

COLLABORATIVE PROGRAM IN WOMEN'S STUDIES AT THE MASTER'S LEVEL

Guidelines for the Submission of a Thesis or Major Research Paper Proposal in Women's Studies

Theses/major research papers in the collaborative program in Women's Studies (WS) are not merely theses including women as "subjects." They are *about* women/gender and are written from a feminist perspective. Feminist perspectives can range from the demonstration of the existence of inequalities between men and women to analyses centered on gender norms, gender relations or patriarchal structures, to the promotion of agendas for change (etc.). IFGS **theses/major research papers proposals demonstrate knowledge of feminist scholarship in the field or fields appropriate to the question and specific feminist methodologies when applicable.** They also use gender inclusive language where appropriate. In addition, WS theses/major research proposals may focus on women's experiences. They may be written from a woman's point of view, and they may emphasize gender as a significant social category worthy of extensive analysis. When they rely on human research participants, they generally favour a collaborative approach between the researcher and the participants. Theses/major research papers in WS acknowledge that various social, economic, legal and cultural factors (for example: race, class, sexuality, etc.) limit generalization.

1. The approval, by the Institute of Feminist and Gender Studies (IFGS), of a student's thesis or MRP project is a mandatory requirement of the specialization in Women's Studies in the Collaborative Program. All students should submit the thesis/major research paper proposal upon completion of the equivalent of two terms of full-time registration -- this even in the case that the primary unit does not require a proposal. The thesis/major research paper proposal must be submitted between the months of April and December after the first two terms of enrolment (having first registered in September of the first year). Students must have successfully completed the two compulsory FEM courses (FEM 5103 and FEM 5300) before the submission of the thesis or major research paper proposal.
2. Students are encouraged to submit the same proposal to both disciplines when possible (that is, when the length of the proposal to be submitted to the primary unit corresponds to the length required by the IFGS Graduate Studies Committee AND conditional to the proposal's content representing adequately both discipline).
3. The proposal must be submitted to the IFGS before data collection or writing of the thesis or MRP. Otherwise, the IFGS reserves the right to refuse to evaluate the student's project.
4. The proposals submitted to WS for evaluation will typically be no less than 10 and no greater than 15 double-spaced and typed pages (without the bibliography). If the primary unit does not provide the student with guidelines for the preparation of a proposal, the student is expected to conform to the Suggested guidelines for the submission of a thesis or major research paper proposal in Women's Studies (on the next page).
5. Once students' proposals are ready for evaluation, students must fill out the *Women's Studies thesis or major research paper proposal form* and obtain the approval of their supervisor before submitting their proposal to Women's Studies. The supervisor's signature ensures that s/he has read the proposal to be submitted to WS and authorizes the student to submit. Students must also obtain the signature from the Graduate Studies Director of their primary unit on that form. Once the proposal form is received by the IFGS Operations Coordinator, students may then submit by email to mcharbo@uOttawa.ca their thesis or major research paper proposal to the IFGS Graduate Studies Committee for comments and evaluation (grade: S/NS). Candidates whose project has been judged non-satisfactory will have to revise their project at the satisfaction of the IFGS-GSC or forfeit the specialization in Women's Studies.

Suggested guidelines for the preparation of a Women's Studies thesis/Major Research Paper proposal

The following are intended as suggested guidelines to help students in their preparation of the thesis/major research paper proposal for the Collaborative Program in Women's Studies at the Master's level. It is understood that the structure and content of the proposal may vary between disciplinary domains and traditions.

- I. **The topic/the problem:** Briefly present the topic of your proposed research. Describe the current state of the literature on the topic and the main points or issues it raises. Specify the research problem that your research wants to address (gap in our knowledge, weaknesses in current understanding(s) of the topic, etc.).
- II. **Objective(s), Question(s), Thesis/Argument, and Relevance:** State the main or general objective(s) of your research and formulate the more specific research question(s) your research attempts to answer. Specify your thesis/working argument. Comment on the scope and relevance of your proposed research to scholarship in Women's Studies (and any other possible applications of your work).
- III. **Theoretical framework:** Articulate the theoretical framework -- theoretical traditions, debates, propositions, and/or key concepts from feminist scholarship, as well as from other scholarship(s) when appropriate -- that will enable you to examine your topic and will help you work towards answering your research question(s).
- IV. **Methodological framework:** Present the methodological strategy (approach, method(s), type(s) and sources of information sought, spatial and temporal scope of your research) you plan to use to answer your research question(s) and meet your research objectives). Address any general methodological concerns raised in feminist scholarship that are of particular relevance to your research (for instance: issues of access/availability, ethical issues, power issues, risks of othering, etc.)
- V. **Provide a provisional outline of the organization of the thesis:** Chapter titles and brief overview of the proposed contents.
- VI. **Research timetable of the thesis:** It should include all the necessary steps of your research process (from ethics approval to data collection to chapter writing and completing the thesis).
- VII. **Bibliography:** Include a bibliography of all the sources cited in the proposal.

Approved by the Women's Studies Graduate Committee on April 1st, 2005 and by the Executive Committee of the Institute of Feminist and Gender Studies on May 2nd, 2005 and revised on May 14, 2009 ; revised 20149.