**HISTORY OF RELIGIONS PhD DISSERTATION PROPOSAL TEMPLATE**

**Title page**
The title page should list the title of the proposed thesis along with the members of the dissertation committee specifying which is the adviser.

Spaces should be marked for the signature of all four faculty, and upon successful completion of the proposal defense, the entire document along with this signed cover page must be given to the head of History of Religions to insert in the student's file as an official record of dissertating status.

**1. Purpose of the dissertation**
A brief introduction that provides a general overview of the dissertation's central questions, its thesis, and argument. This should be approximately one page in length and provide a succinct summary.

**2. Central questions to be considered/answered and relevant background**
This is an elaboration of the first section, and focuses on discrete questions that your dissertation will address.

Here you should include relevant background information that may be obvious to your adviser and other specialists in your field, but which are vital for enabling other members of the committee to understand your project.

**3. Contribution to scholarship (beginning with survey of current work on the topic)**
Indicate what work has been done previously in the field. Who are the important figures? How do they relate to each other? What are the major gaps, and where do you think scholarship should go from here?

Situate your own work in terms of previous scholarship. What makes your own work an important one? How does your approach and concerns relate to previous research? Also describe what you yourself perceive of your own work's methodology, driving rationales, etc.

**4. Source materials**
You should carefully note down all texts you will be focusing on during your research with author names/dates and bibliographic citations. In particular, indicate clearly which texts you plan on translating and/or reading particularly carefully.

Also provide a description of what these texts are about, and how they all interlink in your planned thesis.

**5. Methodology**
Describe concretely and in detail how you plan to go about accomplishing your research aims, and the type of theoretical methodology you will be utilizing.
6. **Chapter Outline**
Describe the separate chapters you envision with as much detail as possible on what you plan to do with each chapter. You should give the overall thesis and its chapters projected titles. This section should show the dissertation’s arguments chapter by chapter, and clearly specify the central points of each chapter.

7. **Tentative timeline**
Give a projected overall timetable for field work, writing up, and so forth with specific dates.

8. **Bibliography**
Provide a detailed and full bibliography of the main relevant works in both primary and secondary source literature. Be as complete as possible.