

How Do I Develop a Directed Reading Proposal?

Directed reading proposals typically include:

- a paragraph that describes the focus of your study: what will be your topics of study and your goals for the course? what are the research interests or questions that are motivating your work? do you see this work becoming part of a thesis or dissertation chapter or the foundation for a course you hope to teach?
- a sentence or two to address your plan for your work with your supervising professor: will you meet weekly to discuss readings, will you send reports over email every other week, will you submit drafts of a paper each month?
- a sentence or two that describes your plan for what you will produce by the end of the directed reading. Common products include annotated bibliographies, essay drafts, or some combination. In some cases, other products such as teaching materials may be appropriate.
- some proposals include a tentative schedule for your work (this could be a weekly listing as in a syllabus or a rougher sense of several weeks devoted to different texts/topics or deadlines for various drafts of your project).
- all proposals must include a working bibliography of texts you plan to study. You may include a mix of primary and secondary texts (for fields that make such distinctions) and the reading load should approximate that of a graduate seminar. Please format your bibliography according to a standard style such as MLA, Chicago, or APA.
- please also include the course name and number on your proposal (6901: Directed Reading and Research for MA proposals; 7901: Directed Reading and Research for PhD proposals) and give your course a short subtitle that reflects the focus of your study.

You should discuss all of these decisions with your supervising professor and check in about any other expectations that they may have so that you have a clearly agreed upon plan for working together.

Once your supervising professor has approved your proposal, they send it along to the graduate director for approval and copy the graduate secretary who sets up the course once it has been approved.

If you would like to see samples of effective directed reading proposals, please contact the graduate director or graduate advisor.