

THE COLLEGE OF SAINT ROSE ALBANY, NEW YORK



A GUIDE TO THE PREPARATION OF MASTER'S THESES

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I. Introduction

The following requirements apply to any College of Saint Rose graduate student who selects the thesis option. This guide reflects the minimum standards required of a thesis at The College of Saint Rose; note that individual graduate departments may have requirements above and beyond the following institutional requirements. A graduate student completing the thesis option must abide by the College's rules for taking an Incomplete grade and will only be given up to one month into the next semester to complete the project if necessary. Additional time needs to be negotiated with members of the thesis committee.

II. Requirements

A. Before the Thesis

1. Discuss the thesis idea or topic with your Graduate Coordinator and other members of the graduate faculty.
2. Select a committee of at least two full-time, tenure-track faculty from your academic department to guide you through the Thesis Proposal process. From this committee, choose one Thesis Director.
3. Use the format for the Thesis Proposal as set forth by your academic department. If no format has been developed, see Form A, B, or C in the Appendix as a guide.
4. Revise the Thesis Proposal with your Thesis Director before submitting it to the reader(s). The Thesis Director will indicate when the Proposal is ready for review by the other committee members.
5. Submit your Thesis Proposal to the readers. (Faculty may use the *Checklist for Readers* as a guide for assessment.)
6. The Thesis Proposal must be approved in the following manner, including signatures obtained on the *Thesis Research Proposal Form*.
 - a. If the committee is composed of two readers, and one reader does not approve the Thesis Proposal, the following will apply: The committee will select/would agree to a third reader in the department (or allied discipline as appropriate). If that reader approves the Thesis Proposal, that reader signs the form and becomes a new member of the thesis committee and can either replace the non-approving member, as agreed upon by all three readers, or be added as a third reader in the process.

- b. Should a reader not approve the Thesis Proposal and a third reader also not approve the Thesis Proposal, the student has several options: s/he must work with the Thesis Director and either revise and resubmit the proposal to the original thesis committee, begin a new Thesis Proposal, or choose to abandon the thesis option and proceed with another option consistent with specific departmental requirements.
 - c. With a committee of three, at least two readers must approve the Thesis Proposal. Should the non-approving reader choose to do so, s/he could remove him/herself from the committee. Under these circumstances, a new third reader would be agreed upon by both the Thesis Director and the remaining thesis reader.
7. Submit the signed *Thesis Research Proposal Form* to the Registrar's office.
 8. If appropriate, complete the *Human Subjects Research Form* (available on the College website at <http://www.strose.edu>, in the IRB link under the Current Students and Faculty tab) and return it to the IRB before any data has been collected.

B. Preparation of Thesis

1. Typing: The thesis must be typed and double-spaced on 8 ½- by 11-inch, ACID-FREE PAPER. Acceptable typefaces are 12-point Times New Roman and Courier. The original copy must be in black.
2. Style: APA, MLA, or Chicago format, as appropriate to your discipline.
3. Margins: One inch on top, right-hand side, and bottom; one and one-half inches on the left-hand border.
4. Page Numbering: Refer to requirements of APA, MLA, or Chicago style.
5. Title Page: Include a title page with your name, full title of thesis, list of members of the thesis committee, name of the degree being completed, and name of the academic program.
6. Table of Contents: A Table of Contents, giving chapter headings and page numbers, is prefixed to the thesis.
7. Tables and Figures: The word "table" designates tabulated numerical data used in the thesis. The word "figure" designates all other nonverbal material used in the thesis, including charts, graphs, maps, photographs, plates,

drawings, and diagrams. They are numbered in separate sequence and are placed as close as possible to the text they will illustrate unless they are of such length to constitute an appendix.

C. Completion and Presentation of the Thesis

1. After either research or creative activities of the Thesis Proposal are completed, the Completed Thesis must be approved by the thesis committee. At this point, a student has three options. Should s/he choose to continue, s/he can defend the thesis. Should s/he decide more time is required, s/he can request an extension from the thesis committee. Finally, should s/he decide s/he no longer wishes to complete the thesis option, s/he can formally withdraw and continue with another option consistent with departmental requirements. This final option must be exercised no less than three weeks before the end of the given semester in which s/he was to defend the thesis, and BEFORE s/he has committed to defending the thesis. Should a student indicate s/he wishes to defend his/her thesis, that student forfeits the option to withdraw from the thesis option and is committing to receiving a passing or failing grade.

2. Should a student agree to proceed with the defense of the thesis, the following will apply:

a. The student must make a formal presentation or “defense” of the Completed Thesis (as determined by the student’s department) before members of the thesis committee and other interested parties from the educational community. Upon conclusion of this defense, the Thesis Director will notify the office of the appropriate School Dean that the thesis has been successfully completed. Specific requirements for the presentation may differ across departments. A student should check with his/her department for its requirements.

b. Should a committee of two disagree as to the merit of the Completed Thesis and not agree on appropriate revisions, a third reader from the full-time, tenured faculty of the academic department (or allied discipline as appropriate) must be agreed upon. If the third reader approves the Completed Thesis, then s/he signs the approval form and the thesis is completed. If the third reader does not approve the submitted Completed Thesis but can agree to necessary revisions, the student can revise and

resubmit the document to the Thesis Director and the new reader for a final evaluation. If approved by both of these readers at this time, the thesis is completed.

c. With a committee of three, should one person disagree as to the merit of the Completed Thesis but two members agree, the document is approved and the thesis is completed. However, if there are two dissenting readers, the student can be asked to revise and resubmit the Completed Thesis and continue working with the Thesis Director. If the document is approved by two or three members of the committee after the revision and resubmission, the student is given a passing grade. If the two dissenting readers believe the document cannot be revised and lacks merit, the student is given a failing grade.

3. Two copies of the Completed Thesis, with signatures from the thesis committee, ready for binding, must be delivered to the Serial Librarian at the Neil Hellman Library no later than one week prior to Commencement. A receipt from the Librarian must then be brought to the Thesis Director, who submits the final grade and forwards the receipt to the appropriate School Dean.

4. The Completed Thesis is the property of The College of Saint Rose. Publication in whole or in part requires permission of the College secured through the office of the appropriate School Dean.

D. Time Frame

1. Most theses take at least one full year to complete (two semesters and one complete summer). The student is urged to develop a timeline for completion in collaboration with his/her thesis committee. Below are critical times to remember:

a. The student must register for the Thesis Proposal option prior to beginning work on the thesis.

b. All thesis committee members must approve the Thesis Proposal.

c. After thesis committee approval, all theses using human subjects must be approved by the IRB before data are collected.

d. After the thesis is completed and the student commits to defend the thesis, the student must make an oral presentation to the thesis committee and other interested parties from the educational community.

- e. Upon successful completion of the thesis, the student must submit two (2) copies of the Completed Thesis, with all revisions and signatures of the committee members on the Title Page, to the Serial Librarian one week prior to Commencement.
- f. The receipt must be shown to the Thesis Director and, at that time, the Director will submit the grade to the Registrar. The receipt can be photocopied and placed in the student's permanent file with his/her advisor.
- g. Upon conclusion of the defense, the Thesis Director will notify the office of the appropriate School Dean that the thesis has been successfully completed and will forward the original receipt to the Dean's office.

APPENDIX

Thesis Research Proposal Form
Form A and Checklist for Readers
Form B and Checklist for Readers
Form C and Checklist for Readers
Receipt for Binding

FORM A - QUALITATIVE RESEARCH

Students who wish to engage in qualitative studies must assure their mentors that their work is at an appropriate level of rigor for graduate-level theses. Qualitative theses must demonstrate knowledge of authorities in the fields of study, and make original contributions to the fields.

Students who engage in writing theses work with full-time faculty mentors in their fields of research. Qualified part-time faculty and faculty at other colleges and universities may serve as readers on theses committees. These students are advised to consult with their mentors regarding which models of research are most appropriate for their theses and which faculty might be helpful readers on the theses committees.

QUALITATIVE THESIS OUTLINE

The following outline will usually be appropriate for a qualitative thesis proposal.

- I. Statement of Intent:** State the thesis of the project. Indicate the anticipated scope of your work and its contribution to the field.
- II. Rationale:** Referring to existing research in the area, provide an overview of the critical and/or creative works that led to your own work. Clarify the connections and influences, explaining the nature of your proposed contribution to this existing body of work. Stress the originality and significance of your contribution.
- III. Product/Process:** Describe the finished product and explain how that format (e.g., case study, scholarly essay, short story collection) serves a purpose in the field. Describe the process of inquiry; that is, name the major issues to be considered and show how coverage of these issues will contribute to your thesis. Project an organizing scheme for this coverage. If applicable, project any specific needs (materials, equipment, institutions) for your study and explain how you plan to meet those needs.
- IV. References:** Attach to the completed proposal a list of works cited in the proposal.
- V. Bibliography:** Attach to the completed proposal a preliminary bibliography of primary and secondary works. This list should give evidence of credibility for beginning the study and of potential for pursuing it.

Student's Name _____
Thesis Title _____
Faculty Reader _____ Date _____

**CHECKLIST FOR READERS AND WRITERS OF
QUALITATIVE THESIS PROPOSALS**

1. Does the project make an original contribution to the field?

2. Does the writer sufficiently demonstrate knowledge of authorities in the field?
 - a. Are authorities clearly incorporated into the project, as reflected in the text of the proposal?

 - b. Does the bibliography indicate a number and range of sources sufficient for background and for advancement of the project?

3. Is the plan for pursuing and completing the project reasonable, ambitious, and solid?

4. Is the writing (style, grammar, mechanics) at the level appropriate for this thesis?

5. Do you have any other concerns or comments about the project as it is presented here?

Signature of Faculty Reader

Date

FORM B - QUANTITATIVE RESEARCH

Students who wish to engage in quantitative studies must assure their mentors that their work is at an appropriate level of rigor for graduate-level theses. Quantitative theses must demonstrate knowledge of prior research pertinent to the questions of study, and make original contributions to the fields.

Students who engage in writing theses work with full-time faculty mentors in their fields of research. Qualified part-time faculty and faculty at other colleges and universities may serve as readers on theses committees. These students are advised to consult with their mentors regarding which models of research are most appropriate for their theses and which faculty might be helpful readers on the theses committees.

Quantitative Thesis Outline

Quantitative theses proposals and completed studies usually contain the components outlined below.

- I. Statement of Problem:** This section includes--Introduction, Questions or Purpose, Rationale, Hypothesis, Implications and Definition of Terms, and Limitations of the Study.
- II. Review of the Literature:** This section surveys all pertinent qualitative and quantitative literature.
- III. Method/Design:** This section must give comprehensive information regarding--Subjects, Research Design (includes independent and dependent variables), Instrumentation, Method of Data Collection and Analysis, and Procedures (includes schedule and sequence of the study's completion).
- IV. References:** Attach to the completed proposal a list of works cited in the proposal.
- V. Bibliography:** Attach to the completed proposal a preliminary bibliography of primary and secondary works. This list should give evidence of credibility for beginning the study and of potential for pursuing it.

N.B. Regarding the methods for data analysis, students should indicate statistical experiences or resources that would enable them to conduct their studies.

Student's Name _____
Thesis Title _____
Faculty Reader _____ Date _____

CHECKLIST FOR READERS AND WRITERS OF QUANTITATIVE THESIS PROPOSALS

1. Does the introduction provide a clear overview of the study?
 - a. Is the problem statement or purpose delineated in clear, specific, and achievable terms?
 - b. Is there a sufficiently strong rationale to warrant undertaking the study? Is the rationale consistent with the stated purpose of the study?
 - c. Is the stated hypothesis appropriate to the study?
 - d. Are the implications or questions of the study well-articulated? Are terms of the study operationally defined?
 - e. Are the study's limitations specified?

2. Does the review of the literature sufficiently demonstrate knowledge of the authorities in the field? Is the review comprehensive in surveying the qualitative and quantitative literature pertinent to the study's problem statement?

3. Are the method and design appropriate for achieving the study's purpose and answering its questions?
 - a. Is the selection of subjects and their number acceptable for achieving representative results?
 - b. Is the research design (including identification of independent and dependent variables) functional for achieving the study's purpose and answering its questions?
 - c. Is the instrumentation appropriate?
 - d. Is the plan for data collection and analysis appropriate?
 - e. Do the procedures and schedule of the study promise successful completion of the study?
4. Does the bibliography indicate a number and range of sources sufficient for background and for advancement of the project?
5. Is the writing (rhetoric, style, grammar, mechanics) at the level expected for a master's thesis?
6. Do you have any other concerns or comments about the project as it is presented here?

Signature of Faculty Reader

Date

FORM C – THESIS IN THE LIBERAL ARTS

Students who wish to engage in thesis writing in the liberal arts must assure their mentors that their work is at an appropriate level of rigor for graduate-level theses. Liberal arts theses must demonstrate knowledge of prior research pertinent to the project and make original contributions to the fields or be of publishable quality in a selected genre.

Students who engage in writing theses work with full-time faculty mentors in their fields of research. Qualified part-time faculty and faculty at other colleges and universities may serve as readers on theses committees. These students are advised to consult with their mentors regarding which models of research are most appropriate for their theses and which faculty might be helpful readers on the theses committees.

Liberal Arts Thesis Outline

The following proposal outline will usually be appropriate for a liberal arts thesis.

- I. Statement of Intent:** State the thesis (or design) of the project. Indicate the anticipated scope of your work and its contribution to the field.
- II. Context:** Create your theoretical base for the thesis by referring to existing research and theory in the area, and provide an overview of the critical and/or creative works that led to your own work. Clarify the connections and influences, explaining the nature of your proposed contribution to the existing body of work. Stress the originality and significance of your contribution.
- III. Design:** Describe the issues raised by your study. Clarify the relationships among these issues and show how coverage of these issues will contribute to your thesis. Project an organizing scheme for this coverage. If applicable, project any specific needs (materials, equipment, institutions) and explain how you plan to meet those needs.
- IV. References:** Attach to the completed proposal a list of works cited in the proposal.
- V. Bibliography:** Attach to the completed proposal a preliminary bibliography of primary and secondary works. This list should give evidence of credibility for beginning the study and of potential for pursuing it.

Student's Name _____
Thesis Title _____
Faculty Reader _____ Date _____

**CHECKLIST FOR READERS AND WRITERS OF
A THESIS PROPOSAL IN THE LIBERAL ARTS**

1. Is the statement of intent clear?

2. Does the project make an original contribution to the field or is it of publishable quality in the genre? Is the originality and significance of the contribution sufficiently stressed in the proposal?

3. Is the context for the thesis well-described?
 - a. Is existing research in the area provided that led to the proposal of the thesis?

 - b. Is an overview of the critical and/or creative works provided that led to the proposal of the thesis?

 - c. Are connections and influences clarified that explain the nature of the proposed contribution to the existing body of work?

4. Is the thesis designed for completing the project successfully and within a reasonable amount of time?
 - a. Are the issues raised by the thesis described? Are the relationships among the issues clarified?

5. Is the writing (rhetoric, style, grammar, mechanics) at a level appropriate for the thesis?

6. Is the bibliography sufficient for beginning and pursuing the thesis?

7. Do you have any other concerns or comments about the presentation of the proposal?

Signature of Faculty Reader

Date

RECEIPT OF THESIS FOR BINDING

_____ submitted and prepaid for binding

_____ copies of the thesis entitled _____

_____ on [date] _____. The copies will be picked up by Mutual Library Binding, Inc. on their next scheduled delivery date. Our best estimate for return delivery date of the bound copies is _____.

Steve Black
Serial Librarian
454-5494
blacks@mail.strose.edu
Neil Hellman Library
The College of Saint Rose

(author of thesis)

phone: _____

email: _____

Mailing address: _____
