MA 5300 MASC PROJECT

Professor Gabriella Lettini
Fall or Spring - 3 Units

For SKSM Master of Arts in Social Change (MASC) students only. MASC students can split this course over two semesters of sign up for it during their last semester. This final project can take a variety of forms and should be representative of the student's learning and creative work in the MASC degree. Projects include research thesis, public presentations, designing and implementing educational curricula, organizing local/national conferences and special events, multimedia artwork, writing a book, and more. The thesis topic, proposal, and final draft need to be discussed and developed with the faculty. The project can have a public presentation. A total of 3 MASC Project credits are required for graduation in the MASC degree. Please discuss with instructor.

Phase 1: brainstorming on the topic, finding a focus

The final MASC project is representative of your learning and creative thinking in the MASC program. Ideally, it will be a bridge between your studies and your future work. Some students arrive at SKSM already with specific ideas about their final project, for instance a thesis on specific eco-justice topic. Other students enter the program with many different ideas and need more time to sort them out. All starting points are good. What is important is that in the first part of the program you keep having regular conversations with your advisor and the MASC Coordinator about what the possible directions for your final project. Starting this conversation early will allow you to keep reflecting on it over the course of several semester, integrating your new learning with your original ideas, stretching your thinking, discovering new questions. Often the initial stages of these conversation are like brainstorming sessions. With time, you and your advisors will narrow down the topic, determining its focus, its scope, its learning goals and methodology.

Phase 2: prepare your MASC project proposal

Please write two-three pages describing the focus and nature of your project, explaining its relevance and articulating the main questions you hope to address.

Please list an initial bibliography and outline.

The proposal should be no more than 3 double spaced pages with one-inch margins and 12-point readable type. Footnotes should appear at the bottom of the appropriate page(s), in the same 12-point readable type, and can take up to but not exceed 2 inches of space above the bottom margin. The footnote should be single spaced; the space between two footnotes should be double spaced.

As you focus on writing your final project, make sure you address the questions below. Please organize your proposal according to the following headlines:

- **TITLE:** What is the working title for the paper/project? It might change until the final draft, but to have a sense of it will enable to see how focused you are in your topic.

- **SCOPE AND NATURE OF THE PROJECT:** Define what the project is about, the Thresholds in which it is located (e.g.,), background of the topic, limitations (things that the project will intentionally not cover that might be expected).

- **PROJECT STATEMENT:** What is the main question or thesis that you want to explore in your project? What, primarily, do you want to accomplish? In one or two sentences, state what the work will attempt to demonstrate or accomplish (that is, if not accomplished, the thesis changes drastically). Put another way: explain where the weight of the thesis lies.

- **LEARNING OUTCOMES:** Please, list 1-3 measurable learning goals you will accomplish by preparing this project.

- **SIGNIFICANCE:** Why is your chosen topic relevant? Who are your primary audience and community of accountability? Discuss the significance of the work within the discipline and possibly other communities (religious, local, political, national, etc.) and possibly for the scholar. Clarify the distinctive contribution of this project.

- **METHODOLOGY**: Explain the theoretical frameworks and specific methodological tools that will be used for research, analysis and/or planning. This is not a question about how the text/ research will be organized, but on its methods.

- **SOURCES AND RESOURCES** What are the sources/resources that you will engage? What is your bibliography? How much research and reading do you need to do to write this paper or organize this project? Is this feasible in the time you have? If not, your plan might be too ambitious for a 3credit project: if you discover so, try to narrow your focus.

- **OUTLINE**: Give a preliminary indication of what each part of the project will include. This will enable you to focus on the steps you need/want to take as you write and plan. You can reshape your outline as you work, in consultation with your advisors. (NOTE: the outline should comply with the spacing requirements of

the proposal, that is, double and not single-spaced text.)

- **SCHEDULE:** What is your preliminary writing/planning schedule? Knowing when you will be able to work and setting up a reasonable planning/writing schedule will enable you not to have to stretch yourself too thin at the end. Remember that your final deadline is the end of the term.

- **SHORT BIBLIOGRAPHY:** In addition to the 2–3-page proposal, please include a short bibliography consisting of at least 15 entries representing the most significant works/materials that will be used in the research/work. Include, when possible, at least 3 entries in languages other than English, especially if you are working on a topic involving a multi-language context.

- **SECOND REVIEWER:** Usually your advisor is the second reviewer of your project. However, you may discover that someone else on the faculty has specific background in your area of interest.

- **MATERIALS FOR EVALUATION:** Many students chose projects other than the traditional research thesis, including organizing events or courses that will take place outside SKSM. If that is your case, make sure you include in your project proposal the list of the material that will be available for review, including a critical reflection piece on the planning, delivery and reception of the project.
  If you write a traditional research thesis, the total number of pages should not exceed.

- Remember that **plagiarism** is a serious ethical breech and offense and does not contribute to any real learning. For information and suggestions on how to avoid plagiarism, please see SKSM Student Handbook.

Deadline: the MASC Project proposal should be handed in by the end of the term previous its completion, or by the third week of the term at the latest. You should have at least 90 days to complete your project.

Phase 3: writing/preparing your project, meeting deadlines

Please, remember that you will receive 3 units of credit for the MASC project. You should do the equivalent work of a three-credit course or SKIL: 135 hours of work expected.

- Length of written material: the written material to review for traditional research thesis should be a minimum of 50 pages and should not exceeds 80 pages. A longer length for projects involving creative writing can and needs to be negotiated with the advisors. Multimedia projects need to include all material

for review.

- For traditional research thesis projects:

  o Wayne, C. Booth, Gregory G. Colomb, et alii. *The Craft of Research*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2016, 4th edition.
  o Nancy Jean Vyhmeister and Terry Dwain Robertson, *Your Guide to Writing Quality Research Papers for Students of Religion and Theology*. Grand Rapids, Michigan, 2014, 3rd edition.
  o Did you consider having extra time for editing and polishing the written part of your project? Please check: Kate Turabian, *A Manual for Writers of Term Papers, Theses, and Dissertations (Chicago Guides to Writing, Editing, and Publishing), 9th edition. http://cmosshoptalk.com/2018/05/08/official-turabian-chicago-style-paper-formatting-tip-sheets/*

Phase 4 (optional): Considering a Public Presentation or Publishing of Your Project

- Ideally the MASC project benefits the larger community. Please consult with your advisors on the best ways to share your work with your targeted audiences.