

Monmouth University Department of English Master of Arts in English
INSTRUCTIONS FOR MA NON-THESIS OPTION: EN ESS/The Master's Essay

General Information

The MA Thesis is the standard capstone to the student's academic work in the MA (literature and rhetoric & writing) program. It should represent the student's strongest scholarly and critical work. However, for some students, an alternative to the thesis is an appropriate choice. The Master's Essay/ENESS option (in the literature and rhetoric & writing concentrations only) is available for students who do not seek the independence or specialized study of thesis work or whose career plans do not require the levels of independent research demanded by thesis work. Students who aim to present their scholarship at conferences or hope to publish it in journals or anticipate applying to more advanced graduate programs after the MA at Monmouth should not pursue the Master's Essay option. The Graduate Program Director and graduate faculty are your guides about whether you should pursue the Thesis or Essay options. Please meet with these advisors before signing up for either EN691: Thesis Development (3 credits) or ENESS: Masters Essay (0 credits).

The Master's Essay/ENESS (0 credits) option requirements:

1. Satisfactory completion of **two additional program courses (6 elective credits)** and
2. Submission of an appropriately revised and expanded paper previously submitted for a MU MA in English course (**no additional credits granted**).
3. The Master's Essay overall quality and length is more than a course paper but less than a thesis. It should aim to be a document of discovery and originality.
4. Two additional courses required: The total number of credits to graduate with an MA is the same as the thesis option: 30. Additional coursework for students who select the Master's Essay option includes two additional graduate EN electives (a total of 6 additional credits).

Literature concentration: One course (elective) must be coded LT (Literature).

Rhetoric and Writing Concentration: One course (elective) must be coded RW (Rhetoric & Writing).

[These two courses replace EN 691: Thesis Development and EN 692: Thesis Writing.]

Curriculum charts prepared by the Registrar map out the sequence and requirements for both Thesis and the Master's Essay options. Registering for and writing the Master's Essay/EN-ESS is a zero-credit, pass/fail requirement of the Master's Essay curriculum.

Process

Qualifiers

Students who wish to begin EN-ESS must have completed 21 credits in the program and have a minimum GPA of 3.0. The Master's Essay should be an extension of a research paper completed in a previous MA course taken during their MA studies at Monmouth University in the student's area of concentration (literature or rhetoric & writing).

Faculty Essay Reader

The Master's Essay will be written with the agreement and under the supervision of a faculty member teaching in the Monmouth University English Department MA program in the student's concentration area. This supervisor is called the Faculty Essay Reader, who should be the

professor from the previous MA course who assigned the research paper chosen for expansion into a Master's Essay.

Registration for EN-ESS

In the final weeks of the semester, before the student wishes to begin the Master's Essay, the student should approach the intended Faculty Essay Reader, win their agreement to supervise the essay to completion, and consult with the Graduate Program Director about the intent to begin work on the Master's Essay. To register for the course, the Graduate Program Director initiates an Etrieve form to enroll students in the Master's Essay (EN-ESS). This enrollment essentially declares the student's intention to pursue the Essay option thesis alternative, Final Master's experience, Master's Essay/ENESS.

Master's Essay

Students who are not certain about what previous paper to expand into a Master's Essay should consult with the Graduate Program Director and one or more MA faculty members. The completed Master's Essay should be a minimum of 6,400 words long (20-25 pages), exclusive of endnotes, works cited, bibliography, illustrations, or similar materials. The essay should not usually exceed 20-25 pages. The work of expanding a previous course paper into a Master's Essay will be done with the Faculty Essay Reader's strategic support in face-to-face meetings held at key moments of the semester (i.e., beginning, middle, and before the submission of the final draft). Written feedback on rough drafts is provided at least twice during the semester. Master's Essay students will be expected to revise and expand the essay with the assistance of appropriate tutors in the Writing Services during the weeks when they are not seeing their Faculty Essay Reader. The Master's Essay should be completed during the student's final semester in the MA program. A final draft is due to the Faculty Essay Reader in week 12 of the semester. The Faculty Essay Reader will consult with the Graduate Program Director to determine a Pass or Fail grade. The Graduate Program Director submits EN ESS grades, which completes the EN-ESS zero-credit course. Non-completion of the course (EN ESS) earns a failing grade, and the student must retake the course. If a Master's Essay student needs to complete the Master's Essay without concurrent enrollment in program courses, he/she will still need to maintain matriculation.

*Please note that summer study of EN ESS is discouraged.

For additional information, please consult the Graduate Program Director for the MA in English:
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