

CHL MA Capstone Project: THESIS

This document is intended to be a brief guide to the steps involved in writing and completing a thesis. For more detailed guidance, refer to the Graduate School's thesis handbook.

Note that Graduate School policies supercede any steps included in this document.

A. Before you start your thesis:

1. Come up with a topic, and do a little preliminary research to see what information is available. You'll be spending a lot of time and thought on your thesis, so you want to make sure that your topic is something that truly interests you.
2. Approach a faculty member to talk over your thesis idea, and to ask them to be your thesis advisor. Note that before they accept or refuse, the faculty member may ask you to do more preliminary research, or to write a short document outlining your ideas and area of research.
3. In consultation with your faculty advisor, consider which other faculty member you would like to ask to be your second reader. This person will likely be a member of the Children's Literature faculty, but can also be someone housed in a different department or program.
4. In consultation with your advisor, write a thesis proposal. This document will likely be 15-20 pages in length and should cover existing research on your topic; ways your project will expand, challenge, and/or complicate existing scholarship; a working bibliography of primary and secondary sources; and a rough outline and timeline. Reminder: if you plan to sign up for thesis credits in the fall, you need to submit your proposal well before the fall term begins.
5. Once your thesis proposal is approved by your committee (advisor and second reader), fill out the THESIS APPROVAL FORM. Your advisor will submit it to the Graduate Director.
6. Once the Graduate Director accepts your proposal, you'll be given a CRN to enroll in thesis credits. You should plan to take your thesis credits the semester before your thesis will be due. For example, if you plan to graduate in April, a final version of your thesis will be due in March, which means a draft will be due

in February, which means you'll need to spend the fall term prior to this completing research, drafting, outlining, etc.

B. Writing your thesis:

Although you'll be working with an advisor, a thesis is a very independent project. Thus, it is helpful to establish thesis-writing parameters with your advisor before you start.

These parameters may include:

- a) Establishing deadlines (in addition to the overall Graduate School deadline)
- b) Meeting schedule (how often will you meet?)
- c) Writing expectations (should you be producing a minimum page count or number of revisions for each meeting?)
- d) Preliminary writing (will your advisor ask for outlines, annotated bibliographies or summaries of theories/historical periods/genres, etc. before you start writing the thesis itself?)

Length: although there is no predetermined length, your thesis should be roughly 60-80 pages long, organized in chapters, and formatted using the latest version of MLA style.

C. After you've finished writing your thesis:

1. Submit your edited, completed thesis to your advisor.
2. Once your advisor has accepted your thesis, submit it to your second reader.
*Note: some committees prefer to have the advisor and reader read the thesis simultaneously.

You should give your committee no less than **two weeks** to read the thesis. Preferably, aim to give them a month.

3. If either your advisor or reader suggests revisions, you'll need to factor in time to make these revisions.
4. Once your committee accepts your thesis/thesis revisions, complete the MASTER'S THESIS DOCUMENT APPROVAL FORM. Submit it to the Graduate Director.

5. The Graduate Director will forward your thesis and approval form to the Graduate School.
6. The Graduate School will review the thesis. If there are changes that need to be made, they will contact you. You should make those changes immediately, and re-submit the thesis directly to the Graduate School.
7. The Graduate School will email you a Rights and Permissions Form. The permission form allows your thesis to be posted online, and offers embargo options of your work if publication is pending.

D. Timing:

Typically, it takes a school year to complete a thesis, plus advanced preparation of the proposal during the previous Winter, Summer, or both. Most students entering their degree in September typically work in the following order (but can also choose their own order):

Fall Year 1	Winter Year 1	Summer	Fall Year 2	Winter Year 2
Course 1 Course 2*	Course 3 Course 4 Course 5 (Research/formulate thesis topics** Write proposal**)	(OR Research/formulate thesis topics** Write proposal**)	Course 6 Course 7 Thesis credits***	Course 8 Course 9 Submit thesis to committee

*Students with First-Year-Writing GAships typically take their GA course as a second or third course in the first semester.

**Whether you work on your proposal during the Winter or Summer will depend on the availability of faculty during the Summer. Some faculty do not work on theses during the Summer months.

***Thesis credits count as an elective course within your Program of Study, which means you'll need to plan accordingly to make sure you are taking all required courses.

Note that students can only use three hours of thesis credits regardless of how long they actually take to write the thesis.

Deadline dates

The following deadline dates are typical, but always check the latest deadline dates on the Graduate School's website.

Graduation Date	Due to Department Graduate Coordinator	Due to Graduate School
December	November 1	November 15
April	March 1	March 15
August	July 1	July 15