

Graduate Thesis Guidelines, Sciences

Preamble: Written communications in various disciplines are most commonly read by members within the same or allied interests who share at least partly their writing styles, vocabularies and text organizations. Between disciplines, there have developed therefore understandable and considerable differences in writing forms. To acknowledge and accommodate these, the Graduate School deems it acceptable for graduate students to prepare their written theses in forms which are consistent with broadly used yet distinctive styles. Traditionally in the physical and biological sciences, the hierarchy of written communications devolve from topical to general subjects along the lines of the “paper”, “review article”, and “book”. A “thesis”, as a written form, actually embraces aspects of all three of these traditional forms. This presents both opportunities and challenges to a graduate student and research director. Within the broad requirements for originality, clearness, comprehensiveness, and citations to the literature, the thesis form should have considerable flexibility while conforming to a university standard. To these ends, the following guidelines are intended to assist a student in preparation of a written presentation of their graduate work.

General Outline. A Thesis shall have the following organization and broad contents. *Italicized components are required.*

Title Page

Table of Contents

List of Figures (if any employed)

List of Tables (if any employed)

List of Abbreviated Terms (if any employed)

Dedication and Significant Acknowledgments

Body of Thesis

Introduction

Hypothesis, Purpose or Goal of the Work

Presentation (in one or more Chapters)

Literature Cited (collected for entire Thesis, or at end of each Chapter)

Vita

Attestation Page

The following specifications apply:

Paper: Not less than 50% rag-content bond, 8-1/2" X 11" (A).

Recommended font: Times-Roman (12-point)

Text: Single sided; recto. Spacing: double (25 lines per page)

Pagination: Roman minuscule, center bottom, preceding

Body of Thesis; Arabic, upper right corner, thereafter.

Margins: Top, right and bottom (1"; 2.5cm)

Left or bindery edge (1.5"; 3.8cm)

Tables and Figures may be more densely filled but must be accommodated within the margins.

Title Page. The Title page will conform to the university standard. An example is appended as Example A.

Each Thesis component will begin on a new page.

Citations to the literature may be placed at the end of each individual Chapter or collected at the end of the Thesis. Literature references shall always give every author or editor for article in the periodicals or books. The organization of literature references may be by number or by name(s) and year of publication. Examples are given in Example B.

Time schedule. Six (6) semester hours shall be earned by a graduate student in a research project culminating in the production of a Thesis. Only students who have gained full admission status as a graduate student (candidates) may begin a Thesis work. Theses are properly conducted under the graduate course sequence PRE563 and PRE 564, where PRE refers to the Departmental prefix for courses in that area under the direction and guidance of a member of the Graduate Faculty (Example: CHE 563). The research effort may extend over a longer period than the two semesters nominally required for the completion of these hours, and the effort should be carefully coordinated between the Thesis student and the research advisor. Ordinarily, the plenitude of requirements for graduation will be met at the completion of the semester in which the Thesis is defended, approved and accepted by the Graduate School. A graduate of IP ("in progress") is assigned to the Graduate School whereupon the research advisor of record will assign letter grades to each course. Because of the special requirements of graduate research, a grade of I ("incomplete") will ordinarily not be assigned so long as the research efforts made by the candidate are satisfactory. Exceptional provisions for interruption, delay or discontinuance of a thesis effort after begun can be made by the candidate in consultation with the research advisor of record and through the office of the Dean of the Graduate School.

Thesis preparation, defense and approval. Following generally and specifically the form outline herein, the Thesis shall be prepared by the candidate for distribution to a Graduate Thesis Committee one week in advance of the date established for the Thesis oral defense. The Graduate Thesis Committee shall consist of the research advisor and at least two other members of the Graduate Faculty. If approved, adjunct Graduate Faculty are to serve on the Graduate Thesis Committee, the membership shall not be less than 75% full-time Graduate Faculty. On the date and time established for the oral defense, the Committee will meet at the place established for the defense by the candidate and conduct the proceedings under the presidency of the research advisor. At the termination of the defense, the Committee will determine whether the candidate's Thesis is "unsatisfactory" or "satisfactory" and rank the work as prescribed by the Graduate School. The members of the Committee, upon a "satisfactory" determination, shall sign (three original exemplars of) the attestation page. (These will be placed at the end of the Thesis upon submission to the Graduate School. A form is given as Example C.) Corrections required to be made to the Thesis shall be made by the candidate before submission of the final manuscript to the

Graduate School. Corrections following the defense shall be determined to have been made by any member of the Committee requesting corrections, and/or by the research advisor. Theses must be submitted in final manuscript form in triplicate to the office of the Graduate School not later than two weeks prior to the first day of examinations at the end of the semester in which graduation is desired. Approval of a submitted Thesis by the Graduate School is conditioned on receipt of the Thesis in proper form and number, and proof of payment of the bindery fee.

Example A. Title Page (All Roman capitals, double spaced; center justified, [page 1] without pagination; 1" top margin)

MISSISSIPPI COLLEGE

(1 line spacing)

TITLE OF THE THESIS IN ALL ROMAN CAPITAL

LETTERS AND CENTER JUSTIFIED

(1 line spacing)

BY

FIRST MIDDLE LAST NAME

(3 line spacing)

A THESIS SUBMITTED TO THE GRADUATE SCHOOL IN PARTIAL

FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF

MASTERS OF _____

(3 line spacing)

CLINTON, MISSISSIPPI

MONTH, YEAR

Example B. Citations to existing literature.

Numbers (superscripted or enclosed in parentheses) or name(s) and year of publication (enclosed in parentheses) are placed in the text at the point or at the end of the sentence in which the citation refers. Numbers are assigned in order of citation from the beginning of each Chapter if the citations are collected at the end of each Chapter. Numbers are assigned in the order of citation from the beginning of the Thesis if the citations are collected at the end of each Thesis. Numbers are reused if the same citation is invoked in more than one location within a Chapter or the Thesis. New numbers are assigned if, in citations to books or texts, a separate location within the reference is cited. On recurrence of a citation, the first author and *op cit* or *ibid* (as appropriate) may be used. A complete citation should be given to any paper (as opposed to books for which pages or chapters may be indicated).

Example. The representation of a function in a Fourier series for all values of the independent variable depends on the function's being periodic with a finite period. If the function is not periodic, it may still be possible to get a Fourier integral representation of the function. Roughly speaking, this can be thought of as the limiting form of the Fourier series when the period approaches infinity.¹ Construction of a related function, in which the coefficients of the series are only partly known, can be constructed similarly.²

At the end of Chapter or Thesis (order numerically by appearance in the text):

1. Titchmarsh, E.C., "The Theory of Functions," 2nd ed., Oxford University Press, Fairlawn, NJ, 1937, pp. 432-433.
2. Patterson, A.L. *Physical Review*, **46**, 372 (1934).

Name and Year. Family name(s) and year of publication are given as citations in the body of the Thesis. All names are given if the number of authors is less than four, otherwise the name of the first author is followed by "et al." Names and years are reused if the same citation is invoked in more than one location within a Chapter or the Thesis. The year is amended with small letters and years follow immediately in the text location calling for the citation or after the period of the sentence in which the citation is connected. Name(s) is(are) separated from years by comma; more than one citation at a given location are separated by semicolon.

Example. The representation of a function in a Fourier series for all values of the independent variable depends on the functions's being periodic with a finite period. If the function is not periodic, it may still be possible to get a Fourier integral representation of the function. Roughly speaking, this can be thought of as the limiting form of the Fourier series when the period approaches infinity (Titchmarsh, 1937). Construction of a related function, in which the coefficients of the series are only partly known, can be constructed similarly (Patterson, 1934).

At end of Chapter or Thesis (order alphabetically by family name of first author of a citation):

- Patterson, A.L. (1934). *Physical Review*, **46**, 372.
Titchmarsh, E.C. (1937). "The Theory of Functions," 2nd ed., Oxford University Press, Fairlawn, NJ, pp. 432-433.