

English Literature MA, Stages of the Program and Guide to the Thesis

The MA Literature Program (45 credits) consists of two stages:

- 1) Course Work (21 credits)
- 2) Thesis Research and Writing (24 Credits)

Course Work

Students normally take 2 courses per semester in the first year of their studies (12 credits), 2 courses in the fall semester of the second year (6 credits), and 1 course in the winter semester of the second year (3 credits). However, students may also choose to take an additional course during the first year of the program, or the fall semester of the second year, in order to dedicate the winter semester of the second year entirely to thesis writing.

A minimum of two courses (6 credits) must meet the Period requirement (pre-1900), while at least one course (3 credits) must meet the Theory requirement. If you have questions about which courses fulfill these requirements, please consult with the Graduate Program Assistant.

Thesis

The MA Thesis is an original work of research of around 10,000-12,000 words or 40-50 double-spaced pages. Students write the thesis under the supervision of a faculty member in their field, and the completed thesis must be approved as well by a second reader.

In preparation to write the thesis, students prepare a Thesis Proposal of 250-500 words and an Annotated Bibliography consisting of between 15-30 entries, both submitted at the beginning of the fall semester in year two of the program. The thesis is usually written during the winter and spring of year two, then edited, completed, and filed during the spring or summer of the second year of the program.

Regular Stages to Completion

Year 1	Fall	- 2 courses (6 credits)
	Winter	- 2 courses (6 credits)
	Spring/	- Confirm a thesis supervisor
	Summer	- Thesis research
Year 2	Fall	- 2 courses (6 credits)
		- Thesis Proposal and Annotated Bibliography (6 credits)
	Winter	- 1 course (3 credits)
		- Thesis writing
	Spring/	- Thesis revisions
	Summer	- Thesis completion/submission (18 credits)

Choosing a Thesis Supervisor

You may have in mind a potential supervisor when you enter the program, or you may arrive at a decision about whom to work with during the first year of your program, through courses, by meeting with faculty in your field during their office hours, or by consulting with the Graduate

Program Director about potential supervisors. Don't hesitate to get in touch by email with faculty working in your field or on projects that interest you and whose expertise is relevant to your prospective research.

Students should have been in touch with prospective supervisors by the end of the Winter semester in year one of the program, and are expected to confirm a supervisor prior to June. In consultation with your supervisor, you may want to write up a short topic proposal of about 150 words by that time, stating the topic you intend to pursue and thus setting an agenda for reading and research over the summer.

Thesis Proposal and Annotated Bibliography

The Thesis Proposal and Annotated Bibliography are due by September 30 in the second year of the program. Writing the proposal and compiling and annotating the bibliography should help you contextualize and communicate your project, clarifying your sense of how to proceed in writing it. (If you are unable to meet the September 30 deadline and have not submitted the proposal/annotated bibliography by the end of the fall semester of your second year, you should to inform the GPD).

The Thesis Proposal delimits the field of your topic, specifies the questions you intend to pursue, and outlines methodological and/or theoretical approaches informing your approach.

The Annotated Bibliography reviews of relevant scholarly material that you will consult and position your work in relation to in the thesis. It can include essays, books, book chapters, and other forms of scholarship, literary criticism, and theory. The material should be chosen with an eye to positioning your thesis within current scholarly debates on your topic. Annotated bibliographies are usually between 15 and 30 entries; your supervisor will help you set parameters suitable to your topic and the format of your citations. Guides to bibliographic formats are available through Concordia's library, [here](#). The Purdue Writing Center has a useful guide to annotated bibliographies [here](#).

After approving the proposal/annotated bibliography, your supervisor should forward the documents to the GPD and GPA (Graduate Program Assistant), informing them that you have passed this requirement. You will then receive credit for this part of the program.

Working with a Supervisor

Before the summer between year one and year two, students and supervisors should discuss the viability of the topic, plans for research over the summer, and steps toward writing the Thesis, including the Thesis Proposal and Annotated Bibliography. Following submission of the Thesis Proposal and Annotated Bibliography, students and supervisors should discuss next steps, establishing a schedule for thesis research, writing, revision, and completion. Students and supervisors should also establish how regularly they will meet and what sort of feedback will be most effective in aiding the process. Some guidelines:

- Students are responsible for meeting deadlines established with their supervisor, just as supervisors are responsible for providing timely feedback on work submitted.

- Supervisors usually require at least two weeks to read submitted work, and may require up to a month during busy times of the semester. If students are not receiving adequate or timely feedback on their work, they should discuss their concerns with the GPD.
- Students should be mindful of key deadlines (listed below) pertaining to graduation and thesis submission, and should be sure to submit work to their thesis supervisor with sufficient time to receive feedback, to revise accordingly, and to receive feedback on revision. Both students and supervisors should have in mind a realistic timeline for that process.
- If, for any reason, a conflict or an irresolvable divergence of views arises between students and supervisors, the GPD can help to mediate the problem or, if a solution is not possible, to aid the student in finding a new supervisor.

The School of Graduate Studies also has a general set of [guidelines](#) for graduate supervision.

Thesis Readers

Your second reader may be determined in consultation with your supervisor, several months before you plan to submit your thesis. Your supervisor will approach the prospective second reader to inquire about their availability and the suitability of the project. Following approval of the thesis by the supervisor, the second reader should be given four weeks to read and comment on the work. Their comments are then submitted, in writing, to the supervisor. If the thesis is approved, these comments are then forwarded to the student. If the thesis is deemed NOT ready for submission to the Graduate Studies Office, the thesis supervisor will resume work with you on a further draft.

Formatting

The page format should be double-spaced, in a standard font (Times New Roman 12 pt), with one-inch margins. For final submission to Spectrum, the title page, signature page, abstract, and acknowledgement/dedication page should be numbered in roman numerals. For more information about formatting and other thesis issues, see the guidelines outlined [here](#). MLA and Chicago styles are the most widely used citation formats for literary scholarship, and style guides are available through the Concordia Library [here](#).

Key Dates for Graduate and Thesis Submission in Year Two of the Program

January 15	Deadline to Apply to Graduate for Spring Graduation
February 15	Thesis Submission for Spring Graduation
April 1	Deposit Thesis in Spectrum for Spring Graduation
July 15	Deadline to Apply to Graduate for Fall Graduation
	Thesis Submission for Fall Graduation
September 1	Deposit Thesis in Spectrum (for Fall Graduation)