

MA Thesis Guidelines

Department of English and Journalism

The academic thesis should investigate a topic requiring substantial original research in an area of specialization which aspires toward making a contribution to the field. The student shall demonstrate appropriate academic preparation prior to its undertaking.

Likewise, the student doing a creative thesis must have a demonstrable body of work in the genre before beginning a thesis.

It is the responsibility of the thesis director in consultation with the student to set parameters for the scope of the research, and to insure that the research is current and that the response to that research is adequate.

The Committee

Ideally the student asks a faculty member who is a member of the Graduate Faculty in our department and with whom he or she has previously studied to direct the thesis. The director and student should agree on a pair of second and third readers. The roles of the readers should be determined by the director and the readers. These roles—advisory, judicial, content-oriented, editorial—should be clarified in an addendum attached to the proposal sheet so that committee members understand their responsibilities. A member of another department may serve on the committee if there is a sound academic reason, but only one of the three committee members may be from outside English and Journalism. Thesis committee members who are not Grad Faculty must be approved by the Graduate Committee. Likewise, late changes in the make-up of the committee must be approved by the Graduate Committee.

Length

Student and director should peruse the department thesis archives, but 50 pages is the general guideline for minimal length.

Timeline

- Second semester: Student should approach graduate director and/or thesis director during the second semester of residence. Proposals and committee formation must occur before student has completed 15 hours in the program. For the student in full time pursuit of the degree this should be done before the end of the second semester.
- Semester before completion: A statement of appropriate progress must be written and approved by committee members.

- Final Semester:

A draft (hard copy--no electronic submissions) and abstract must be submitted to all committee members no later than the end of the 8th week.

Revisions, which address the concerns of the committee members, should be made and turned in to members by the end of the 12th week. The committee will confer to review final revisions by the end of semester.

Students will participate in an end of semester **Thesis Colloquium** in which they make brief presentations of their project to faculty, friends, peers, and family.

It is the student's responsibility to make final arrangements with the Archives Office and to make two copies of the thesis, one for the Department and one for the director.

Approved by Graduate Faculty 3/04/04
Posted to web 11/28/05 cbd

**Department of English and Journalism
Western Illinois University**

**Thesis Proposal Form
Master of Arts**

Graduate students who plan to write a thesis to fulfill their research requirement for the Master of Arts degree must secure authorization of the thesis proposal and file it with the graduate advisor.

1. Student's signature

2. Topic of thesis

3. Approval of thesis proposal:

a) Thesis advisor's signature

Date

b) First reader's signature

Date

c) Second reader's signature

Date