

Thesis Prospectus Guidelines

Department of Classical Studies

The prospectus is a plan of research, not a contract: its purpose is to orient your writing, not to circumscribe it.¹ Later, you may wish to change its shape in accordance with the advice of your advisor or your own interests. Your prospectus is not a binding agreement; rather, it is simply something that looks ahead (hence the term “pro-spectus”). “What you need *not* do is answer the hard questions you pose. . . . That’s the job of the thesis itself.”²

Your prospectus should be no longer than 3 pages double-spaced and include the following:

1. A working title (subject to change) and the name of your thesis advisor.
2. A short description of the subject matter and aims of your research (what you are interested in studying, and why and how your approach will provide a contribution to the field). Your research question and primary sources should form part of this description, and the scope of the thesis should be evident. This description should also include a statement of the state of scholarship on your question.
3. A short description of your research methods—theoretical or applied—if appropriate.
4. A working outline of the contents of the thesis, including a short description of the aims of each chapter.
5. A bibliography of prospective secondary sources.

Sample prospectuses are available at Canvas site for Honors in Classical Studies.

¹ These guidelines have been adapted from “Thesis Prospectus Guidelines,” University of Memphis Department of English, which were accessed on August 22, 2011 at <http://www.memphis.edu/english/undergrad/honorsprospectus.htm>.

² Charles Lipson, *How to Write a BA Thesis: A Practical Guide from Your First Ideas to Your Finished Paper*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2005, p. 77.