The following are examples of good thesis proposals (and are used with permission of their authors).
Name: Rev. Christopher J. Singer
Date: July 22, 2009
Proposed Title: "Marriage Preparation Law and its Practice in the Diocese of Erie"

Brief Outline of Major Points to be Investigated:

• Briefly trace the historical development of universal law regarding marriage preparation from the 1917 Code to the Second Vatican Council.

• Provide a more detailed analysis of universal marriage preparation law and particular law for the United States from the Second Vatican Council to the present.

• Provide an analysis of the Common Policy for Marriage in the Diocese of Erie currently in force.

• Provide an analysis of the proposed Revised Common Policy for Marriage and comment on its congruency to properly implement current marriage preparation law.

• Offer observations and suggestions on how the proposed revised policy can be canonically improved before promulgation in the Diocese of Erie.


Doctoral Pursuit: Not at this time.

Signatures

[Signature]

Christopher J. Singer
Proposed Outline:

Chapter I: The Current Law

A. 1917 Code of Canon Law
   1. analysis of canons
   2. subsequent universal legislation through 1962
   3. particular law for the United States through 1962

B. 1983 Code of Canon Law
   1. developments from 1962 to promulgation of 1983 Code
   2. analysis of pertinent canons from the 1983 Code
   3. Subsequent universal legislation post 1983
   4. Subsequent particular legislation post 1983

C. Combined sketch of current canonical requirements for marriage preparation

Chapter II: Policy Analysis


B. Canonical summary of newly proposed Common Policy for Marriage.

Chapter III: Observations and Recommendations:

A. Canonical analysis of proposed policy. Observations of strengths and weaknesses in comparison to canonical requirements.

B. Considerations for strengthening proposed policy.
   1. Contributions of National Pastoral Initiative for Marriage
   2. Debate on mandatory Natural Family Planning training and canon 1101 § 1.

C. Suggestions for proposed policy and conclusion.
Preliminary Bibliography:


Codex Iuris Canonici auctoritate Ioannis Pauli PP. II promulgatus (Vatican City: Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 1983).


Pope Pius XI, Casti connubii. December 31, 1930.
The Catholic University of America
School of Canon Law

Fr. Richard F. Reidy
November 11, 2006

Proposed Title: The Gravity of the Defect of Discretion of Judgment Necessary to Establish the Invalidity of Marriage under Canon 1095, 2°

Thesis Statement: The canonical concept of “discretion of judgment” has roots in natural law, Roman Law and Scholastic philosophy. It connotes a minimal ability, using the intellect and will, to make a free, rational, mature choice to marry. Discretion of judgment is a capacity presumed of all persons not prohibited by law from marrying. That presumption can only be overturned by a grave defect of discretion grounded in a severe form of psychopathology which causes a true incapacity to give consent.

Outline of Major Points to be Investigated:

I. Introduction

II. Chapter I: Discretion of Judgment — Canonical Roots and Content

A. Pre-Scholastic Roots

1. Natural Law
2. Roman Law
3. Ecclesiastical Law

B. Scholastic Philosophy to the 1917 Code of Canon Law

1. Thomas Sanchez (mortal sin norm)
2. Thomas Aquinas (puberty norm)
3. 1917 Code of Canon Law

C. Discretion of Judgment since the 1917 Code of Canon Law

1. Pre-1983 Code Developments
2. 1983 Code of Canon Law, canon 1095, 2°

III. Chapter II: What constitutes a “grave defect”? 

A. How can discretion of judgment be defective?
B. Discussion of gravity
C. Incapacity to consent

IV. Conclusion

Methodology: Chapter I will involve an historical survey of the roots of “lack of discretion” in the broader topic of mental capacity. Chapter II will be an analysis of select canonical jurisprudence and literature and papal allocutions concerning canon 1095, 2° under the 1983 code.
Sources:

Preliminary and Partial Working Bibliography

PRIMARY SOURCES


SECONDARY SOURCES


Further Studies: While I am interested, it is unlikely that I would immediately be pursuing a JCD.