



**PROJECT TITLE: Rice Reading Groups**

**PROJECT TAGLINE/CAPTION** (160 characters): A monthly interdisciplinary reading group by PhD students from the Humanities and Social Sciences seeking to foster interdepartmental and intellectual community.

**IMAGE:**



Primary Contact: Charles J. Schmidt

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Primary Contact Department: Religion

Name of Group/Organization: Rice Reading Groups

**PROJECT DETAILS**

**Provide a description of the project.**

Rice Reading Groups will coordinate two monthly interdisciplinary reading groups, hosted by PhD students from the Humanities and Social Sciences who seek to foster interdepartmental and intellectual community. Our goals are two-fold: (1) to increase the cross-fertilization of ideas and contact between various departments, and (2) to foster exposure to and facility with seminal and ground-breaking works in theories and methods—especially in critical theory (i.e., philosophical studies regarding the socio-cultural, -historical, and ideological forces surrounding the study of race, gender, and class). The first reading group is dedicated to methodological approaches to the study of religion and culture. The second reading group is a more general survey of Critical Theory. Overall, these reading groups are a joint effort to help make all of us better thinkers, writers, critics, scholars, and citizen teachers.

**Timeline:** If the project will take place at a specific time and place, please give details. Is it a one-time event or a series?



Each of the joint ventures in the Rice Reading Groups program will be held monthly. At present, we plan on one group meeting on the first week of each month, with the second group meeting on the third week of each month.

**Audience: Who is your target audience? (e.g. program-specific, interdisciplinary, or university-wide? Will undergraduates, faculty, staff, or postdocs be involved? Any off campus participants?)**

Our target audience is any graduate student (PhD, MA, or MFA) interested in learning about and participating in discussion regarding cutting-edge scholarship in the fields that comprise the Humanities and Social Sciences.

**How many people do you anticipate will participate?**

At present, we have 16 graduate students from the Departments of Religion, Political Science, English, Anthropology, and Art History on board.

**Marketing Plan: How do you plan to publicize the project?**

We will publicize our events with announcements posted on the bulletin boards in the halls of each department in the Social Sciences and Humanities, continual postings in the GSA Weekly Announcements email blast, an official Facebook page, and a centralized website listing the monthly schedules and readings.

## **ADVANCEMENT**

**What are the goals of the project?**

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**Briefly explain the need for the project and how it will promote excellence in scholarship, training, and/or development?**

This project will assist in fostering intellectual and interdisciplinary/interdepartmental community among students in the Humanities and Social Sciences (as well as all other Rice graduate

# GRAD starter

students interested in reading and discussing about the topics covered in our reading groups). By reading cutting-edge and seminal works on methods and theories in the fields of the Humanities and Social Sciences, we hope to broaden our knowledge in ancillary disciplines as well as dialogue with colleagues in other disciplines/departments. Being able to discuss critical issues in cultural studies, political science, art history, religious studies, and sociology with members from these disparate fields and subfields will help each of us become better communicators, thinkers, critics, mentors, and teachers.

**If this is an existing project/event or a similar one exists, describe how the project/event is being expanded or enhanced.**

This is a brand-new project.

**If your proposal is for a pilot project, suggest how it might develop over a three-year period.**

We hope that over the next three years, the Rice Reading Groups may grow to encompass several general and specialized reading groups for graduate students at Rice, each with their own autonomous schedules and coordinators, yet connected by a network of interdisciplinary foci between members. If Rice Reading Groups can grow to include Postdocs and Faculty, we hope to begin receiving financial assistance from the respective departments in the Humanities and Social Sciences as well as incorporate invited guests for a roundtable discussion about their recent work which the Reading Groups have read that month.

**Describe how you will measure the success and impact of this project. Please, provide quantitative targets, if possible.**

Rice Reading Groups will measure its success based on the healthy and steady (or increased) participation of its members and its sustainability throughout this first year. There is clearly a need for such interdisciplinary reading groups at Rice, and we believe that a rotating reading schedule devoted to the multitude of intersecting interests, methodologies, and theories in both the Humanities and Social Sciences will seek to fill this need. Presently, we plan for and expect an overall membership of 30 students this first year, with a consistent monthly attendance of 15–18 persons per meeting per reading group. We are well-aware that attendance will vary based on time of year and the particular reading(s) selected for that month. We will keep track of attendance numbers and names to assess the overall success [of this project](#).



## BUDGET

### ***Itemized Budget***

Please, provide an itemized budget. List each item, a description, and the anticipated cost.

Item	Description	Cost
Food	pizza or sandwiches	\$100 x 6 meetings
Beverages	water and soft drinks	\$50 x 6 meetings
Total Expenses		\$900

### ***Funds from other sources***

Please, provide any information on funds from other sources that you have secured or potential funds that you plan to apply for.

Source	Status	Cost
School of Humanities	Meeting Pending	TBA
School of Social Sciences	Meeting Pending	TBA
Total Amount		\$

### **If the project/event has been offered in the past, how was it supported?**

This project has not been offered in the past. We hope to limit the out-of-pocket expenses of the student members and coordinators of Rice Reading Groups.