

Guidelines for the G.S.F.R. M.A. Independent Research Project (IRP) 2017 – 2018

In addition to 18 units of coursework, the M.A. in Gender Studies and Feminist Research requires the student to complete an Independent Research Project (IRP). The IRP builds on and expands work begun in the core courses, while also giving more scope to explore new interests and devise an independent research agenda. The student will work closely with a Supervisor, first to develop a proposal to be approved by the GSFR Graduate Program Committee and then to see the project through to completion. Most of the work on the project will take place between May and August. The student should, however, begin working on the proposal in January and should be developing the project throughout Term II.

The student will choose one of the following options, and develop a project in accordance with the requirements below:

1. **A Major Research Project**, resulting in an original and potentially publishable article of 20-25 pages, likely arising from and extending previous seminar work.

2. **A Project in Pedagogical Research**. The student will choose a particular sub-field or topic within feminist and/or gender studies and will develop, in consultation with the Supervisor, an extended reading list in that area along with a body of research on pedagogy related to that sub-field or topic. The reading list should consist of between 30 and 40 items in total. The specific ratio of items related to the topic and those on pedagogy related to the topic will be arrived at in consultation with the Supervisor. On the basis of this material, the student will choose from one of the following two options:

a) ***Creation of a Detailed Course Outline and a short research paper*** (7-10 pages) explaining and rationalizing the choices made in the original reading list and in the course outline. Both the course outline and the research paper will be presented and defended by the student via oral exam. The research paper will be evaluated according to four criteria:

- i) the conceptual framework(s) of the course outline
- ii) the treatment of feminist pedagogical theories
- iii) the course description/rationale
- iv) the learning objectives/requirements and their pedagogical rationale.

The paper, course outline and reading list will be submitted to the examining committee one week in advance of the oral examination and will be examined within 10 days of its receipt. The student will have an opportunity to comment upon and/or present orally parts of this paper at the beginning of the examination, and it will serve as the starting point for questions from the committee. An examination will only be scheduled if the outline, reading list and paper are deemed defensible for examination by the Supervisor and second reader.

b) **Pedagogical Research Paper:** a 15 page paper researching pedagogical issues and theories relating to the topic or sub-field studied. The original reading list (described in 2 above) is submitted with the pedagogical paper and forms part of the evaluation.

3. **A Knowledge in Action Project**, based in work with a community organization, ideally extending a placement previously undertaken for GENDRST 707 Knowledge in Action. The student will devise and deliver a policy brief, website, grant proposal, lecture series, or other document or tool for use by the community organization in question, in addition to writing a 15 page critical reflection paper.

Procedures and Timeline For M.A. Independent Research Projects

2018 Important Dates at a Glance

Confirmation of Supervisor	January	Approach directly, or ask Director for help
Proposal Due Date	March 9	Emailed copy, with Request for Approval Form, to Director and CC to Program Assistant.
Colloquium	May 10	15 minute presentation of IRP material; this is a work in progress, not a completed, polished set of findings
First Draft Due	June 30	Submit to Supervisor only
First Draft Returned	July 15	Make revisions suggested by Supervisor
Second Draft Due	Aug 1	Submit electronically to Director and Program Assistant. Will go to Supervisor and 2 nd reader.
Second Draft Returned	Aug 15	Make final revisions
Final Draft Due	Aug 30	Submit electronic copy to Director and Program Assistant, and a second electronic copy to

1. **Selecting a Supervisor.** The student, in consultation with the Director of the G.S.F.R. program, will consult with potential supervisors in the fall term. Supervisors should be decided upon early in Term II, and the student should work with the Supervisor in crafting the project proposal. The Supervisor will sign the completed proposal before it is submitted to the Graduate Coordinator (see below).
2. **IRP Proposal.** The proposal should be between 3-5 pages long, double-spaced (about 1000-1500 words). It will outline the nature, scope, critical underpinnings and methodology that will inform the IRP. For the Major Research and Pedagogical Projects (options 1 and 2 above), the proposal should include a working bibliography. For the Knowledge in Action project, the student must submit a written contract with their designated community organization, indicating the organization's willingness to accommodate the student in a placement, and outlining what the terms of the placement will be.

***Important Note:** If the student's IRP requires ethics approval (that is, if the student plans to conduct research using human subjects), a draft of the ethics approval form *must be submitted along with the Proposal*. This draft will be reviewed by the Graduate Program Committee, along with the project Proposal. Once the project has been approved by the committee, the ethics approval form should be submitted to the McMaster Ethics Review Board without delay. Ethics approval takes time, as does the collection and evaluation of ethnographic data. The student should ensure that there is sufficient time to gain Ethics Board approval, collect and evaluate data in order to meet project deadlines. If the ethics approval form is not submitted with the proposal, the student will not be able to conduct research using human subjects (that is, the student cannot decide on this methodology after the Proposal has been approved).

The supervisor must sign the **Request for Project Approval** form and the student must submit a hard copy of this form, along with a hard copy of the proposal, to the Graduate Coordinator.

IRP Proposal due date: March 9, 2018

The proposal will be evaluated by the Graduate Program Committee and will be accepted or rejected. Those proposals that are rejected will be returned to students for revisions and re-submission.

3. **Conference-Style Presentation:** At the beginning of the summer, in the second week of May, all students will present their in-progress research projects at a symposium and answer questions from other instructors and students in the program. The student's presentation will be approximately 15 minutes in length. It will summarize the project's main ideas and methodology. The student's performance in the symposium presentation will be taken into account in the overall evaluation of the IRP.
4. **First complete draft:** due June 30, 2018. The student will have worked on this draft with the Supervisor. The complete draft will be submitted to the Supervisor on this date. This draft will be returned to the student, with comments and suggestions for revision, no later than July 15, 2018.
5. **Second draft:** due August 1, 2018. This draft, which takes into account the revisions suggested by the Supervisor, will be submitted to the Graduate Director and the Graduate Program Assistant electronically (as a Word document; for those who have a non-written component of the project, this component must be made readily available to the Supervisor and second reader). This draft will be read by the Supervisor and a second reader. The second reader will be chosen by the Graduate Program Committee, in consultation with the student. Both readers will provide feedback on the second draft of the student's IRP directly to the student, no later than August 15, 2018.

6. **Final Draft:** The student must make revisions and submit an electronic copy of the final complete draft to the Graduate Program Director, with a CC to the Administrative Assistant, no later than August 30, 2018. This deadline must be met in order for the student to graduate by Fall Convocation. The Supervisor and Second Reader will review the final version of the IRP and assign it a grade; the final IRP will be marked Pass, Fail, or Pass with Distinction.