

Guidelines for your MA thesis

One of the key components of the MA in Religion and Global Futures is the master's thesis. Before starting the thesis, it is important to reflect on your research topic and prepare carefully. The Study Project module is designed to provide structured time for independent reading, conceptual development, and methodological reflection before the thesis-writing phase. These guidelines outline the required steps during the Study Project and the transition to the MA thesis.

1. Identify a topic and register for the Study Project

Choose a research topic that interests you and that you would like to explore further. Register for the module Study Project. This registration should take place in the second or third semester of the programme.

2. Find a supervisor

Identify a supervisor within the department for the Study of Religion and confirm with them that they are ready to supervise your project. Your supervisor will help you refine your research question and advise you on appropriate methods.

3. Write your research paper for the Study Project

After finding your supervisor, you should start writing your research paper (2.000-2.500 words) as part of the Study Project. The Study Project should be used as an opportunity to read widely and deepen your understanding of the topic of your thesis. Your research paper will serve as preparation for your MA thesis, and its main results can later be integrated into the thesis. The research paper must be completed and discussed with your supervisor before you can begin your MA thesis. It must be submitted no later than

the end of the third semester. To allow sufficient time for feedback, submission by the middle of the third semester is strongly recommended.

4. Register your MA thesis

Once your Study Project paper has passed, you should approach your supervisor to officially register your MA thesis. This usually takes place in the fourth semester. As you cannot change the title of your thesis after registration, it is important to discuss this step thoroughly with your supervisor.

5. Write your MA thesis

After registration, you have six months to complete your MA thesis. If you require an extension, you must discuss this with your supervisor in advance. The thesis should be 60–70 pages in length, excluding the bibliography, and formatted with 1.5-line spacing.

6. Submit your completed thesis

The final thesis must include a signed statutory declaration confirming that the work is your own. Here is the example of statutory declaration:

"I hereby declare that I have written this work independently and have not used any sources and tools other than those indicated. All materials used, from published as well as unpublished sources, whether directly quoted or paraphrased, are properly reported. No part of this work has been generated by AI and no use of AI-based tools was made without declaration. I am aware that untruthful information will be treated as an attempt to deceive and in such a case all methods of detecting plagiarism can be used."

The thesis must then be submitted to the Examination Office (Prüfungsamt):

<https://www.uni-bayreuth.de/en/examination-office>

7. Public presentation

After your work has been assessed, you will present your project once again in a 15-minute presentation at the department. Other students and lecturers, as well as the supervisors, will be present and will have 15 minutes to ask questions afterwards.