



## **Senior Capstone guidelines for students focusing on Religious Studies (BA, Liberal Arts)**

Students have the option of undertaking an Independent Senior Thesis or an appropriate MA-level course to complete the Senior Experience Requirement for the major in Liberal Arts.

### **Choose One Option**

#### **A. Independent Senior Thesis**

Consideration of the independent senior thesis should start in the second semester of your junior year, as you work out your Area of Special Competence with the director of the Religious Studies program. This should be prior to registration for first semester senior year classes, to ensure that you will have completed relevant classes prior to the thesis-writing semester.

Step 1: Self-directed, independent senior projects are individual research or creative projects developed in close consultation with a faculty advisor. Choose a topic you wish to work on and identify an advisor who is both knowledgeable in the area you wish to pursue and willing to work with you. A project proposal, developed with your proposed advisor, must be submitted to the program chair for approval. Averaging 40-60 pages (including bibliography), projects should be limited in scope in order to allow completion in one semester.

Step 2: Start developing your proposal in the summer. Proposals should be 6-8 pages long (double-spaced) and contain the following:

- a) Working title of proposed research paper/creative project.
- b) Name of advisor.
- c) 3-4 page description of the key idea being explored, optimally divided into chapters; indicate where you have already done relevant research.
- d) 2-3 page annotated bibliography.

#### **B. MA-level Course**

The course, chosen in consultation with the director of the Religious Studies program, must be offered within The New School. (Not very many courses relevant to religious studies are offered at The New School each year.) Permission must also be obtained from the course instructor. Student must complete all requirements of the MA course, including a substantial final research paper, which should be submitted also to the Religious studies program director.

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### **Overall Criteria: Written Projects**

All Senior Projects must be based in research. Creative elements are possible, but these must be accompanied by research findings that are relevant and substantial. The goal of research projects is to engage with an existing literature in the field of religious studies (or another discipline in relation to a topic related to religion), in relation to a specific *question or set of questions*.

Generally, projects must therefore be comprised of the following general parts:

1. clear articulation of question(s), placed in context,
2. a review and analysis of relevant literature in the field, with clear explication of relevance to the question(s) at hand, and
3. exploration of question(s) with supporting evidence

### **Requirements**

A *minimum* of 15 books and scholarly articles must be referenced in the work; demonstrated familiarity with the relevant literature is required. Students should expect to complete a research project of 40 to 60 pages or equivalent creative work/research combination.

### **Grading**

Active and conscientious participation in the project process is essential to a successful senior project. This includes (1) fulfilling the requirements outlined in this document, (2) meeting with the project advisor consistently, (3) providing material for review to the advisor in a timely manner (giving sufficient time for feedback to be provided), and (4) engaging with advisor feedback in a constructive manner. In general, senior projects are graded in accordance with the degree of success of the final product. Though to a lesser degree than in a course, the process that led to the final product and the student's participation therein are taken into account as w.

FINAL APPROVAL BY THE CHAIR OF THE PROJECT MUST BE REPORTED TO THE SENIOR CLASS ADVISOR BY THE FIRST DAY OF ADVANCE REGISTRATION FOR THE FOLLOWING SEMESTER (GENERALLY MID NOVEMBER FOR SPRING AND EARLY APRIL FOR FALL).

**See Senior Work Advisor form on next page.**

**SENIOR WORK ADVISOR FORM**

To be completed by students undertaking individual or collaborative senior projects

STUDENT'S LAST NAME: \_\_\_\_\_ FIRST NAME: \_\_\_\_\_  
STUDENT I.D. #: \_\_\_\_\_

STUDENT'S LAST NAME: \_\_\_\_\_ FIRST NAME: \_\_\_\_\_  
STUDENT I.D. #: \_\_\_\_\_

STUDENT'S LAST NAME: \_\_\_\_\_ FIRST NAME: \_\_\_\_\_  
STUDENT I.D. #: \_\_\_\_\_

TITLE/SUBJECT OF PROJECT:  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**To be completed by the Senior Work advisor:**

SENIOR WORK ADVISOR'S NAME: \_\_\_\_\_  
NEW SCHOOL UNIVERSITY AFFILIATION?  YES, DIVISION  NO

FULL-TIME NEW SCHOOL FACULTY MEMBER? \*  YES  NO

*\*If you are NOT a New School faculty member, has your advisee contacted the Associate Dean for approval?*

PHONE: (one of these telephone numbers should be a number where a message can be left)  
WORK: \_\_\_\_\_ HOME: \_\_\_\_\_

E-MAIL: \_\_\_\_\_  
ADDRESS: \_\_\_\_\_

**Please read and check statement below then sign it.**

**\_\_\_\_\_ I have read and discussed the Senior Work Proposal with the above-named student, and approve it to be forwarded to the Chair or designee for final approval. If revisions are deemed necessary I agree to further develop the proposal with the student.**

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_