

Department of History and Classical Studies
McGill University

MASTER OF ARTS
GUIDELINES FOR THE PREPARATION AND SUBMISSION OF THE THESIS

GENERAL REQUIREMENTS:

Under the supervision of a professor in our department, or, in exceptional cases, more than one supervisor, you will write a master's thesis. The range of possible subjects depends on the expertise and availability of professors in our department. It is best to contact the professor in your field of interest before you apply to the program, to be sure that she/he is willing and able to supervise your thesis work. Once you are enrolled, you will be asked to write a thesis topic and description (max. 350 words), have it approved by your supervisor, and submit it on myProgress by the end of your first semester.

The thesis should show familiarity with previous work in the field, and demonstrate the ability to carry out research, organize results, and defend the arguments/conclusions in a scholarly manner. The thesis should be based on original research and demonstrate original analysis. The balance between the historiography of the field and new research should be determined by the specific subject and methodology, in consultation with the supervisor.

The length of the thesis should be between a minimum of 55 pages and a maximum of 100 pages, inclusive of foot/endnotes but excluding bibliography and appendices. The guidelines of Graduate and Postgraduate Studies indicate 150 pages as the maximum acceptable length for MA theses, inclusive. For details of mandatory components and formatting, please see the information provided further below.

Students are strongly encouraged to apply for internal and external funding, to facilitate travel for thesis research. For funding sources, please consult the relevant page of McGill's Graduate and Postgraduate Studies: <https://www.mcgill.ca/gps/funding/travel> However, research outside of Montreal is not a requirement and students should take advantage of local and/or digitally accessible primary sources.

RESEARCH ETHICS COMPLIANCE:

Research involving human participants must have had the appropriate compliance certification. Copies of any certificates of compliance must be retained by the supervisor and student in accordance with McGill's policies on research ethics. Supervisors indicate on the Nomination of Examiners and Thesis Submission Form that the thesis research has complied with all ethical standards. See the [Ethics and Compliance](https://www.mcgill.ca/research/research/compliance) webpage: <https://www.mcgill.ca/research/research/compliance> for further information about certification and training requirements.

SUBMISSION

Steps:

- Draft thesis: To be submitted directly to your supervisor for approval before your initial thesis submission on myThesis
- Initial thesis submission: The submission of your thesis to the examiner on myThesis
- Final thesis submission: The submission of your final thesis after all corrections required by examiner have been made

Timeline:

1. Submit the draft thesis to supervisor for approval. Discuss this date with your supervisor as you should set aside at least 2-3 weeks before your initial thesis submission on myThesis. NB: You are also required to complete your "[intent to submit](#)" form on myThesis two months prior to your initial thesis submission.
2. After supervisory approval, submit the initial thesis to the examiner through myThesis (approx. 6-8 weeks before the [final deadline](#)).
3. Receive examiner's report back from initial thesis. The examiner will return their decision in approx. 4 weeks. Make any necessary changes and submit the final thesis by the deadline.

For more detail about deadlines, consult the information here:

<https://www.mcgill.ca/gps/thesis/deadlines>

Students should make every effort to eliminate all typographical, grammatical, and other errors from the thesis before the initial thesis submission. If copies are deficient in these respects, they will be returned for corrections. If the corrections are very numerous, the granting of the degree may be delayed. Supervisors should not sign off on work that is not as error free as possible but this is the responsibility of the student.

The research paper will be examined by one reader, internal to the Department and selected in agreement with the student, the supervisor, and the GPD. In exceptional cases, should a qualified faculty member within the Department of History and Classical Studies not be available, the reader may be chosen from outside the unit.

MANDATORY COMPONENTS

In addition to the body, the thesis must include the following formal components:

- 1/ title page (for details, see below);
- 2/ a brief abstract (maximum 150 words);
- 3/ a complete bibliography of works consulted.

1/ Title Page

The title page must include:

- (a) the title of the paper;
- (b) the name of the author and department followed by "McGill University, Montreal";
- (c) the month and year of submission;

- (d) the following statement: "A thesis submitted to the Department of History and Classical Studies in partial fulfilment of the requirements of the degree of Master of Arts";
- (e) the universal copyright notice followed by the author's name and the year the paper was submitted.

2/ Abstract

The abstract must provide a concise summary of the thesis in English and French (150 words or less each).

3/ Bibliography

FORMATTING

Script and Page Format: A conventional font, size 12-point, 10 to 12 characters per inch must be used. Line spacing must be double or 1.5.

Margins: Left and right hand margins should be 1 inch.

Pagination: Positioning of page numbers is optional. Pages with figures or illustrations may be numbered in sequence or left unnumbered. The chosen procedure must be used consistently throughout the thesis. Pagination must be carefully checked for correct sequence and completeness. All errors must be corrected before final submission.

Footnotes, References and Appendices:

Consistency of formatting for footnotes and references is required throughout the paper. Historians in North America normally use the Chicago Manual of Style as their guide to academic composition, and in particular, to formatting bibliographical references in footnotes and bibliographies. Updated editions of the Chicago Manual appear regularly, so it is convenient to consult the electronic version available through the Library website: go to <http://libraryguides.mcgill.ca/c.php?g=344953&p=2323288> and click on "Chicago Manual of Style" to expand. On the Library resource page mentioned above, you will find an electronic version of Kate Turabian's A Manual for Writers of Research Papers, Theses and Dissertions

http://www.press.uchicago.edu/books/turabian/turabian_citationguide.html

Follow this guide in formatting your bibliographic citations, remembering that the layout and punctuation differ depending on whether the item is part of a footnote, part of a bibliography, or part of a reference list (if you are using parenthetical references). Always check with your supervisor to determine which format -- footnote or parenthetical reference -- is preferred. The Library also offers free software which will download bibliographic references from electronic databases or the Library's catalogue and automatically format them in Chicago Style. Seminars are also conducted by the Library on how to use these programs: see <http://libraryguides.mcgill.ca/citation>.

Figures and Illustrations: Where graphs, illustrations, photographs, etc. fill an entire page, these pages can be numbered in sequence or left unnumbered (see Pagination above).

Photographs: Photographs may be incorporated into the thesis or attached in an appendix.

A list of illustrations, including photographs should be included (with credits) in the table of contents.

EXAMINATION PROCESS

The MA thesis will be graded by one examiner on a pass/fail basis.

Eligibility for Graduation: If all other requirements of the program have been met (all seminars have been completed successfully and there are no outstanding marks on the official record) the candidate is then eligible to be placed on the next degree list.

If the graduation is still some time away, candidates may request a letter certifying successful completion of degree requirements from the Graduate Program Director of the Department of History and Classical Studies. Note that such requests normally require sufficient notice, as the student's record must first be checked.

Please note that the web page of McGill University's Graduate and Postgraduate Studies contains more detailed information under "Preparation of a Thesis:"

<https://www.mcgill.ca/gps/thesis/thesis-guidelines/preparation>

When there is a discrepancy between the two sets of guidelines, students should consult their supervisor and the Graduate Program Director and, as a rule, follow the Department of History and Classical Studies guidelines.