

Monmouth University Department of English Master of Arts in English  
**INSTRUCTIONS FOR MA THESIS DEVELOPMENT/EN 691 AND THESIS WRITING/EN 692**

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### **General Information**

The MA Thesis (EN 691 and EN 692 taken in consecutive semesters) constitutes the two-semester capstone to the student's academic work in the MA (literature or rhetoric & writing) program. It should represent the student's strongest scholarly and critical work. The MA thesis may extend course work or a written project completed in a previous MA course at Monmouth University or may be undertaken in a new area of study within their concentration (either literature or rhetoric & writing), which has been the focus of their MA studies. The completed thesis is not simply review prior scholarship but should undertake to discover and present original research (i.e., synthesis or extension of previous scholarly work), such that it can be used as a writing sample in a student's application for subsequent graduate study or publication or presentation.

### **First Reader and Second Reader**

The Thesis courses/EN 691 & EN 692 are supervised under the direction of a First Reader, who must be a member of the graduate faculty in English with expertise in the field, and a Second Reader, a full-time English faculty member. They should be contacted the semester before EN 691 to confirm their participation in the project and to begin developing the Thesis Proposal. The student should also contact the MA Graduate Program Director to confirm their Readers and the project. The student should review their academic Audit found on the student's WebAdvisor portal, verify their concentration\* and that the intended course is listed on their Audit. Then, email the MU Registrar's Office to confirm eligibility for the course and projected graduation date. \*The student concentration has been the focus of the student's MA studies. The MA concentration is listed at the top of the student's "Academic Audit": MA Program Concentration.

### **EN 691 / Thesis Development (Samples are on the MA Website and eCampus Portal)**

#### **Proposal and Syllabus**

The semester before Thesis Development/EN 691 starts, the student must meet with their approved First Reader to discuss and then independently write a 500-word Proposal that describes the intended project's synopsis, scope, theoretical approach, critical conversation, methodology, and goals. The Proposal is not a formality but a substantive part of the intellectual process of developing a project of appropriate focus and scope. The student will also construct a Syllabus with meeting schedules and a short bibliography. After the student completes those two documents, Proposal and Syllabus with bibliography, they submit them as PDFs via MU email to their First Reader, GPD, and Michele McBride (see below), who will register them by submitting the two documents (Proposal and Syllabus with bibliography) via an Etrieve form, "GR Thesis-Project-Practicum-Internship," and attaching the final PDFs. The Etrieve form will be sent through an approval channel that includes the Registrar, GPD, Chair, and Dean. Registration must be completed on time so that the student can meet all financial, registration, and program deadlines. This process will be repeated for EN 692, with just a syllabus for registration. **Students cannot self-register for these courses.** Please note that the summer study of EN 691/Thesis Development is discouraged.

#### **Reader Meetings**

In the semesters of EN 691 and EN 692, the student should expect to meet with the First Reader regularly (bi-monthly). The Second Reader meetings are held three times, once during the start of the project, the mid-point, and at the end-of-the-semester. These meetings and dates will be clearly stated on the Syllabus and agreed upon between the student and their readers.

#### **EN 691: Annotated Bibliography and Critical Essay**

During the semester of registration for EN 691/Thesis Development, the student will complete a 25-item, 25-page annotated bibliography and a ten-page critical essay on their bibliographic research. The structure

of the annotated bibliography is determined by the First Reader and may include two-to-three substantial paragraphs including author credentials, summary, comments on how the item contributes to the project, and how the entry relates to other items in the bibliography. The entire final draft of the annotated bibliography will be submitted to both readers by the seventh week of the semester.

In the critical essay, the student should articulate a position or thesis about the scholarly materials investigated and assembled in the preparation of the annotated bibliography; in other words, the student should "enter the critical conversation." This essay may be adapted as a portion of the EN 692/Thesis. The critical essay should follow by the tenth week. Readers must not be asked to read documents submitted after that point.

### **EN 692 / Thesis Writing**

Students may register for EN 692/Thesis Writing after Thesis Development has been completed and a grade of B or higher has been submitted. Registration for EN 692/Thesis Writing is done using the submission of a Word and PDF version of the new semester's Syllabus to the First Reader, GPD, and Michele McBride, who will process the Etrieve form for EN 692. **Students cannot self-register for EN 692.** Please note that the summer study of EN 692/Thesis Writing is not permitted.

### **Thesis**

The completed Thesis should be about 30-60 pages(maximum), exclusive of endnotes, works cited, bibliography, charts or graphs, or similar materials.

### **Defense**

The completed and revised thesis should be submitted to the Readers by the seventh week of the semester to allow for substantial revisions. Readers must not be asked to read documents submitted after that point. The revised document should be sent to the Readers and the GPD in preparation for the thirteenth-week Defense.

As the semester of Thesis Writing nears completion, the Readers and student must schedule a formal Defense with the GPD. The one-hour Defense occurs during the last week of regularly scheduled classes (not during final exams). The format will typically follow: the student's presentation of the research, then questions from and discussion with the Readers and GPD. After that, the First Reader will ask the student to wait outside the room while the committee discusses their evaluation. The student returns for thesis feedback, details of the completion of their final draft, grading, and the signing of release forms (available on the MA website).

### **Final Draft**

The material submitted must earn a grade of B or higher. The grade is agreed upon by the First and Second Readers. Following the Defense, the student must submit a revised version, final draft of the thesis as a Word and PDF document via MU email to Readers, the GPD, and Michele McBride. The student must also upload these documents to their student eCampus EN 692 course. The final draft is sent to the Monmouth University Guggenheim Library to be bound in book form. One copy will be archived in the Monmouth University Library. One copy will be housed in the English Department.

Program contacts:

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