

Master's Thesis Handbook



Mount Saint Mary's University
LOS ANGELES

Graduate Division

**GRADUATE RELIGIOUS STUDIES PROGRAM
MOUNT SAINT MARY'S UNIVERSITY**

**10 CHESTER PL
LOS ANGELES, CA 90007**

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Introduction

This *Master's Thesis Handbook* is written for students beginning the process of writing a master's thesis in partial fulfillment of the requirements for a Master of Arts in Religious Studies from Mount Saint Mary's University. This handbook should also be used by faculty members serving in the capacity of the Capstone Director or Second Reader of a thesis. It is the official guide to the Graduate Religious Studies Department's requirements for the writing and submission of a thesis proposal (RST 290, 290A, 290B) and thesis (RST 291, 291A, 291B, 291C). In addition to explaining the required elements for the thesis proposal and thesis, the handbook communicates departmental expectations related to communication with your thesis director, the timely completion and submission of your thesis, and information on graduation.

I. RST 290: Capstone Proposal (1 unit)

1. Students must complete the following prior to gaining permission to register for RST 290: Capstone Proposal:
 - a. Students must have already completed all required coursework in all categories (Systematics (two 3-unit courses, of which RST 220: Theories and Methods is required), Scripture (two 3-unit courses), Ethics (two 3-unit courses), Pastoral Theology (two 3-unit courses), and Electives (9 total units)).
 - b. Students must choose a Capstone Director and Second Reader. The Capstone Director should be chosen on the basis of the director's academic field of study and/or areas of expertise in relation to the topic that the student wants to explore. The Capstone Director and Second Reader must be faculty members in the Graduate Religious Studies/Religious Studies Department at Mount Saint Mary's University. In extraordinary cases, the Second Reader may be a faculty member from another accredited institution.
 - c. The student must contact and meet with the faculty member that they would like to have as their Capstone Director. The student should be prepared to discuss the Capstone topic and request that the faculty member be the Capstone Director.
 - d. In dialogue with the Capstone Director, the student must choose a specific research topic. The choice of the research topic will ideally be based upon research and analysis that the student has been engaged in since the time they were admitted into the program.
 - e. The student can then meet with the Director of Graduate Religious Studies to obtain approval to register for RST 290: Capstone Proposal.

II. Writing the Capstone Proposal- General Information

1. Style

The Graduate Religious Studies Department requires that all theses proposals and theses conform to *The Chicago Manual of Style* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, current edition) (hereafter *The Chicago Manual*). For additional support in using *The Chicago Manual* students should reference Katie L. Turabian's, *A Manual for Writers of Term Papers, Theses, and Dissertations* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, current edition), which specifically addresses how to shape your writing in conformity with the norms associated with academic writing.

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As these guides may be revised or updated, please be certain to consult the most recent edition of any manual used. The *Chicago Manual* and *A Manual for Writer's of Term Papers, Theses, and Dissertations* can be obtained online (in abbreviated form), at the Mount Saint Mary's University library, or can be purchased online or at a bookstore.

2. Language

The Graduate Religious Studies Department recognizes that it serves a culturally rich and ethnically diverse student population. It may be the case that a student's primary language for theological inquiry, reflection, and communication is one other than English. In an effort to support diversity and inclusivity, the Graduate Religious Studies Department allows for the use of languages other than English in the completion of both RST 290: Capstone Proposal and RST 291: Capstone Research, Analysis and Presentation. If a student desires to complete any part of their Capstone Project in a language other than English, the following criteria must be met:

- a. The Capstone Director and Second Reader must be fluent in the language chosen.
- b. The student must complete a petition to be presented to the Director of Graduate Religious Studies during the semester the student is registered for RST 290: Capstone Proposal. The Director of Graduate Religious Studies, in consultation with the Religious Studies Chairperson, Capstone Director, and Second Reader, may then grant the student permission to write the thesis proposal and thesis in their primary language.
- c. The student must write an abstract for their thesis in English.
- d. The student must write a 15-20 page summary of their thesis in English upon its completion.

3. The Professional and Academic Resource Center (PARC)

The PARC is a center that provides additional resources and writing support for all Weekend/Evening College and Graduate Division students at Mount Saint Mary's University. Students are strongly encouraged to visit PARC for any research or writing support. The PARC is meant for additional support and should not be used as a replacement to the advisement of the Capstone Director or Second Reader. The PARC is located at Doheny, Bldg. 10, Rm. 201. They can also be reached online at <https://www.msmu.edu/academics/academics/learning-resources/parc/>, by email at PARC@msmu.edu, or over the phone at (213) 477-2898.

4. Timeline and Expectations for Meeting with Capstone Director

a. RST 290: Capstone Proposal is a course that should be completed in one semester. Only in extraordinary circumstances should a student need to register for the Capstone Continuation Courses, RST 290A, RST 290B. Completing RST 290: Capstone Proposal in one semester will require that the student has already chosen a topic of research and has begun research in this area (see above I.1.c,d). In order to complete the Capstone Proposal in one semester, it is highly recommended that the student complete a *backward calendar*. By using a *backward calendar* (see Table 1), the student and Capstone Director can clearly outline due dates for each Element of Capstone Proposal (elaborated below) in order to meet the final deadline at the end of the semester that the student is registered for RST 290. As this is a *backward calendar* method, the student and Capstone Director should begin with the deadline at the bottom of the table and work up to determine the due date for each Element of the Capstone Proposal. The table can be modified to suit the needs of each student and Capstone Director.

Table 1: A Sample Backward Calendar for Capstone Proposal¹

Element of the Capstone Proposal	Deadline
Description of Topic/Research Question & Working Title	To be completed <i>prior</i> to registration in RST 290
Preliminary Literature Review	
Thesis Statement	
Articulation of Methodological Frameworks & Definition of Terms	
Chapter Outline and Summary	
Preliminary Bibliography	
Submission of Capstone Proposal & Departmental Signature Form	Ideally, the deadline will be 1-2 weeks prior to the Registrar's Office scheduled due date for semester grades. Please reference the Academic Calendar for accurate deadline information.

b. It is recommended that the student meet with the Capstone Director at regular intervals. While the frequency and duration of meetings between the student and Capstone Director are at their discretion, it is recommended that meetings (phone or in-person) occur at each stage of submission for the Elements of the Capstone Proposal (See Table 1). Students should give their Capstone Directors material according to the pre-established back calendar due date and expect to meet with their Directors about the material submitted *after* the Capstone Director has had time to read and assess the quality of the submission. Students must make every effort to establish meeting times with their Capstone Director and are responsible for ensuring they are both on time and prepared.

III. Elements of the Capstone Proposal

While the student and Capstone Director may choose to include additional elements to the Capstone Proposal, each of the following elements are *required*. Students that do not include each of the following elements in their proposal will have their proposal returned to them until the missing elements are included.

1. Working Title, Description of Topic, Research Question

In dialogue with the Capstone Director the student must choose a topic to research and analyze in their thesis. It is recommended that the student frame their topic as a research question that they aim to analyze, and make a unique contribution to, in their thesis. The topic should be specific, focused, and able to be addressed within the confines of a 60-100 page thesis. This element of the proposal requires that the student complete preliminary research to sufficiently narrow their topic and ensure that their proposed topic will constitute a new contribution to the field. The description of topic and research question should function as an introduction to your overall proposal and should inform the creation of a “working title.”

2. Preliminary Literature Review

The preliminary literature review is meant to provide an overview of the existing research on the student's topic/research question. While there are many ways to write a literature review, it is highly recommended that the student follow the guidelines provided by the Professional and Academic Resource Center (PARC) in “How to

¹ This table is an adaptation of Marianne Di Pierro's “backward calendar” method. See *Navigating the Dissertation: Strategies for New Doctoral Advising Faculty and Their Advisees* (Stillwater, OK: New Forums Press, 2014), 19.

Write a Literature Review," which provides a detailed description for each of the eight components that ought to be included for each source the student reviews. "How to Write a Literature Review" can be found at: <https://mountsaintmarysuniversi.sharepoint.com/sites/MYMSMU/academics/PARC/Writing-Documents/How%20to%20Write%20a%20Literature%20Review.pdf>. Students may also obtain a hardcopy of this document by visiting the PARC. The preliminary literature review should not include every source from the bibliography. Instead, it should include at least 6-8 academic sources that are crucial in addressing the topic/research question and/or those sources that are important in supporting the thesis statement or argument the student will make in the thesis. Decisions over which sources should be included ought to be made in dialogue with the Capstone Director.

3. Thesis Statement

Students must incorporate a clear and concise thesis statement in their Capstone Proposal. The thesis statement constitutes the student's overarching argument as it relates to the topic of focus and/or research question. The thesis statement should be created in light of the preliminary research the student has completed on the topic. The thesis statement is the thread that holds together the Capstone Project. As such, it will inform the "Chapter Outline" element of the Capstone Proposal.

4. Methodological Frameworks, Explanation of Concepts, and Use of Terms

The fields of Religious Studies and Theology contain multiple methodological and analytical frameworks. Further, definitions of concepts and terms may differ amongst scholars in the field. As such, in this element the student must provide the following:

- a. A clear explanation and justification of the methodological and analytical frameworks utilized in their thesis.
- b. Definitions of key concepts and terms utilized throughout the thesis. Students must cite the scholarship that supports their own definition and use of key concepts and terms.

5. Chapter Outline and Summary

This element requires the student to provide an outline and summary of the chapters of their thesis project. Working titles for each chapter and a 1-2 paragraph summary of the content to be included in each chapter must be included. Students should pay careful attention to whether the chapter outline and summary evidence a logical progression the argument they will make in the thesis.

6. Preliminary Bibliography

Students must provide a preliminary bibliography at the end of the Capstone Proposal. Bibliographic references must be complete and according to *The Chicago Manual*.

7. Signature Form

Students will attach the completed Capstone Proposal to the required RST 290: Capstone Proposal form. The form must be signed by the Capstone Director, Second Reader, and the Director of Graduate Religious Studies. For your convenience, the required signature form can be found in Appendix A of this handbook. Students may also access the required signature form from the Graduate Religious Studies web page. To download proceed to <https://www.msmu.edu/graduate-programs/religious-studies/> and click "Departmental Forms." The form can then be accessed and printed.

IV. RST 291: Capstone Research, Analysis, and Presentation (2 units)

Once the Capstone Proposal is completed and approved the student may register for RST 291: Capstone Research, Analysis, and Presentation. A student has four semesters to complete the research, analysis, and presentation of their Capstone Project. If a student does not complete RST 291 in one semester, they will be issued an "IP" and will register for the appropriate continuation course- RST 291A, RST 291B, or RST 291C. The continuation courses are 1-unit courses. If unforeseen circumstances arise that will prevent a student from writing their thesis on any given semester, students may file for a Leave of Absence with the Office of the Registrar. Students remain subject to the formal Leave of Absence policies as communicated in the Mount Saint Mary's University catalogue.

V. Writing the Capstone Project/Master's Thesis- General Information

1. Style

The Graduate Religious Studies Department requires that all theses proposals and theses conform to *The Chicago Manual of Style* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, current edition). For additional support in using *The Chicago Manual* students should reference Katie L. Turabian's, *A Manual for Writers of Term Papers, Theses, and Dissertations* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, current edition), which specifically addresses how to shape your writing in conformity with the norms associated with academic writing.

As these guides may be revised or updated, please be certain to consult the most recent edition of any manual used. The *Chicago Manual* and *A Manual for Writer's of Term Papers, Theses, and Dissertations* can be obtained online (in abbreviated form), at the Mount Saint Mary's University library, or can be purchased at any bookstore.

2. Format

In order to ensure the formatting aligns with the standards set forth by the Graduate Religious Studies Department, students are strongly encouraged to view sample Capstone Projects. Sample theses that have been printed and bound can be found on the second floor of the Doheny Library or in the Graduate Religious Studies Department, Doheny Campus, Building 2. Students can also access sample theses on the Graduate Religious Studies Department webpage under "Capstone Documents." For additional help, library representatives can be reached at (213) 477-2750 and the Graduate Religious Studies Assistant can be reached at (213) 477-2640.

Master's theses must align with the following formatting requirements:

- a. Standard 1-inch right margin, 2-inch left margin (for binding), and size 12 Times New Roman or Arial font.
- b. **Preliminary Pages:** Completed theses will be submitted with the required preliminary pages: Title page, Signature page, Library Cataloging and Shelving Authorization and Cover Sheet page, Abstract page, and a Table of Contents page. The required signature pages can be found in Appendix B of this handbook. Students may also access the required signature form from the Graduate Religious Studies web page. To download proceed to <https://www.msmu.edu/graduate-programs/religious-studies/> and click "Capstone Documents."
- c. **Pagination:** The preliminary pages of the Capstone Project will consist of the following pages that must be identified with Roman numerals (i.e. I, II, III, IV, etc.)

- i. Title Page
- ii. Signature Page
- iii. The Library Cataloging and Shelving Authorization and Cover Sheet²
- iv. Abstract Page
- v. Table of Contents Page

The Arabic numerals (i.e. 1, 2, 3, etc.) begin with the actual body of the thesis (Introduction or Chapter 1) and continue through to the endnotes, bibliography, and any appendices.

- d. **Organization of Content:** Theses must be divided into chapters in the following manner:
 - i. Each chapter of the thesis must have its own title page.
 - ii. On each chapter title page, the title should be centered.
 - iii. If necessary, divide the body of the chapter into sections, centering the section title (please note, sections do not need their own page).
 - iv. Divide long sections of chapter with sub-headings, typed at the left margin.
- e. **Length:** The average length of theses in the Department of Graduate Religious Studies is between 60-90 pages. The written body of the *thesis should not be shorter than 50 pages in length*. Please note that all preliminary pages, chapter pages, endnotes, and bibliographic pages, though numbered, are not included in the total page count for the written text.

3. PARC

The PARC is a center that provides additional resources and writing support for all Weekend/Evening College and Graduate Division at Mount Saint Mary's University. Students are strongly encouraged to visit PARC for any research or writing support. The PARC is meant for additional support and should not be used as a replacement to the advisement of the Capstone Director or Second Reader. The PARC is located at Doheny, Bldg. 10, Rm. 201. They can also be reached online at <https://www.msmu.edu/academics/academics/learning-resources/parc/>, by email at PARC@msmu.edu, or over the phone at (213) 477-2898.

4. Timeline and Expectations for Meeting with Capstone Director

a. While a student has four semesters to complete the RST 291, it is ideal that students complete RST 291 within two semesters. As suggested for the Capstone Proposal, it is highly recommended that students create a "*backward calendar*" in consultation with their Capstone Director to ensure that they continue to make steady progress towards completion of their Capstone Project. Students should begin their *backward calendar* with the desired semester of graduation and with reference important dates for graduation set out by the Office of the Registrar. The table can be modified to suit the needs of each student and Capstone Director. For example, the *backward calendar* may need to include additional rows for additional chapters.

² The Library Cataloging and Shelving Authorization and Cover Sheet is required only in the bound copy that is submitted to library of Mount Saint Mary's University. Note that in the bound copy submitted to the library, the Library Cataloging and Shelving Authorization and Cover Sheet must be the *first* preliminary page.

Table 2: A Sample Backward Calendar for Capstone Project Completion

Elements of the Thesis	Deadline
Chapter	
Chapter	
Chapter	
Introduction	
Submission of Complete Draft of Thesis to Capstone Director and Second Reader	
Thesis Defense (Students admitted after Summer 2017)/Presentation of Thesis	
Submission of Bound Copies (including Title Page, Table of Contents, and Signature Pages)	Deadline will ideally be 1-2 weeks prior to the Registrar's scheduled due date for semester grades. Please reference the Academic Calendar.

b. It is recommended that the student meet with the Capstone Director at regular intervals. While the frequency and duration of meetings between the student and Capstone Director are at their discretion, it is recommended that meetings (phone or in-person) occur at each stage of submission (See Table 2). Students should give their Capstone Directors material according to the pre-established back calendar due date and expect to meet with their Directors about the material submitted *after* the Capstone Director has had time to read and assess the quality of the submission. Students must make every effort to establish meeting times with their Capstone Director and are responsible for ensuring they are both on time and prepared. Capstone Directors will offer timely feedback to their students' submitted work (generally within 2 weeks). Students must take the direction of their Capstone Director, ensuring that they have made the revisions suggested by their Director. Failure to do so will result in slowed progress. If, at any time, the Capstone Director and/or student have concerns about the direction or progress of the project, they are encouraged to meet in-person to discuss pathways forward. If, after meeting in-person, they still have not come to a mutual agreement about the direction or progress of the project, they are encouraged to contact the Director of Graduate Religious Studies.

5. Research with Human Subjects

If a student plans to conduct research with human subjects they must request permission to do so by completing the Mount Saint Mary's University Application for the Approval of Human Subjects Research. No research on human subjects may be completed prior to the completion of this process. It is highly recommended that the application for permission be submitted prior to registration in RST 291: Capstone Research, Analysis, and Presentation. For further information or to access the application please visit: <https://www.msmu.edu/academics/research-with-human-subjects/>. If a student has additional questions, they are advised to contact Dr. Robin Gordon through electronic mail at rgordon@msmu.edu.

VI. Elements of the Thesis

The following Elements of the Thesis provide students with general information and guidelines to different components of completing and submitting the Master's thesis. If an element is *required* it will be marked as such.

1. Abstract (required)

Each student will complete an abstract to be included as a preliminary page of the thesis. The abstract must be written in English, even if your thesis was written in another language. The text of the abstract should be double-spaced. The abstract should be *no more than 150 words* and provide a concise summary of your thesis. It should contain the following information:

- a. A brief statement on the topic or primary research question of your thesis.
- b. A brief explanation on the methods/analytical frameworks used to approach your topic.
- c. A summary of your thesis statement.
- d. A summary of your conclusions.

2. Table of Contents (required)

Each student will complete a table of contents that will be included as a preliminary page of the thesis. The table of contents should take the form of an outline. When someone reads the table of contents, they should be able to understand what the research project is about and see the logical succession of ideas from chapter to chapter.

3. Introduction and Conclusion (required)

The introduction to the thesis (Chapter 1) should provide the reader with a clear understanding of what the thesis is set out to accomplish. Students are encouraged to revisit their Capstone Proposal in the construction of their introduction since the Capstone Proposal also functioned to create a “map” of the Capstone Project in its inclusion of the following elements: a description of the topic/research question, the methodological frameworks to be privileged in the project, a thesis statement, and an outline and summary of the chapters necessary for the successful completion of the project. The introduction should concisely tell the reader what you propose to do in your thesis (goals and objectives), how you will go about completing the task (methods), and the course that you will take in order to do it (chapter summary). While turning to the Capstone Proposal may give students an idea as to how to construct their introduction, they should keep in mind that projects may shift during the course of their research. Though it may seem counter-intuitive, it is often prudent to write your introduction after most of your chapters are already complete, or after you have written the conclusion.

The conclusion of your thesis is meant to summarize the development of your argument and your ultimate findings (conclusions).

4. References (required) and Footnotes/Endnotes (required)

Citation of references must be utilized throughout your thesis. Sources may include books, journal articles, periodicals/magazines, etc. It is crucial that students ensure the sources they are relying upon to build their argument are reputable. If a student has questions as to the reliability of a source it is recommended that they contact the Capstone Director or utilize resources from the PARC. One resource that can be obtained from the PARC is the document “How to Determine Peer-Reviewed Academic Sources.” It can be found at: <https://mountsaintmarysuniversi.sharepoint.com/sites/MYMSMU/academics/PARC/Writing-Documents/How%20to%20Determine%20Peer-Reviewed%20Academic%20Sources.pdf> Students may also obtain a hardcopy of this document by visiting the PARC.

While endnotes may be utilized according to *The Chicago Manual*, footnotes are strongly preferred since they are more convenient for your readers. Each and every idea or fact that is not one's own must be cited.

5. Bibliography (Required)

Each thesis must contain a bibliography. Students should have *no less* than twenty sources listed in the bibliography. List only the sources you have actually read and/or referenced.

6. Appendices (Required, if applicable)

Any use of illustrations, surveys, interviews, and/or other explanatory materials in the thesis should be placed at the end of the thesis.

7. Presentation of Thesis (Required)

RST 291: Capstone Research, Analysis, and Presentation will end with students presenting their thesis. Presentations occur at the end of the semester that the student is expected to graduate. Presentations should include an overview of the student's research, methods, and findings. Presentations should be no more than 15-20 minutes and students should expect to answer questions about their projects for 5-10 minutes following their presentation.

8. Thesis Defense (Required for Students Admitted after Summer 2017)

After the submission of the thesis to the Capstone Director and Second Reader the student should prepare for their thesis defense. The thesis defense committee will be constituted by the Capstone Director and the Second Reader. The student may invite one additional committee member to participate in the defense. The thesis defense is meant to allow time and space for critical engagement and questioning of the student's research and argument. The committee should have *at least* two weeks to read the thesis and prepare their questions for the thesis defense. Students and Capstone Directors are strongly encouraged to use the *backward calendar* (see Table 2) in order to ensure that the thesis defense will occur prior to the end of the semester that the student is registered for RST 291, RST 291A/B/C. The duration of the thesis defense will be one hour. Time and location of the defense will be determined by the committee and the student. Students can prepare for their defense by re-reading their thesis and referencing "Appendix C" of this handbook, which contains some sample questions that may arise in the context of a thesis defense.

VII. Submission of Bound Copies of the Master's Thesis

After the thesis has been completed and approved by the Capstone Director, Second Reader, and Director of Graduate Religious Studies, students must submit *two* printed and bound copies. Both copies must align with the formatting requirements as outlined above in section I.IV.2. Once the student has made the two bound copies, they must ensure that they obtain necessary signatures on each page a signature is required and that they submit the copies to the appropriate offices.

1. The first bound copy is to be submitted to the Doheny Library of Mount Saint Mary's University. Remember that the bound copy submitted to the library must The Library Cataloging and Shelving Authorization Cover Sheet as the first page. It is optional to include this page in the second bound copy.
2. The second bound copy is to be submitted to the Department of Graduate Religious Studies for filing on the Doheny Campus, Building 2. Students may leave the bound copy with the Assistant of Graduate Religious Studies, Director of Graduate Religious Studies, or the Religious Studies Chairperson.

VIII. Graduation

All students must apply for graduation through the Office of the Registrar. Students must visit <https://www.msmu.edu/academics/registrar/graduation-application/> in order to learn the specific requirements and deadlines associated with graduation. As stated by the Office of the Registrar "students applying for graduation must file a graduation application in the Registrar's Office by the published deadline at the *start of the term prior to the term of projected completion (see the Academic Calendar for published deadline)*. *Students will not receive a degree award if they have not abided by the deadlines and guidelines set out by the Office of the Registrar.*

During the semester they are expected to graduate students will also receive communications from the Department of Graduate Religious Studies. To ensure that they receive these communications students must regularly check their msmu.edu email accounts. Students are expected to respond to these communications in a timely manner with respect to deadlines. The Department of Graduate Religious Studies is not responsible for a student not receiving, or responding to, an important communication.

Students may only participate in commencement ceremonies if they have completed RST 291/RST 291ABC. Under no circumstances will a student be allowed to "walk" in Spring commencement if they have not finished the thesis.

Appendix A: Capstone Proposal Signature Form

RST 290: Capstone Proposal (1-unit)

Student Name: _____ **_____ units completed**

Date submitted

Date accepted

Proposed Capstone Completion Date

Working Title: _____

Attach Capstone Proposal to this form. Be certain that all required “Elements of the Capstone Proposal” as set out in the *Master's Thesis Handbook* are included in your proposal:

- **Description of Topic**
- **Preliminary Literature Review**
- **Thesis Statement**
- **Methodological Frameworks, Explanation of Concepts, and Use of Terms**
- **Chapter Outline and Summary**
- **Preliminary Bibliography**
- **Signature Form**
- *Language in which you intend to write the essay. (Read GRST Policy on language of thesis proposal and thesis found in the *Master's Thesis Handbook*).*

Signature

Date

Enter Name Here

Capstone Director | 1st Reader

Enter Name Here

2nd Reader

Enter Name Here

Director, Graduate Religious Studies

N.B. The student completes this form, furnishes the information requested, and submits it to the Capstone Director, the Second Reader, and the Director of the Graduate Religious Studies Program for approval within the semester this course is taken. The entire process must be completed before the student is allowed to register for RST 291: Capstone Research, Analysis, and Presentation.

Appendix B: Theses Preliminary Pages

TITLE

A CAPSTONE PROJECT

Presented to

The Faculty of the Graduate Religious Studies Program

Mount Saint Mary's University



In Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree of

Masters of Arts

in Religious Studies

by

Name

Month, Year

Los Angeles, California

Appendix B, cont.

This capstone project submitted to the faculty of the Graduate Religious Studies Program at Mount Saint Mary's University, has been read, approved, and accepted by the candidate's committee in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts in Religious Studies.

Enter Name Here
Capstone Director | First Reader

Enter Name Here
Second Reader

Enter Name Here
Director, Graduate Religious Studies Program

Appendix B, cont.

CAPSTONE PROJECT
Graduate Division, Religious Studies Program
Library Cataloging and Shelving Authorization and Cover Sheet

Name: _____

Capstone Title: _____

Completion Date: _____

Authorizing Signature/s

Date

Enter Name Here

Enter Name Here

Authorizing Signature/s: This form must be signed and dated by *at least two* of the following: Graduate Program Director, Department Chair, Capstone Director, or the Graduate Dean.

Appendix C
Thesis Defense- Sample Questions

The following questions are examples of questions that students *may* be asked during their thesis defense. Students should use these questions to aid them in their preparation for defense. These sample questions function to provide a general sense of the types of questions asked; however, students should not assume that the questions listed below will be the only questions asked, nor should they assume that every question listed will be asked.

- What are some of the reasons that you were drawn to this topic? Were there any specific courses or course topics that led you to want to pursue this topic?
- Students may be asked to further elaborate on any part of their argument, their choice of methodological frameworks or concepts used.
- What is the specific contribution your thesis project provides to this area of research?
- Can you identify gaps that still exist in this area of research?
- What did you find most difficult about completing this project?
- What did you find most uplifting or valuable in completing this project?
- Were there areas in the project that you wished you could have pursued more deeply? If so, what are they?