MASTER’S ESSAY TIMELINE—Fall Semester 2015

May 11  MASTER’S ESSAY INFO SESSION
   Required. 5:00-6:00 p.m., JRC 222

July 1 or before  REGISTRATION
   Email Graduate English at gradenglish@stthomas.edu for provisional registration

September 11  PROPOSAL AND ANNOTATED BIBLIOGRAPHY DUE
   The signed & completed Essay proposal and bibliography are due to the Graduate English Office

November 2  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 November 9  REVIEW COMMITTEE MEETS
   The Review Committee meets with student to discuss Essay

December 16  MASTER’S ESSAY PRESENTATIONS
   Wednesday, December 16, 5:00pm – 7:00pm, (OSF Library, Room 108)

December 21  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 be recorded and your diploma is processed after 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
♦ The Master’s Essay counts for 3 credits toward the MA degree and must receive a “Satisfactory” to pass
♦ Current MLA or Chicago documentation style may be used

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.