

**MONTCLAIR STATE UNIVERSITY**

**THE GRADUATE SCHOOL**

**Procedures and Guidelines  
for the  
Preparation of Master's Theses  
at  
Montclair State University**

**November 2013**

## I. INTRODUCTION

A graduate thesis is a permanent record of a significant contribution made by a student to a particular field of knowledge. It demonstrates the writer has the capacity for research, the ability to draw logical conclusions, and make interpretative claims. In the process of developing the thesis, students will be required to accomplish extensive readings and to demonstrate a significant knowledge of their discipline's methodological approach to research.

### ***Statement of Responsibility:***

Students are responsible for following the requirements set forth in this thesis guide and any additional guidelines established by their department or program. (To determine if your program has additional or special guidelines, student should contact their graduate advisor.) It is the student's responsibility to locate appropriate materials, perform the necessary research, develop conclusions, and present all of the above in a form, which meet standards acceptable to the discipline.

Plagiarism in any form is unacceptable and will result in serious disciplinary action including loss of matriculation. If detected after graduation, the student's degree may be rescinded. Students must act ethically in all aspects of the thesis process. ***Students are expected to know, understand and follow the policies and procedures as outlined in the students' Rights and Responsibilities section of the Student Handbook.***

Subject content and appropriate supervision of all aspects of the thesis process is the responsibility of the thesis sponsor and the thesis committee. The Graduate School will approve the thesis only if style, form, and content standards appropriate for the department are maintained, and the thesis conforms to the guidelines present in this document.

Students are required to be fully matriculated and in good academic standing in their graduate degree program before being allowed to register for the thesis course or complete the thesis project.

Before certifying to the Registrar's office and the department that the thesis has been formally approved, The Graduate School will review the manuscript to determine compliance with Graduate School standards as to form and style.

## II. THE THESIS PROCESS

*Students intending to write a thesis are to follow the steps described below.*

### **A. Identification of Thesis Topic**

1. Upon matriculation into the Master's program, students should begin to consider possible thesis topics. Students should have received these and any departmental guidelines from their Graduate Program Coordinators at the time of matriculation. Thesis writers should begin the thesis process as early in their program as possible to ensure timely completion of the degree. As students begin

to take courses they should continue to discuss possible thesis topics with their Graduate Program Coordinator as well as other faculty in the department.

2. As a possible thesis topic begins to be identified, students should begin to review the literature available on this topic. Reference librarians and graduate advisors may be resources to help you begin this literature review.

3. As you are conducting a literature review and are attempting to define your thesis topic, students should meet with your Graduate Program Coordinator to discuss the thesis topic and identify potential thesis sponsor/advisors. At this meeting the Graduate Program Coordinator can answer any questions students may have about the thesis process.

### **B. Thesis Sponsor and Committee Selection**

1. Following the meeting with the Graduate Program Coordinator, students should seek the cooperation of a particular faculty member to serve as the thesis sponsor. The selection of this person is very important. The thesis sponsor has the primary responsibility for the general supervision of your thesis. To facilitate this process, prepare a 1 to 3 page general topic statement. Faculty members will use this document to decide if they have the expertise and interest to serve as sponsor.

2. Thesis sponsor/advisor must be a full-time tenured or tenure-track faculty member in the student's department. The sponsor must also hold graduate faculty status as defined by the Graduate Council Policy Manual (Appendices I.C.2).

3. In consultation with your thesis sponsor, students should seek the cooperation of two additional faculty to serve on the thesis committee. The sponsor and the two committee members constitute the three-member thesis committee.

4. Thesis committee members shall be full-time, tenured or tenure-track faculty who hold graduate faculty status within the student's department. Committee members who do not hold graduate faculty status and/or are not full-time, tenured or tenure-track may serve on thesis committees with the approval of the Graduate Program Coordinator (as identified by the department) and The Graduate School.

5. Faculty from outside the student's department may serve on thesis committees at the request of the student and with the approval of the Graduate Program coordinator (as identified by the department) and The Graduate School. No more than one member of the thesis committee may be from outside the student's department.

6. Changes in committee members may be made at the request of the student and with the approval of the thesis sponsor and/or Graduate Program Coordinator at any time up until registration for the thesis course.

7. Once registered for the thesis course, changes may be made in thesis committee members or thesis sponsor only in unusual circumstances. This request must be made in writing to the Dean of The Graduate School.

### **C. Approval of Thesis Topic and Development of a Thesis Outline**

1. With the establishment of the thesis committee, students should immediately begin to clearly outline the thesis. The student should prepare a document that provides a clear statement of the research issue, an extended literature review and a proposed research design/methodology and an annotated bibliography (if appropriate). It should follow disciplinary standards and include significant detail. In developing the outline, it is imperative that students work closely with their thesis sponsor. Although they are not usually asked to review the outline until it is completed, other committee members may be approached for assistance. This document will be used by the student and the thesis committee to focus the remainder of the work on the thesis.
2. When the student and the sponsor agree the outline adequately presents the proposed thesis, it should be submitted to the thesis committee. Upon their suggestion, significant revisions may be necessary. When the outline is approved, the Approval for Writing a Thesis form (with the outline attached to it) must be approved and signed by the student, thesis sponsor, committee members, Graduate Program Coordinator and The Graduate School. Copies of the thesis outline are retained by the student, thesis sponsor, and The Graduate School.

### **D. Institutional Review Board for the Protection of Human Research Participants**

In accordance with federal legislation and University policies, assurances must be made in writing that, where human participants are in any way involved in the thesis research, they will experience no physical or psychological harm. Prior to initiation of any aspects of a study involving human participants, the Montclair State University Institutional Review Board for the Protection of Human Research Participants (IRB) must review and approve the research procedures to be employed. Once the thesis outline is approved, a copy of the Disposition Form for the IRB (which is the first page of the Application for Review of Research Involving Human Participants) must be appropriately signed and filed with The Graduate School. The student must follow the methods and procedures approved and alter nothing without prior approval of the Montclair State University IRB. Students should download the application from the IRB website at <http://www.montclair.edu/media/montclair.edu/provost/irb/IRB-Application-9-3-13.pdf>. Students should note the dates of the IRB meeting in order to plan the submission of the proposal and allow 4 – 6 weeks for full review. Students should also read a copy of the statement on Ethical Standards published by the American Psychological Association, which is available in The Graduate School and on the IRB website. *All IRB related inquiries or concerns can be directed to the IRB at [reviewboard@mail.montclair.edu](mailto:reviewboard@mail.montclair.edu) or 973-655-7583.*

## **E. Registering for the Thesis Course:**

### **1. Thesis Course**

Once the thesis topic and outline have been accepted and approved, the appropriate parties can sign the Approval for Writing a Master Thesis form. Registration for the thesis course shall not take place until all preliminary steps have been completed, students have earned a minimum of 18 s.h. of graduate-level courses within the student's degree program, and they are sure of their commitment to the thesis project.

All Master's Thesis courses are numbered 698 (i.e., the M.A. in English Master's Thesis Course is ENGL 698). Master's Thesis courses are one-semester courses, earning either 3, 4 or 6 credits depending on the approved academic program. For specific information about the thesis course, students should consult with their Graduate Program Coordinator.

*Registration for the thesis course is done by submission of the Approval for Writing a Master's Thesis form (pages 12 & 13 of this manual) to the Office of the Registrar, after The Graduate School approves it. This means that students do not register for the thesis course through WESS.*

### **2. Master's Thesis Extension Course**

Students who are unable to complete the Master's Thesis during the semester in which they register for the thesis course, must register for the Master's Thesis Extension course (1 credit) each subsequent semester (excluding summer and winter terms) until the Master's Thesis is successfully completed and approved by The Graduate School. All Master Thesis Extension courses are numbered 699. There is no limit on the number of times a student may register for the Master's Thesis Extension course.

Master's Thesis credit and extension will be recorded as IP (in progress) while the thesis is being conducted. Incomplete is not an available grade for thesis. Only at the completion of the thesis and with the approval of The Graduate School, will the thesis sponsor submit a final grade. The final grade will be applied to the original, 3, 4 or 6 credit Master's Thesis course. The Thesis Extension course(s) will be graded as P or F when the thesis is completed.

### **3. Due Date for Master's Thesis**

The final thesis must be submitted to The Graduate School no later than two (2) weeks prior to the student's anticipated graduation date.

### **4. Thesis Course Grade**

After the thesis has been received and approved by The Graduate School, the thesis sponsor will be notified that a grade may be assigned for the thesis.

## **F. Research and Writing the Thesis**

### **1. General Instructions**

- a. The thesis committee will specify a particular style manual (see list below). Sections III and IV of these guidelines contain style instructions, which are applicable to all theses. All drafts -- preliminary (working) and final -- must be in conformity with the selected style manual, Sections III and IV and, if applicable, any special school, program, and/or departmental thesis guidelines.
- b. All questionnaires, letters of inquiry, etc., that are not subject to the Institutional Review Board for Human Subject Protection approval, must be approved, in writing, by the thesis sponsor prior to mailing.
- c. Any change in your research outline and/or research methodology must be approved, in writing, by your thesis committee prior to its implementation and may require revision of your originally approved outline.
- d. It is expected that you will be providing to each member of your committee regular drafts of your work in progress. In providing material to your committee, be certain to allow adequate time for the members to develop their responses. During the summer sessions, faculty may not be available. Be aware of the university calendar (published in the Schedule of Courses booklet) and of the schedules of your committee members. Adequate planning is an absolute necessity. The thesis sponsor may also recommend a timetable for the completion of the thesis; students should follow this timetable as closely as possible.
- e. Maintain duplicates of all research materials and of the various drafts of the thesis.
- f. It is highly probable that several drafts may be written before the final version is developed. Students should budget their time accordingly.

### **2. Style Manuals**

Style, footnotes, citations, and bibliographical form of the thesis should conform to the conventions prescribed by a standard style manual appropriate to the student's major field. In some cases, the style employed in the discipline's major research publications may also be appropriate. The style manual selected must be approved by the thesis committee. Also, students must confer with their thesis committee for possible additional style requirements.

The following list includes some commonly utilized style manuals. In all cases, the latest editions must be employed.

American Chemical Society. *Handbook for Authors of Papers in the Research Journals of the American Chemical Society*. Washington, D.C.: American Chemical Society.

American Institute of Biological Sciences. *Style Manual for Biological Journals*. Washington, D.C.: American Institute of Biological Sciences.

American Psychological Association. *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association*. Washington, D.C.: American Psychological Association.

Campbell, William G. *Form and Style: Thesis, Reports and Term Papers*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin.

Gibaldi, Joseph and W. S. Achter. *MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers*. New York: The Modern Language Association of America.

Turabian, Kate L. *A Manual for Writers of Term Papers, Theses, and Dissertations*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

U.S. Government Printing Office. *Style Manual*. Washington, D.C.

University of Chicago. *The Chicago Manual of Style*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press.

## **G. Completion and Approval of Thesis**

1. When the student, the thesis sponsor, and the thesis committee agree that the thesis is complete, students must submit a final version of the thesis to the committee for its approval. This copy of the thesis should follow the format specifications as outlined in section IV.
2. Oral Examination (Optional):
  - a) The oral examination is a critical element of the thesis process. The date of the examination will be determined by your thesis sponsor. **Oral examinations may not be scheduled during the summer sessions or winter break without prior approval of each member of the thesis committee.** To allow for the incorporation of changes and possible additional research, the orals should be held at least eight weeks prior to the date of graduation
  - b) The format of your oral examination will be determined by the graduate program. Normally, the thesis sponsor will lead the examination. You should be prepared to provide a verbal presentation of the thesis (approximately 10 to 20 minutes). Committee members and persons outside the committee are allowed to

raise issues and ask questions. To determine the exact nature of your oral examination, contact your thesis sponsor.

c) Immediately at the end of the oral examination, the sponsor and the committee members will convene privately to decide upon the thesis and the oral examination. The sponsor will notify you immediately of the decision. Some of the possible decisions include:

- (a) The thesis is approved.
- (b) The thesis is approved with modification
- (c) The thesis is not approved. The committee will recommend further action.
- (d) If the thesis is approved, you should proceed immediately to prepare the final version.

### **III. Thesis Document Style**

#### **A. Font and Style**

The standard page size for a thesis is 8 ½ x 11 inches. The original manuscript must be printed on one side of the paper only. A laser printer, utilizing black ink should be used. When pen work is required, it must be performed in a permanent, carbon-based black ink employing either a lettering guide or a lettering device. Non-standard typefaces--such as script--are not acceptable. All non-standard typefaces must be approved, in advance, in writing, by your thesis committee, by your department, and by The Graduate School. To obtain such approval, submit a sample page to the above principles. Measurement of typefaces is given in point size, and 10 to 12 points, usually 12 for text, are appropriate sizes. The following fonts and point sizes are among those which are acceptable:

11 point Times New Roman

12 point Times New Roman (used throughout this manual)

Whichever size and type of font you choose must be used consistently throughout your manuscript.

#### **B. Page Numbering**

The thesis document must be numbered. The location and format of the page numbering is subject to the standards of the style manual being employed. If no guidelines on page numbering is available in the style manual, then page numbers must appear on the bottom right margin.

### **C. Paper**

As the original copy is professionally bound and maintained permanently in the Sprague Library, it must be printed on white, 20-pound bond paper with 25 percent fiber content. While it is not necessary to use the above paper for photocopies, such copies must be made on substantial paper.

### **D. Margins**

Each page must have the following margins:

1 and ½ inches on the left margin

1 inch for the right, top, and bottom margins

### **E. Spacing, Pagination, Footnotes, Citations, Bibliographical Entries, etc.**

Follow the style manual selected by your thesis committee.

### **F. Corrections**

The manuscript must be free of strikeovers, interlineations, and other detectable corrections. Erasures are allowed if they are indiscernible. Liquid correction fluid and dry correction tape (e.g., KO-REC-TYPE) are never acceptable. Clean copy is essential. Both sides of all sheets must be free of carbon smears, smudges, gray cast, or any other extraneous marks.

### **G. Illustrations and Similar Data**

Subject to the following guidelines, drawings, figures, tables, graphs, photographs, maps, and all other types of illustrative material may be included. All such processes must be permanent and of high quality.

All illustrative data in the text must be prepared on paper of the same size, weight, and color as that of the rest of the manuscript. Such material must conform to the page margin requirements. A typewriter, lettering guide, or similar device must be used for captions, numerals, symbols, and characters. A black typewriter ribbon or permanent, carbon-based, black ink must be used for preparing the material. All text, tables, illustrations and similar must appear in black ink (no color is permitted per UMI Standards).

Photographs should be printed from negatives on 8 ½ x 11-inch photographic paper. Charts, maps, drawings, etc., also may be photographed and printed on 8 ½ x 11-inch paper.

If illustrations must be mounted, great care must be exercised in choosing a procedure. Generally, dry mounting is considered to be a permanent method. A permanent paper cement (with the affixed material dried under pressure) may be acceptable. Do not mount with rubber cement, mucilage, photo-mounting corners, tape, staples, or other non-permanent methods.

#### **H. Oversized Data**

This material should be photographically reduced and printed on 8 ½ x 11-inch paper. If this is impossible, a folded page may be employed. To avoid cutting during the binding process, the right hand folded edge must be at least ¼ inch from the right edge of the regular pages. Be certain to number this page in alignment with the pagination in the text.

#### **I. Proofreading**

The manuscript in final form must be carefully proofread and corrected before it is submitted to The Graduate School.

Every page must be checked for correct numbering and correct margins, and all copies must be checked to insure that pages are not missing. The manuscript must be thoroughly proofread for consistency. All titles in the table of contents must agree exactly with their wording in the text. Headings and subheadings must appear in the table of contents in descending order of value. Consistency in positioning all headings of the same value must be maintained.

#### **J. Reproduction**

The manuscript must be photocopied in a permanent manner on a paper of substantial quality. In all cases, the printing must be of acceptable quality and completely free from smudges, gray cast, or any other extraneous marks.

## **C. Format of Document**

The format of the final thesis manuscript must include the following in order:

### **A. Abstract**

Prepare a 1 to 2-page abstract of the thesis.

### **B. Thesis Signature Page**

Complete The Thesis Signature Page (see Section VI, Forms and Sample Pages) and have it signed by the thesis sponsor and the other committee members.

### **C. Title Page**

The second page is the title page. (See the sample title page located in Section VI, Forms and Sample Pages.) Observe the usual margin requirements. Center all lines within the margins. The title of the thesis is in upper case (capital) letters. With a long title, double space between lines and use an inverted pyramid form. The author's name is typed in full. The month and year should be that in which your degree will be conferred.

### **D. Copyright Page (Optional)**

Include only if you wish to have your thesis copyrighted. The university does not require that the thesis be copyrighted; however, if your thesis is placed into the library without a copyrighted page, it becomes public domain and cannot be copyrighted at a later date.

For complete copyright information, write to the Library of Congress, Copyright Office, Register of Copyrights, 101 Independence Avenue, S.E., Washington, DC 20559-6000, call at (202) 707-3000, or refer to the Copyright Office website at <http://www.loc.gov/copyright>. (See sample copyright page located in Section VI, Forms and Sample Pages.)

### **E. Acknowledgements (Optional)**

### **F. Table of Contents**

### **G. List of Figures. Insert this page only if needed.**

### **H. List of Illustrations. Insert this page only if needed.**

### **I. Thesis Text**

### **J. Bibliography**

### **K. Appendices (if applicable)**

### **L. Supplemental Figures and Illustrations (if applicable)**

## **D. COPIES**

Copies should be prepared and distributed as noted below:

Required of all thesis writers:

1. The original and one copy must be given to The Graduate School. (Each should be delivered in a manner that will ensure that the document is in perfect condition and will be free of marks, punched holes and any other impediment to binding).
2. One copy must be given to the department.

Optional (based on requirements of department):

3. One copy presented to the thesis sponsor.
4. One copy presented to each member of the thesis committee.

The original of the Thesis Signature Page must be included in the original copy of the thesis. Make enough photocopies of the signature page to become the cover page for the photocopies of the thesis.

## **VI. FORMS AND SAMPLE PAGES**

The following pages include the forms necessary for the registration and completion of the Master's Thesis. The pages marked "sample" should be used as models for the final document. To obtain the "Application for Review of Research Involving Human Participants", please visit the Office of Research and Sponsored Programs website at <http://www.montclair.edu/media/montclair.edu/provost/irb/IRB-Application-9-3-13.pdf>.

**MONTCLAIR STATE UNIVERSITY  
THE GRADUATE SCHOOL  
APPROVAL FOR WRITING A MASTER'S THESIS  
and COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIP**

The following student is approved to register for the Master's Thesis course.

Student Name: \_\_\_\_\_ CWID. # \_\_\_\_\_

Course Title: \_\_\_\_\_ Course Number \_\_\_\_\_

Semester \_\_\_\_\_ Year \_\_\_\_\_ Section No. \_\_\_\_\_ Semester Hours \_\_\_\_\_  
(assigned by Registrar)

Thesis Sponsor \_\_\_\_\_  
(type or print) (sign) (date)

Graduate Program Coordinator \_\_\_\_\_  
(type or print) (sign) (date)

Committee Member \_\_\_\_\_  
(type or print) (sign) (date)

Committee Member \_\_\_\_\_  
(type or print) (sign) (date)

The Graduate School \_\_\_\_\_  
(type or print) (sign) (date)

Student \_\_\_\_\_  
(type or print) (sign) (date)

Title of Thesis \_\_\_\_\_

**(Attach Thesis Outline to this Form)**

*Please indicate Style Manual used in your thesis:* \_\_\_\_\_

**Please remember to fill out IRB Approval Section on the next page. Thesis Approval form will not be processed without it**

**IRB APPROVAL SECTION**

Does Your Thesis Activity Involve Human Subjects? (**YES** to any of the following indicates involvement of human subjects)

	Yes	No	Not Sure
Is the data or information being obtained from or about living individuals? <i>Items that qualify (list is not comprehensive): survey data, interview data, blood samples, hair samples, publicly available data (BRFSS, ICPSR,) focus group recordings, educational assessments</i>			
Is the data collected through intervention or interactions with individuals?			
Does the data contain identifiable private information?			

If you selected **Not Sure** to any of the following, please contact the IRB at 973-655-7583. If you selected **Yes** to any item, you will be required to submit an application to the IRB. Your thesis sponsor must initial below after reviewing your selections above.

\* Thesis sponsor initials \_\_\_\_\_.

**(Sample Thesis Signature Page)**

MONTCLAIR STATE UNIVERSITY

(title of thesis)

by

(name of student)

A Master's Thesis Submitted to the Faculty of

Montclair State University

In Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements

For the Degree of

(insert name of degree- e.g. Master of Arts, Master of Science, etc.)

(insert date degree is to be conferred- e.g. May 2013)\*

College/School \_\_\_\_\_  
(e.g. College of Science and Mathematics)

Thesis Committee:

Department \_\_\_\_\_  
(e.g. Geoscience)

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Thesis sponsor signs on line; type name under signature)  
Thesis Sponsor

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Committee member signs on line; type name under signature)  
Committee Member

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Committee member signs on line; type name under signature)  
Committee Member

**\*(Insert Month and Year with no comma between. The only months degrees are conferred are January, May and August. No other months should be specified)**

**(Sample Copyright Page)**

Copyright © 1995 by *John William Doe*. All rights reserved.

**(Sample Title Page)**

JUDGEMENT AND FEELING IN THE ANESTHETIC  
THEORY OF BERNARD BOSANQUET

A THESIS

Submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements

For the degree of (insert name of degree)

by

VELVA JEANNE OSBORNE

Montclair State University

Montclair, NJ

2013