

## **ARCH 700: INDEPENDENT THESIS PROPOSAL GUIDELINES (06/20/2019)**

### **PREPARING THE THESIS PROPOSAL**

The thesis proposal provides a succinct but thorough statement of the student's intentions in undertaking an independent thesis. Thesis proposals must be prepared according to the outline of topics presented below. A thesis proposal should be 2,000-2,500 words, not including supporting material.

### **PROPOSAL OUTLINE**

- 1. Title:** A simple but descriptive title is best. An appropriate title will lead readers to select the thesis correctly when reviewing literature on a given topic. For example, the title may consist of two parts; the first part should announce the evocative thrust of the thesis, and the second should contain the shortest descriptive summary, containing the “keywords” that can be used to identify the thesis topic.
- 2. Thesis Statement:** This statement should be a succinct summary (normally one substantial paragraph) of the precise topic of the thesis that gives a brief but clear idea of its scope and focus. The statement must identify the issue or problem to be addressed and present an argument or claim that clearly asserts the position that is being taken relative to the issue or problem.
- 3. Theoretical/Conceptual Framework:** This section elaborates upon the theoretical and/or conceptual positions and concerns that will frame the thesis. Typically, it advances a proposition concerning the nature of architecture by actively referring to existing academic and/or professional theoretical and conceptual positions concerning architecture. Such references are mostly be drawn from the field of architecture, but may also be drawn from other fields.

This critical review of existing literature defines the main categories of research that are essential to defining the issue you are investigating. In describing how others have approached this topic, it will help you synthesize and refine your own position. It may also be important to analyze specific design approaches, or case studies, that others have taken to define your position. Please note that this section will run well beyond a full page (double-spaced).

- 4. Methodology:** This section should describe the methodology by which the thesis will be pursued. The methodology advanced by the student must contain its own justification—why is the methodology appropriate or best for the proposed thesis? Typically, the theoretical/conceptual framework should suggest a methodology.

The evaluative and transformative methodologies that structure the creative process must be subject to critical examination, and their examination is integral to the successful defense of a thesis. Design methodologies, like theoretical/conceptual positions, are often habitual or assumed rather than stated, but a thesis requires a student to explicitly examine these assumptions.

Questions such as the following may help clarify this section: Should the design methodology be based on precedent, convention, or architectural typology; on functional analysis, original research, or systematic investigation of site or design parameters; or on some combination? What relative role will be played and how much weight will be given to topics such as, site, users, program, climate, community, history, context or budget? Not all of these questions need be answered, but they are the

type of questions that must be addressed. The description of the proposed methodology should be brief but sufficiently thorough so that the Review Committee can understand the student's approach and point out potential problems.

5. **Scope of Investigation:** This statement will generally be a paragraph or several paragraphs setting forth the limits of the thesis. The more clearly the thesis elements and limits are identified and described, the better the Review Committee will be able to judge the feasibility of completing the thesis in the time available. For a design thesis, this section must include the identification of the project site and a summary of the project program. The site selection and/or program development may be part of the actual thesis process itself. In this case, the proposal must include a detailed written description of the specific process by which the program will be developed and/or a written set of detailed site selection criteria indicating exactly the specific process by which the site will be chosen. This section should also explain the breadth of exploration anticipated as part of the thesis. In addition, it should define what aspects are to be taken as givens and what aspects will be explored by the student.
6. **Preparatory Study:** In this paragraph (or paragraphs), the student's preparation for the thesis project should be described. This will often include an outline listing of course work that the student has taken that is relevant to the selected thesis topic. A sentence or two about the relevance of each course should be provided. In particular, the student must reference the work done in the Arch 592: Research Methods class. In most cases where a design thesis is intended, the Arch 592 class should lead to the preparation of a project program and selection of a project site.
7. **Annotated Bibliography:** An annotated bibliography listing only the texts that have been read or are likely to be read and actively referred to in the thesis. The annotation must briefly describe the theme of the text, and the importance or anticipated use of the text with respect to the thesis.
8. **Supporting Material:** Students must include their final paper for Arch 592, if it was taken prior to submission of this proposal. Students may also attach additional material as evidence of preparation to undertake the proposed thesis. This material may include site maps, drawings, photographs, research reports or a detailed program.

### INDEPENDENT THESIS TIMELINE

The following is a rough timeline for students who choose to pursue an Independent thesis. Specific dates and more detailed information will be made available by the Graduate Program Coordinator and Advisor.

|                            |  |        |
|----------------------------|--|--------|
| <b>Autumn quarter 2019</b> | Submit "Thesis Proposal" to Thesis Proposal Review Committee | Week 2 |
|                            | along with proposed Supervisory Committee                    |        |
|                            | Finalize Supervisory Committee                               | Week 7 |
|                            | Register for Arch 599/Arch 700                               |        |
| <b>Winter quarter 2020</b> | Arch 599: Thesis Research and Preparation, 3 credits         |        |
|                            | Arch 700: Thesis, 6 credits                                  |        |
| <b>Spring quarter 2020</b> | Arch 700: Thesis, 6 credits                                  |        |

Questions? Contact Claudine Manio <[claudine@uw.edu](mailto:claudine@uw.edu)> or Rob Peña <[rbpena@uw.edu](mailto:rbpena@uw.edu)>