

MA in Literature

Things to Think about When Considering a Thesis Option

Timing

It typically takes a year to complete a thesis. Most students will begin researching and formulating a topic in the summer before their final year of coursework. After the summer of reading, students use the fall term to write a proposal and get it approved. In winter term, students register for Thesis credits (3 hours, which count as an elective on the program of study, and which are necessary in order to get credit for the thesis). In the following spring/summer, students then complete and deposit the thesis. It can take longer than this, if necessary, to complete the thesis; while there is no limit to the timing, a student can only have 3 hours of course credit no matter how long the writing process takes.

Deposit Deadlines (typically, your committee will require you to turn in the thesis earlier than these dates, so that it can be approved and finalized by the dates below)

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

Further information is available at

http://www.emich.edu/graduate/students/thesis_capstone/thesis.php , although some of this is aimed at more scientific projects.

Project Details

The proposal is typically approximately 10-20 pages long, with a substantial bibliography in MLA style. It should not simply identify the questions/issues the project will examine, but should situate the project within the current research in the field. Substantial research into the area of interest should be reflected in the proposal, which offers readers a sense of current thinking on the topic as well as identifying the “gap” the current project will fill and/or identifying the significance of the proposed project.

Theses are typically around 100 pages long, divided up into several substantial (25ish pages) chapters, plus a short introduction and conclusion.

Advisors and Committee

You need one main advisor who has expertise in the area in which you are researching. You also need at least one additional committee member, who may or may not be a member of the English department. Typically, the primary advisor will work closely with the student in designing the project and finalizing the proposal, and will read drafts of chapters; the rest of the committee will generally read only the more polished versions of things.

For more information about Theses or the MA Exam in Literature, contact Andrea Kaston Tange
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