

Thesis Guidelines
English M.A. Program
Spring 2016

1. Identify and define your project

- Write a two- to five-page proposal summarizing your argument, theoretical background, and the critical intervention you intend to make with your thesis.
- Include summaries of your proposed chapters with titles.
- Construct a timeline for the completion of each chapter, the first draft, and the final version of the thesis.
- Provide a bibliography of the project's key primary and secondary texts.

2. Identify a thesis committee

- Find one professor to direct your thesis and another to serve as your second reader.
- Give each one a copy of your thesis proposal.
- Complete the English Department Master's Project or Thesis Enrollment Form (available in the English office), sign it along with your two readers, and return copies to your readers, the MA Coordinator, and the English office. A copy of your proposal must be attached to the form.

3. Register for the thesis class

- Contact the MA Coordinator to receive permission to register for ENG 695 – Master's Thesis.
- This course meets twice a semester—in the first week, and about halfway through the semester—to discuss departmental policies and strategies for writing the thesis.
- The course is worth 6 credits, so it can take the place of two electives in the MA program.
- If you do not finish your thesis in this semester (which is normal), you will receive an IP (in progress) grade. This grade will be changed and the 6 credits will appear on your transcripts only after you have submitted the finished thesis.

4. Maintain a working relationship with your thesis committee

- It is your responsibility to work on and finish the thesis. It will be useful to set up a regular schedule of meetings and/or email communications with your committee members.
- Plan on a reasonable timeline for completion. Set research and writing deadlines for yourself that you know you can meet.
- Stay in touch with your committee members. If you cannot make a meeting or have not finished writing a section that you promised to send them, let them know immediately.

5. Register for the thesis continuation if necessary

- If you do not complete your thesis while you are taking ENG 695, you may register for ENG 721, the thesis continuation, for one additional semester at no charge.
- After that semester, you must register for ENG 722, the thesis extension. This course will charge you for one credit hour per semester.

- Find the Individual Graduate Study Application form for both 721 and 722 on the Graduate School website, at <http://graduateschool.buffalostate.edu/sites/graduateschool.buffalostate.edu/files/uploads/Documents/indstudy2012.pdf>.

6. Complete the thesis draft three weeks before the Digital Commons deposit date

- You must give your committee at least this much time to read and approve the final version of your thesis.
- Be sure that you follow all the Graduate School guidelines for correct thesis formatting. You can find their guidelines here: <http://graduateschool.buffalostate.edu/sites/graduateschool.buffalostate.edu/files/uploads/thesis%2012.8.11.pdf>.
- Include a signatory page as shown near the end of these guidelines.
- Keep in mind that your work must conform to MLA style, since this is a literature degree.
- The thesis must be uploaded to Digital Commons by their deadline, which is usually the Friday of the third week of November in the fall and the Friday of the third week of April in the spring.
- Once the thesis is uploaded to Digital Commons, the English Department chair will read it and forward any additional comments or required revisions to you and your thesis director.
- After English Department approval, the Dean of the Graduate School will read your thesis, offer comments and/or revisions, and approve it after all revisions are complete.

7. Upload your thesis to Digital Commons

- Before beginning the process, make sure that you have your full thesis saved as a correctly formatted Microsoft Word or PDF document, a 250-word abstract, the full names of your thesis committee members, and 1-6 keywords identifying your thesis topic.
- Digital Commons is a resource housed on the library's website. On the Butler Library main page, access the "Collections" link in the upper right-hand corner, click on "Digital Commons," then click on "Master's Theses and Projects."
- Click on "My Account" in the upper right-hand corner to create an account.
- Once you have created an account, click on the "Submit Research" link and choose your academic department (English).
- Agree to the Digital Commons' right to post your thesis by checking the appropriate box.
- Fill in the required fields (Title, Author, Award Date, Embargo Period, Access Control, Degree Name, Academic Department, Thesis Adviser, Additional Readers, Keywords, Primary Subject Categories, and Abstract).
- Upload your thesis document by clicking on "Upload File from Your Computer."
- The English Department chair, MA Coordinator, and Graduate Dean will receive emails informing them once your submission has been successfully uploaded.

8. Get one copy of your thesis bound for the English Department

- The Graduate School no longer requires students to submit a hard copy of their thesis; however, the English Department requires one bound copy of each thesis to be submitted for our records.
- Be sure to have your first and second readers sign your signatory page before taking one hard copy of the thesis to be bound.
- Print the thesis on one side of the page only with a laser printer.
- Use a 1 ½-inch margin on the left (to allow room for binding) and 1-inch margins on all other sides.
- We recommend 8 ½" x 11" high quality, acid free, plain white bond paper with minimum 20-lb weight and 100% cotton content for archival preservation.
- The thesis should be bound in black with the full title and author's name on the front and the last name, degree title, and year on the spine. Text should be stamped in gold.
- We recommend Quality Bindery Services, Inc., which is located at 501 Amherst Street in Buffalo, 716-883-5185. They charge about \$80 for a bound thesis.
- The Instructional Resources Department at Buffalo State recently purchased a binding machine and is willing to bind theses for a smaller fee. Contact them for details: Kaylene Waite, Graphic Design – Bulger 122, (716) 878-6676 or waitek@buffalostate.edu.
- You may bring the bound thesis either to the department office or to your thesis director.