

THESIS GUIDELINES

Department of World Languages, Literatures and Linguistics
West Virginia University

1. WHO CAN WRITE A THESIS?

You can write a thesis, if your GPA is 3.66 or above after your first semester or after you have taken at least three courses in your area of study.

2. WHAT IS THE TIMELINE FOR COMPLETING THE THESIS WITHIN TWO YEARS?

The timeline is the following:

Deadlines	Actions
Midterm of your 2 nd semester	Choose your committee members and have a topic proposal approved by them. See the section on “Choosing Your Committee and Having your Topic Approved” below for guidelines.
End of your second semester	Have your thesis proposal approved by your committee. See “Thesis Proposal” below for guidelines.
2 nd week of your fourth semester	Submit the first (rough) draft of your thesis to your committee.
Midterm of your fourth semester	Submit the final version of your thesis to your committee
End of your fourth semester (there is a university-wide deadline for all thesis defenses 2-3 weeks before the end of the semester)	Thesis defense

It is your M.A. committee that ultimately decides the timeline as well as whether and when the thesis can be defended. If you miss these deadlines, your committee members may either not allow you to proceed with the thesis writing process, or you may need to take longer than two years to complete your thesis requirement.

Please note that if you are a GTA, your assistantship is guaranteed for two years only. Also, please note that even if you comply with these deadlines, you may need to take longer than two years to complete your thesis requirement. Your committee may decide that the thesis is not complete yet and that you are not ready to defend the thesis by the end of your fourth semester.

3. CHOOSING YOUR COMMITTEE AND HAVING YOUR TOPIC APPROVED

The very first step in writing a thesis is the selection of a topic. It should represent an area in which you are particularly interested and to which you are willing to dedicate your time and energy in research. You should discuss the topic with faculty in your field of study, for they will be able to assist you in better defining the topic.

You will be able to write a thesis, if at least three members of the faculty agree to serve on your thesis committee and approve your topic. At least two of the committee members, including the committee chair, should be regular members of the graduate faculty. You may also ask a professor from another department to serve as an 'outside reader', especially if your topic touches on areas beyond the scope of this department.

By the midterm of your second semester, you must submit to the graduate coordinator a completed "M.A. Thesis Topic Approval" form provided below with a brief description (1 page/250-300 words) of the approved thesis topic attached to it. The form must be signed by the thesis committee, and copies will be made for the committee members, for you, and for your file.

4. THESIS PROPOSAL

After having your topic approved by your committee, you must prepare a formal thesis proposal, including a preliminary bibliography. Before beginning the proposal, be sure to consult with your committee on how to structure the proposal. The proposal shall be typewritten (double spaced, 12 pt font) and be written in accordance with the appropriate style for your area of study, MLA or APA, with which you are expected to be very familiar. The proposal shall be 5-8 pages (1250-2000 words) in length, including notes but excluding the bibliography.

You must have your thesis proposal approved by your committee by the end of your second semester of study. After your proposal is approved, you should turn in a copy of it signed by your committee members to the graduate program coordinator. The copy will be placed in your file.

5. THESIS WRITING PROCESS AND ORAL DEFENSE

After approval of your proposal, you will need to maintain close contact with your committee regarding the progress of the thesis. It is strongly suggested that you submit to the committee individual sections or chapters of the thesis throughout the remainder of your course of study in order to receive progressive feedback. The committee is expected to provide you with specific suggestions and comments for revision in a timely fashion. Although the exact length of the thesis will depend on several factors, it should have a minimum of 50 pages, including notes but excluding the bibliography.

As indicated above, you should have the first draft of your thesis completed by the end of the second week of your fourth semester, and the final version of the thesis ready by the midterm of your fourth semester.

After the thesis has been found acceptable by the committee, the oral defense/examination will be scheduled, at which time the committee will ask questions relating to the specific topic and content of your thesis. Also, although by writing a thesis you are not required to take the written comprehensive examination, you are still responsible for the MA reading list in your area, and during the oral defense, you may be asked to comment on the reading list as well as course work, particularly as they relate to the thesis. The oral defense/examination normally lasts between 1.5-2 hours, and must be scheduled before the deadline for submitting the signed blue shuttle sheet certifying that all requirements for graduation have been met in the semester you intend to graduate.

6. LIBRARY REQUIREMENTS

All theses and dissertations must be submitted electronically to the library. For the submission deadline and electronic submission guidelines, please consult the following website <https://etd.lib.wvu.edu/> . Although your committee will be able to provide you with some help in these matters, it is ultimately your responsibility to ensure that all such requirements and deadlines are satisfied.

MA THESIS TOPIC APPROVAL
Department of World Languages, Literatures and Linguistics
West Virginia University

Student's name: _____

Area of Emphasis: _____

Expected date of graduation: _____

Committee:

Professor's Names (printed or typed)	Regular Graduate Faculty?	Signature
,Chair		

*** You must attach a one page (250-300 words) description of your thesis topic.***

Please turn in the signed form to the Graduate Program Coordinator.