Thesis Proposals Guidelines and FAQ

When are thesis proposals due?

Thesis proposals are due at the end of the third week of April.

How should I approach my thesis proposal?

By the end of March of their Junior year, students should have an idea of the thesis they want to pursue (see below for questions). At this point in the semester they should begin meeting with their advisors and other FAMS faculty to discuss their project. They should go in with notes on the project, and they should revise those notes after each meeting.

Students should construct the draft of their proposal in consultation either with their advisor or with another core faculty member or Steering Committee member in FAMS.

What should my thesis proposal contain?

Proposals should be 2-3 pages long, with an attached bibliography/filmography of works that inform the project and that may become objects or tools of investigation.

Proposals should answer a series of questions, in whatever order students believe best represents the project:

1. What has brought you to the project? What is your preparedness for the research at this stage? What courses and fields of study in the major inform your work?
2. What are the central objects you propose to consider (whether contemporary documentary film, a theoretical school of thought, television texts, etc.)?
3. What are the central questions you're interested in asking?
4. What method do you propose to employ? And how will critical and creative practices intersect in your work? Will the thesis be primarily a written document, a moving-image piece, an installation, or an equal combination of elements?

How are decisions regarding thesis proposals made?

Acceptance of proposals will be based on the feasibility and clarity of the project. That said, the proposal is not carved in stone. Over the summer (or even early fall), students may rethink their objects of study or their approach. In consultation with their advisor, they may need to redraft a proposal before the semester begins.

How are thesis advisors assigned?

Advisors are assigned by the FAMS Steering Committee. The choice of an advisor will be based on who has the best expertise and the most interest in the project. What faculty members the student has engaged with throughout the development of the proposal will also be taken into account.
**Tips:**

Consult with as many FAMS faculty as possible as you begin to draft first your ideas and then your proposal.

Think carefully about the intersection between creative and critical work.

Know what your central questions of inquiry are.

Articulate how you define your object of inquiry.

Describe the foundations for this project through coursework and other forms of intellectual and artistic inquiry.

Go for the Goldilocks approach: not too long, not too short. As a culmination of the work in the major, the thesis should represent a student's best quality of work. The thesis is therefore not exhaustive (it's not a feature-length film or a critical project that seeks to explain an entire field of study or display a grand historical sweep).