

Masters Thesis Seminar Policy for Committee Composition and Thesis Procedures

revised september 2014

Rationale

To be considered for acceptance into the PhD program, the MA student should have the broad support of the art history faculty. A positive assessment of the MA thesis is an important indication that the student is ready to move on to the doctoral level with solid support and mentoring from the art history faculty.

DESCRIPTION OF MA THESIS: The MA thesis should be a well researched, well organized and well written essay of about 25-40 pages. The topic of the thesis should be geared to an essay of that length which the student can complete in the course of one semester. It is helpful if the thesis is based on work the student has begun in a graduate seminar.

Committee

Each student committee will be composed of three members of the tenured and tenure-track art history faculty. The composition will be:

1. Advisor (selected by mutual agreement between a student and a faculty member)
2. Faculty director of the MA thesis writing seminar
3. A third faculty member appointed by the DGS in consultation with the advisor and student.
4. If the faculty advisor is also the director of the thesis writing seminar, the Director of Graduate Studies will appoint a second and third reader in consultation with the advisor and student.
5. Distribution of faculty assignments will be done in a fair and equitable way to insure that there is wide faculty participation in the graduate program and that no single faculty member is overburdened with thesis reading. The faculty affirms that even readers far outside the specialized field can be as helpful to the student as those more directly related to the advisor's area of expertise.

Graduate Student Responsibility

The graduate student seeking an MA degree is responsible for securing a faculty advisor who is willing to guide his or her Master's Thesis and for setting and keeping regular appointments with the advisor. Ideally, the student should consult with the advisor at least every other week.

Faculty Responsibility

The advisor must be willing to work with the graduate student on a topic that is defined in collaboration with the student. Once the faculty member has agreed to direct the thesis, he or she is responsible for advising the student regardless of other administrative and teaching duties. If a faculty member begins advising a thesis, he or she will continue advising the thesis when on research and study leave. Advising duties may be suspended in the event of medical or family leave.

Procedure

A brief draft of the thesis proposal signed by the student and thesis advisor must be submitted to the director of the thesis writing seminar at the first class meeting. A final proposal must be signed and approved by all committee members no later than two weeks after the beginning of the thesis writing seminar (e.g., in accordance with the university drop/add deadline). Once the topic has been established and agreed on, it can, of course, be modified, but any major changes must be approved by the student's advisor, who will inform other committee members. The director of the thesis writing seminar will draw up a schedule for completing the thesis and will distribute the schedule to students, as well as to all faculty members, so everyone can plan for the thesis completion deadlines. Students are expected to adhere to the schedule. Faculty advisors are obliged to help keep the student on schedule by reading and commenting on the work in a timely manner; as far as possible, all drafts should be returned in accordance with the thesis schedule.

The advisor will determine when the thesis is ready to be sent to the third reader (or both the third and second readers, if the second reader is not the thesis seminar director). Third readers should be given ample time to read and comment on the thesis and the student should have ample time to revise the thesis if necessary. Theses should ideally be complete and ready to be passed to the third reader two weeks before the deadline for final submission.

If the advisor wishes the second or third reader (or any other colleague) to consult on an earlier version of the thesis, he or she may ask that colleague to do so. If the second or third reader finds a thesis passed by the first reader to be unacceptable, he or she should contact the advisor immediately to work out a resolution.

Students register for MA Thesis ARTH 993, section nnn (faculty member's section number). Changing sections is regarded by the university as drop/add. Because the MA thesis is a three-credit course offered by the individual advisor, students cannot simply withdraw from the course without penalty after the university established drop and add period has ended. This means that students cannot, after the drop and add period, switch to a different field and change thesis advisor at will.

From the Graduate School Rules for what can happen if a student withdraws from a course after the drop/add period

Explanation of Possible Penalties

1) Tuition Repayment –

- Tuition charges are not adjusted by the University once the Census Date has passed, because instruction has been provided and a “seat” has been taken.
- When dropping a course after the Census Date, students are still responsible for paying any associated tuition charges. Refunds will not be processed.
- Students who receive a tuition remission and/or in-state tuition award (i.e. state of North Carolina tuition provided through The Graduate School) will have the award that covered the credit hours for the course dropped rescinded. ***Students are then personally responsible for paying the tuition costs for the credit hours dropped.***
- This policy applies to both in-state and out-of-state tuition from the state of North Carolina provided through The Graduate School.
- Note that there will be financial penalties for students who drop a course after the Census Date if a drop causes any change in tuition charges, even if full-time status is maintained.
- There will not be financial penalties for students who drop a course after the Census Date so long as they are still registered for 9 hours of academic credit.

2) Academic –

- Receiving approval for a drop past the Census Date is not guaranteed. Directors of Graduate Study and the Dean of The Graduate School have discretion to disallow a drop request if, at the time a student requests the drop, the instructor judges the student’s performance to be failing.