

## Thesis Proposal Guidelines

Thesis Proposals are approximately 8 to 12 pages long, exclusive of Title Pages and Bibliographies.

### **Title Page**

Supply the proposed title of your thesis, your name, degree program, and the names of your director and two committee members. A sample Title Page is available on the HCS website under Thesis Resources.

### **Statement of Purpose**

Establish the central **problem** or **question** you seek to investigate or answer in your thesis and explain why that problem or question is significant to the field within which you work.

Include a **description** of your project, including its key terms and themes and a **justification** for undertaking it. This justification should establish (a) the significance of your research agenda (why your problem or question is worthy of attention) and (b) the consequences of your research for your field.

### **Original Materials**

Identify the texts you plan to investigate in your thesis (i. e., the novels, poems, philosophical or scientific texts, artworks, songs, films, video games, etc. that are the central subjects of your project). Explain why these texts are suited to the problem or question posed by your thesis. If any of your texts are in archival or special collections, explain how you plan to access them within the timeframe of your thesis.

### **Contextual Literature**

Situate your Original Literature in its historical context, naming relevant texts. Why is this context important for the problem or question your thesis pursues? How does it contribute to the significance or consequences of your investigation?

### **Related Literature**

Discuss your project's relationship to extant scholarship on your problem or question, offering pointed summaries of relevant texts. How does your work corroborate and / or challenge these arguments? How does your project make a significant contribution to the field you describe?

**NOTE:** Your Related Literature, along with your Preliminary Bibliography, constitutes your "comprehensive examination" requirement at USF. Be prepared to answer questions about these texts during your Thesis Proposal Defense.

### **Theoretical Literature**

Name and describe the theoretical concepts that have most influenced your approach to the central problem or question of your thesis. Why are these best suited to your project?

What terms or strategies does your project borrow? From what texts do these terms or strategies come?

**Organization**

Explain how you plan to structure your Thesis, including your organization of its component sections. A typical Thesis of 25 to 40 pages includes an introduction, a body divided into titled subsections, and a conclusion.

**Preliminary Bibliography**

Provide a robust working bibliography for your project. Identify items you have read and not read to date. All sources mentioned in your proposal should appear in this bibliography. The bibliography should be composed with the guidance of your major professor and suggestions from your committee members.