

# **MATS Thesis and Creative Project Proposal Process**

## **The Thesis Proposal/Thesis and Creative Project Proposal Process**

- o Writing or Writing and Completion of Creative Project
  - a) Preparation: Student registers for MATS 401 or MATS 403 (1 credit hour) in the final year of study. In consultation with both members of the MATS Committee, the student develops a proposal of no more than ten pages (excluding annotated bibliography).
  - b) Formal Submission: Upon receiving approval of both members of the committee, the student submits one clearly readable copy of the Thesis Proposal and a signed copy of MA(TS) Form D: Approval of Thesis Proposal or Thesis and Creative Project Proposal to the Registrar.

## **Components of the Thesis Proposal:**

- o A working thesis and a clear statement of the issue, topic, or problem to be addressed
- o A literature review and initial annotated bibliography that demonstrate an awareness of historical development of perspectives, as well as different points of view
- o A brief discussion of the method to be used
- o An outline of the structure of the Thesis
- o A timeline for the completion of the Thesis

## **Components of the Thesis and Creative Project Proposal**

- o A working thesis and a clear statement of the issue, topic, or problem to be addressed
- A literature review and initial annotated bibliography that demonstrate an awareness of historical development of perspectives, as well as different points of view.

A brief discussion of the method to be used

- o An outline of the structure of the Thesis and Creative Project paper
- o A plan for a Creative Project to be presented and evaluated including
  - a) A description of a proposed format for the Creative Project and a justification for the selection of this medium
  - b) Any areas of expertise unique to the project that will be needed by the committee or an external consultant
  - c) A timeline for the Creative Project's completion
  - d) Criteria for evaluation of the Creative Project
- o A timeline for the completion of the Thesis and Creative Project

### **MATS 402 or 404 Thesis/Thesis and Creative Project and Conference**

In this course, MA(TS) students write a Thesis or Thesis and Creative Project and receive a summative evaluation during the course of a two-hour MA(TS) Conference, in which the thesis or thesis and creative project are defended. The Thesis is an academic research paper informed by biblical, historical, and theological foundations within the student's disciplines of study. The Thesis and Creative Project is an academic research paper accompanied by original art or other approved media.

### **The Thesis or Thesis and Creative Project Process**

- o Thesis Writing (or Thesis Writing and Creative Project)
  - a) The student registers for MATS 402/404: Thesis or Thesis and Creative Project and Conference (2 credit hours) in the term following successful completion of the MATS 401/403 Thesis/Thesis and Creative Project Proposal.
  - b) Using the approved Thesis/Thesis and Creative Project Proposal as a guide, and in consultation with the two assigned members of the MA(TS) committee, the student completes the Thesis.
- o Components of the Thesis – Expectations:
  - a) An academic paper (or academic paper and creative project) informed by scholarship within the student's defined field of study
  - b) Clearly defined and articulated method appropriate to the disciplines informing the Thesis (or Thesis and Creative project)
  - c) Demonstrated capacity for scholarship within a defined field of study
  - d) Demonstrated ability to articulate one's ideas in discourse with specialists in the field of the concentration
  - e) When the summative evaluation includes a creative component such as a film or curriculum, the Thesis must provide a theoretical interpretation of the Project
- o Components of the Thesis – Format:
  - a) 25-50 pages
  - b) Turabian, A Manual for Writers of Term Papers, Theses and Dissertations, 7th edition
  - c) Typed, double-spaced (250 words/page)
  - d) 3 clearly readable copies (one for the registrar and one for each committee member)
- o Where applicable, the student completes the approved creative project:

- a) The Creative Project Evaluation: The Creative Project, MA(TS) Form E, including any public presentation, is to be completed and evaluated by the MA(TS) Committee no later than October 1 in the Fall semester and March 15 in the Spring semester
  - b) When due dates listed fall on a weekend, the deadline will be the following day when institutional offices are open. Faculty members are not available for consultation during the summer term.
- o Acceptance of Thesis or Thesis and Creative Project for Evaluation and Conference Scheduling
    - a) The student completes the Thesis and provides well in advance two clearly readable copies to the MA(TS) Committee for evaluation and approval. The MA(TS) Committee must deem the written Praxis Project acceptable before a conference proceeds. The student is responsible for making sure that the committee is able to accept the Thesis for conference by the appropriate due date listed below.
      - MA(TS) Form F: Acceptance of Thesis or Thesis and Creative Project for Conference – Two clearly readable copies of the Thesis accepted by the MA(TS) Committee are to be submitted to the Registrar with a signed Form F no later than 9:00 a.m. on November 1 (when taken in the Fall semester) or April 1 (when taken in the spring semester).
      - When due dates listed fall on a weekend, the deadline will be the following day when institutional offices are open. Faculty members are not available for consultation during the summer term.
    - b) The chair of the MA(TS) committee schedules a date and room for the conference as soon as the Thesis is accepted and notifies the other committee member, the student, and the Registrar.
      - Participants in the evaluative conference include the student and the MA(TS) Committee.
      - The student may invite a silent peer to attend the conference (i.e. a student currently registered for classes at Saint Paul, not the spouse or significant other of the student). A silent peer offers non-verbal support during the conference. It is the student's responsibility to notify the silent peer of the date, place, and time of the conference and to instruct that person in the role of silent peer. The name of the silent peer should be given to the MA(TS) committee chair at least one day prior to the conference.
      - Occasionally, the VPAAD or the Registrar may ask that a new faculty member be allowed to observe the conference process, but not to participate.

- o MA(TS) Conference

The Thesis and Creative Project and Conference must be successfully completed by April 15 of a given year if the student wishes to graduate in that same academic year.

- a) The two-hour conference begins with a brief fifteen-minute session during which the committee plans an approach to the conference that will be creative and sensitive to the student. The student is then asked to join the committee.
  - MATS Form G: Student File Review: The committee chair summarizes the student's work throughout the degree program, using this form. The student also completes Form G prior to the conference as a means of reflecting on her/his own academic work and vocational readiness.

- During this review segment of the conference, the student may offer additional comments regarding her/his previous work.

- b) A major portion of the conference time will be dialogue between the MA(TS) Committee and the student. Using the Thesis or Thesis and Creative Project as a basis for reflection, the student and committee discuss:
      - The Thesis, its sources and method;
      - The student's creative project (if appropriate), its sources and method;
    - c) Implications for the field in question.
  - o Grading Criteria for Thesis or Thesis and Creative Project and MA(TS) Conference
    - a) At the conclusion of the two-hour conference, the MA(TS) Committee convenes without the student present to evaluate the student's performance in relation to the Thesis or Thesis and Creative Project and Conference Expected Student Outcomes:
      - Demonstrates informed theological understanding and expertise in literature in the field of study
      - Demonstrates ability to do research within a field of study
      - Demonstrates knowledge of the content and method of a field of study
      - Identifies significant issues within that field
      - Thinks critically and coherently about the field
      - Formulates and sustains an argument within the field in written and oral communication
      - Makes a constructive contribution to the field
      - Articulates a thesis both in written and oral discussion
      - Discusses the Thesis and Creative Project in a critical and informed way
      - integrates theological understanding with creative expression in the Creative Project
      - Demonstrates coherence between the Thesis and Creative Project
      - Demonstrates originality, authenticity, and integrity in written and oral communication
    - b) The MA(TS) Committee decides whether the Thesis or Thesis and Creative Project and Conference has been completed satisfactorily.
    - c) MA(TS) Form H: Evaluation of Thesis and Conference or Thesis and Creative Project and Conference: on the basis of the expected student outcomes and the published grading scale, the committee completes Form H by assigning a grade for the Thesis or Thesis and Creative Project and Conference, together. The student is then asked to return for the committee's evaluation.
  - o Post-Conference Process
    - a) Successful Conference
      - An MA(TS) Committee may deem a Thesis or Thesis and Creative Project to be acceptable without revision. A frontispiece with faculty signatures should be attached to the final document(s)/materials and submitted to the Registrar. The student must also submit an electronic copy to the Registrar.
      - An MA(TS) Committee may request revisions or a student may choose to revise the Thesis or Thesis and Creative Project on the basis of conversation that occurs in an otherwise acceptable conference. Once any revisions have been made to the committee's satisfaction, a frontispiece should be attached to the final document. After collecting committee members' signatures, the student submits the final document(s)/materials, in electronic format, to the Registrar.

- When the Thesis and Creative Project and Conference are completed, Forms G and H used in the MATS 404 Conference will be submitted to the Registrar along with the Thesis or Thesis and Creative Project for placement in the student's file.

- b) Submission of Thesis or Thesis and Creative Project to Library – the Registrar must receive an electronic copy of the final Thesis or Thesis and Creative Project, approved by the MA(TS) Committee no later than the date senior grades are due before commencement in May of the same year. The Registrar notes receipt of the materials and maintains them on the secured file.
- c) Unsuccessful Conference
  - A student may make two attempts to complete MATS 402/404 Thesis and Conference or Thesis and Creative Project and Conference satisfactorily. For a second attempt, the student must re-register in MATS 402 or 404 and complete all course requirements during the semester immediately following the semester of the first attempt.
  - A final grade no higher than B will be given to a student successfully completing a second attempt at a Thesis and Conference or Thesis and Creative Project and Conference.
  - Failure to complete the Thesis or Thesis and Creative and Conference on the second attempt results in referral of the student to the Academic Programs Committee for reflection upon vocational readiness and possible termination of registration.