	Jevin Seth Eagle	Jewish Students at Dartmouth College: A Study of Third and Fourth Generation American Jews
1988	Deborah Lynn Hanney	Other Sheep: Non-Christians in Christian Theology
1988	Joon P. Hong	Religious Developments in the Hellenistic World: The Encounter Between Egyptian and Greek Religious Systems
1989	A. Michael Gildersleeve	Apparently Irrational Beliefs and Their Interpretations
1989	Sharyl Hirsh	The Closed Mythological System of the Ancient Near East: A Structuralist Interpretation of the Mesopotamian and Biblical Primeval Histories
1989	Kara Kelly	A Comparative Study of Death Rituals and Mourning Customs in Contemporary Greece and China
1989	Robin MacDonald	Apparently Irrational Beliefs
1990	Robin Farina	Maternal Responsibility and its Ethical and Legal Ramifications
1990	Diane Fisk Bray	Mary, Mary, Quite Contrary... An Examination of the Historical Development of Mariology
1990	Mario Fantini-Cépedes	Monsignor Jose María Escrivá and the Opus Dei, "The Work of God"
1990	Andrew Harris	Zen Buddhism as a Technology of the Self - An Investigation of the Relations Between Language, Belief, and Experience
1990	David Klaus	Moralistic Legislation in a Morally Pluralistic Society: The Problem of Sodomy Laws in the United States

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| 1991 | William O. Brant | Dying the Great Death: Existential Analyses of Early Ch'an Buddhist Texts - An Examination of the Content and Function of 'The Platform Sutra of the sixth Patriarch' and the 'Mumonkan' through the lens of the Existentialism of Martin Heidegger and Rudolf Bultmann |
| 1991 | Barry Hurwitz | Determinism and Indeterminism: Implications for Human Freedom and Responsibility |
| 1991 | J. Kenneth Joug | The Modal Ontological Argument of Charles Hartshorne |
| 1991 | Michael Lazar | The Process of Becoming an Authentic Self: A presentation and Discussion of Soren Kierkegaard's Stages of Human Existence and their Role in the Project of Christian Self-Becoming |
| 1993 | Betsy Barth | Breaking with Tradition - A New Look at Biblical Women |
| 1993 | Kamran Pasha | Joseph as a Religious Hero - A Comparative Study of Jewish and Muslim Exegesis |
| 1994 | Kimberly Blanchard | With One Heart and One Mind - The Messianic Communities as a Case Study in New Religious Movements |
| 1994 | Elizabeth Goldstein | Theological Constructions of the Jewish Woman: An Analysis of the Relationship Between Female Sexuality and the Laws of Family Purity |
| 1994 | Derek C. West | Order Out of Chaos : The Cosmological Argument, Process Philosophy, and Chaos Theory |
| 1995 | Gretchen Ann Freeman | Facing Mount Kenya? - A Discussion of Changing Indigenous Religions of the Gikuyu and Tiriki Peoples |
| 1995 | Nicole Reboe | From Whence the Water Flows: An Analysis of the Initiation Ritual of the Sande Secret Society |
| 1995 | Barbara L. Seniawski | Islam as Discourse - Capturing Diversity and Affirming Unity |
| 1995 | Andrea Hill Useem | Sacred History at the Smithsonian: Veterans, Historians, and the Politics of Memory |
| 1995 | Blake Wentworth | Religious Violence and the Quest for Meaning |

1996	Michelle Meyer	Can This Marriage Be Saved? - The Search for a Successful Union of Early and Later Ethical Themes in Jean-Paul Sartre's Existentialism
1997	Theresa M. Ellis	A Kiss Which Was Something More Than a Peck: Kierkegaard's Embrace of Romantic and Erotic Love in his Pseudonymous and Religious Writings
1998	Ben A. Cooperberg	Disputed Sacred Space: Conflict Over Jerusalem
1998	Philip J. Glasser	The Meaning of Messiah: An Examination of Anointing in the Hebrew Bible and the Ancient Near East
1998	Molli J. Hamermesh	A Scapegoat for Secularization: Representations of the Jew as Parvenu in Early Twentieth-Century Literature
1998	Peter T. Lanfer	Traditions of Biblical Interpretation in Apocalyptic Judaism and Early Christianity
1998	Jennifer D. Molinar	A Faith in Someone Else's Faith: Justification and Belief in Contemporary Foundationalism, Pragmatism and the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints
1999	Gabriel J. Levy	Lubavitch: A Mystical Ethic Within its Religious Matrix
1999	Ross M. Wilken	Double-Barreled Religious Experience: Jonathan Edwards, Willaim James, and Religious Affections
2000	Greg Baker	The Beginnings of the End: An Examination of Potential Foreign and Indigenous Influences on the Origins of Jewish Apocalypticism in the Hellenistic Period
2000	Ryan Coyne	Apophatic Anthropology: Negative Theology and Human Subjectivity in Late Antiquity
2000	Leslie Cushner	Rethinking Turner's Communitas: A re-reading of Victor Turner in light of Sartre and Buber
2000	Susi Kandel	This One Shall Be Called Woman: Representations of Female Sexuality in Genesis
2000	Chris Pearson	
2001	Lara Belkin	Re-examining Divine Androgyne: The Gender of the Godhead in Theosophic Kabbalah

2001	Luke Gonzales	Arriving in America: Mind, Body, and the American Perceptual Disorder
2001	Chris Hummel	The Roman Catholic Church and Croatian Nationalism: The Life of Archbishop Stepinac
2001	Elizabeth McGarvey	Soren Kierkegaard: A vision of the Christian Life
2001	Alexandra Meise	The Myth of Yugoslavian Identity
2002	Karen M. Hart	Building the New Israel: Childrearing in the Twelve Tribes (Ronald M. Green)
2002	Benjamin D. Herson	The Who's Who of the End of the World: The Roles of the Key Figures in Three First Century CE Eschatologies (Susan Ackerman)
2003	Lauren S. Foley	Christianity and Same-Sex Marriage: Exploring Theology and Ritual (Ronald Green)
2003	Jonathan H. Eisenman	The Evolution of a Debate: Opposition to Darwinism in the United States (Ronald Green)
2003	Mirte B. Mallory	Ferenc Berko: A story of Modernism, Jewish Identity, and Photography (Ronald Green)
2004	Esther Mihindu	The Status of Women in the Ancient Israelite Monarchy
2004	Frederica Ghesquiere	Christian Responses to the Environmental Crisis: A Typology
2004	Rachel Bender	Hanukkah and the Maccabees: Historical Questions of Jewish Identity
2005	S. Luke Blair	Modernism and Protestant Fundamentalism: The Quest for "Authenticity" in a Chaotic World
2005	Torivio A. Fodder	Faith and Culture: The Construction of Religious Identity among the Plains Native Americans of Oklahoma
2005	Emma W. Sloan	There's Something About Mary: Interpretations of Mary Magdelene in Modernity
2005	James R. Young, Jr.	Getting Caught Up in the Clouds: Exploring the Christian Doctrine of the Rapture
2006	Willa Rose F. Johnson	<i>Tawhid</i> and its Challenge to Christianity, The Early Muslim-Christian Debate over Monotheism

2006	Andrew Brock Kraebel	EXERCITIA ET RAPTUS, Teaching, Learning and Queering Twelfth-Century Mysticism in the DE QUATUOR GRADIBUS VIOLENTÆ CARITATIS
2006	Charlotte Sadler	Catholic Teachings Revisited: A Casuist Study of the End-of-Life Care of Terri Schiavo and Pope John Paul II
2007	Benjamin S. Selznick	There's Something Happening Here: Esalen and Secular Spirituality in America
2007	Benjamin D. Cox	Gathered to their Fathers: Reconstructing the Folk Deathways of Iron Age Israel
2007	Henry M. Huberty	The Life of the World to Come: Roman Catholic Church Doctrine and the Personal Heavens of America's Roman Catholics
2007	Julia F. Bernstein	Sacred Space in Secular Conflicts: Religion's Role in Modern Debates over Holy Sites
2007	Rebekah M. Junkermeier	Judas Iscariot: Worst Friend or Best Betrayer? A Study of the Gospel of Judas
2007	Vaughn A. Booker Jr	Free at Last" to "Name It and Claim It"? Race, Empowerment, and the Prosperity Gospel in the Black Megachurch Phenomenon

