

# M.A. in Liberal Studies Thesis or Project

## Deadlines for MALS Proposals

Your proposal of 3 to 5 typed pages plus bibliography, should be submitted to the MALS Director by these deadlines:

For Fall graduation:..... submit by second week of May  
For Winter graduation:..... submit by second week of November  
For Spring graduation: ..... submit by second week of March

## Checklist for Process, Beginning to End

1. Work on a preliminary version of the proposal with your chief advisor. ....
2. Submit a formal proposal, with coversheet and bibliography, by the deadline listed above, to the MALS Director, to be reviewed by the Executive Committee.....
3. If revisions are necessary, the proposal should be resubmitted in two weeks. ....
4. Research, write, and develop thesis/project, meeting and communicating on a regular basis with your advisor (at least 3 times a month). ....
5. Complete and turn in the final version of your M.A. thesis or project, two weeks before the last day of classes for the semester in which you plan to graduate. ....
6. Complete Thesis/Project sheet with typed information: your name, title of thesis/project, date, and names and signatures of each committee member, and bring to MALS secretary with corrected, final copy of thesis placed in ½ inch 3-ring binder with clear-cover to be stored in MALS office.....

## Instructions for Beginning Project

1. Before you can write a proposal for a thesis or project, preliminary research of your idea and discussion of it with your chief advisor are required. Keep these goals in mind as you begin work on a preliminary proposal.
  - A. Your proposal must be interdisciplinary, using methodology and subject matter from 2 different umbrella areas (in boldface below):
    - \* **humanities** (art/art history; cinema studies; history; music/theatre/dance;philosophy) ;
    - \* **social sciences** (anthropology; political science;psychology;sociology);
    - \* **literature and languages** (American, British and world literatures;linguistics; modern languages; rhetoric, communications and journalism);
    - \* **sciences** (biology; chemistry; mathematics; physics, also hybrid courses designated by MALS)
  - B. Your proposal should grow out of MALS cores and electives you have taken as MALS program and you should articulate this in your proposal

C.If you are doing a project rather than a traditional thesis, be sure to explain the ways in which the project offers a unique learning opportunity for the student; if it is a service-related project, explain how it benefits the Oakland University or larger community. Projects must have a written and research component.

D. Student and Thesis Committee should keep in mind these goals for the MALS 600 thesis/project:

- i. Demonstration of reasoning skills
- ii. Creativity and flexibility
- iii. Range of knowledge
- iv. Ability to integrate diverse fields of human knowledge
- v. Composition skills and mechanics
- vi. Familiarity with research methods (2 of 4 areas)
- vii. Ability to confront problems of interdisciplinary research

E. Academic Conduct

- \* All MALS students are expected to practice and maintain the standards of honest scholarship, and to be certain that rules regarding documentation of the M.A.

Thesis/Project are clearly understood.

- \* Students must understand and avoid plagiarism, defined as “using someone else’s work or ideas without giving that person credit; by doing this students are, in effect, claiming credit for someone else’s thinking. Whether students have read or heard the information used, they must document the source of information. When dealing with written sources, a clear distinction must be made between quotations (which reproduce information from the source word-for-word within quotation marks) and paraphrases (which digest the information and produce it in the student’s own words). Both direct quotations and paraphrases must be documented. Even if students rephrase, condense or select from another person’s work, the ideas are still the other person’s, and failure to give credit constitutes misrepresentation of the student’s actual work and plagiarism of another’s ideas. Buying a paper and handing it in as one’s own work is plagiarism” (*Oakland University Graduate Catalog*).
- \* Please refer to the *Graduate Catalog* for further information about Academic Conduct.

2. Recommendations for websites with useful information about writing interdisciplinary theses:

<http://condor.depaul.edu/~mals/>

Good materials prepared for Liberal Studies students at DePaul University

<http://www.mals.duke.edu/InternetResources.pdf>

or

[www.mals.duke.edu](http://www.mals.duke.edu) (Go to Current Students, then to Writing Program)

Tips on writing theses;see especially the flow chart: “Academic Thought Process”

liberalstudies.georgetown.edu (Click on “Steps to Graduation,” then click on “Thesis,” to find a useful 31-page booklet about thesis writing prepared for MALS students at Georgetown)

[www.lbst.uncc.edu](http://www.lbst.uncc.edu) (click on “Writing Tips)

Various useful materials used at University of North Carolina-Charlotte Liberal Studies Program

2. For help with writing, see

[www.wisc.edu/writing/Handbook/DocChicago/html](http://www.wisc.edu/writing/Handbook/DocChicago/html)

(Writer’s handbook on Chicago style, University of Wisconsin-Madison)

[Webster.comnet.edu/grammar/index.htm](http://Webster.comnet.edu/grammar/index.htm)

(Guide to Grammar and Writing, Capital CC, Hartford, CT)

[www.bedfordstmartins.com/online/](http://www.bedfordstmartins.com/online/)

(Reference guide for using Internet sources)

3. Print References:

- \*Bolker, Joan. *Writing Your Dissertation in Fifteen Minutes a Day*. New York: Henry Holt and Co., 1998.
- Horton, Susan R. *Thinking through Writing*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1982.
- \*Murray, Rowena. *How to Write a Thesis*. Buckingham and Philadelphia: Open University Press, 2002. Good sections on “Starting to Write,” “Seeking Structure,” and “Writer’s Block,” among others.
- \*Williams, Joseph M. *Style: Toward Clarity and Grace*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1995. (Part of the Chicago Guides to Writing, Editing and Publishing series).
- \**The Essentials of College and University Writing*. (Research Education Assoc. 1995). Provides in visual form the rhetorical shape of argumentation.
- \**Introduction to Research and Graduate Writing*. The handbook explains research terminology, expectations, and the latest Internet research tools in clear and informative prose. The guide also provides a detailed discussion of evaluating empirical research and a representative guide to MLA and APA citation styles, including electronic sources.
- \**Modern Language Association Handbook for Writers of Research Papers*, ed. Joseph Gibaldi, 6<sup>th</sup> edition. Modern Language Association, 2003. Standard format for theses in literature, languages, cinema studies, rhetoric, communications and journalism. Very useful for interdisciplinary theses as well.