
MASTER'S ESSAY TIMELINE—Spring Semester 2011

September 20	MASTER'S ESSAY INFO SESSION <i>Required. 5:00-6:00 p.m., JRC 222</i>
December 1 or before	REGISTRATION Email Graduate English at gradenglish@stthomas.edu for provisional registration
February 1	PROPOSAL AND ANNOTATED BIBLIOGRAPHY DUE The signed & completed Essay proposal and bibliography are due to the Graduate English Office
April 11	ESSAY TO REVIEW COMMITTEE Copies should be distributed to all members of the Committee Student is responsible for arranging a time for the formal review & a room to meet
Week of April 25	REVIEW COMMITTEE MEETS The Review Committee meets with student to discuss Essay
May 18	MASTER'S ESSAY PRESENTATIONS Wednesday, May 18, 5:00pm – 7:00pm, (OSF Library, Room 108)
May 20	SUBMIT FINAL COPIES to graduate English Program Coordinator Three copies of the revised essay: one (unbound) for the department; two bound for UST Archives An abstract of the paper should be submitted along with the bound copies A grade will not be recorded and your diploma is not processed until this step is complete

MASTER'S ESSAY PROCEDURES AND TIPS

- ◆ Students should seek an advisor one full semester before they write their Master's Essay
- ◆ Current MLA documentation style is to be used
- ◆ The Master's Essay counts for 3 credits toward the MA degree and must receive a "Satisfactory" to pass

Choosing a Topic

The Master's Essay is designed to refine skills by substantially re-thinking and re-envisioning a previously considered idea. Ideally, the topic evolves from a paper already written for a graduate course. It need not be the final or major paper for the course. The best essays almost inevitably result from getting started early.

The Annotated Bibliography

A 10-reference annotated bibliography should be submitted along with the proposal. This is a list of citations to books, articles and documents followed by a brief descriptive and evaluative paragraph. More information can be found at <http://www.library.cornell.edu/olinuris/ref/research/skill28.htm>

Essay Advisor

Once a topic has been determined, a faculty advisor should be chosen. The advisor must have expertise in the subject; it is advantageous if the advisor has also taught the student in a graduate course. Once an advisor has agreed, a schedule for the various stages of the essay should be arranged. The advisor will read the primary text(s), recommend secondary materials, and offer feedback and guidance during the writing process.

The Review Committee

One reader on the Review Committee should be familiar with the subject; the other can be outside the area. These readers and the advisor form the Review Committee that will read the essay and participate in the Essay Review with the student.

The Master's Essay Review & Evaluation

About ninety minutes in length, the Essay Review is an extensive discussion between the Committee and the student about the essay's strengths and weaknesses, the revision process, and the essay's relation to the student's future interests or plans. As the culminating project for an advanced degree in English, the Master's Essay is evaluated on its originality, intelligence, and depth of thought; its careful synthesis and use of secondary sources to refine the argument; a clear, logical and effective organization of ideas; and smooth, efficient, graceful, error-free prose.

The Abstract

An abstract for our library will be required with the final copies. It should re-establish the topic of the research, give the main objective and present the methodology used, as well as the main findings and conclusions.

Master's Essay Presentations

At the end of the semester, students writing the Master's Essay speak to interested students, faculty and family about their topic and their experiences in the writing process. Students attending these presentations have found it especially helpful in looking ahead to writing their own essays.