



DOROTHY F. SCHMIDT COLLEGE OF ARTS AND LETTERS

Women Gender and Sexuality Studies (WGSS)

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Thesis: Overview

The thesis is a formal written work that advances an original point of view through extensive, in-depth research under the guidance of the advisory committee. The thesis takes the form of a publishable article in the student's area of research and requires a thorough understanding of the academic conventions within the WGSS and any appropriate subfields. Students must be approved by the Director in consultation with the core faculty to take the thesis option, a process completed during First Year Review.

During First Year Review, students approved for the thesis option will discuss an appropriate thesis chair with the committee and should secure commitments from the chair and two additional committee members by the beginning of their penultimate semester. At least one of the committee members should be WGSS Core Faculty. The Director must approve the student's proposed committee.

During the student's final two semesters, they will meet regularly with the cohort of other thesis track students and an appointed WGSS faculty representative to discuss both practical and conceptual issues relevant to their progress on the thesis track.

During the student's penultimate semester, the student will work with the committee to write a rough draft of a scholarly essay addressing an original research question. This rough draft must be submitted to the committee for approval by exam week of the penultimate semester. The rough draft should provide the basis for a scholarly article, including a claim, some literature review, evidence, and argumentation, but it should be understood by all that this is a rough draft. In consultation with the committee, the student may choose to expand a seminar paper from a previous class, in which case the rough draft should be considerably more developed, although not yet a publishable paper. The rough draft should include a bibliography.

If the rough draft is not submitted and approved by exam week of the student's penultimate semester, the student will be rerouted to the comprehensive exam track to complete the program.

Thesis: Timeline

The following timeline is suggested with full-time students in mind. Part-time students will need to adjust accordingly:

Penultimate Semester

Prior to Semester – register for 3 credits of Master's Thesis work with your committee chair as the Instructor of Record. Ensure that your committee has been approved by the Director and send them your preliminary bibliography (for a new project, a minimum of 10 sources; for a revised seminar paper, provide full works cited plus 7 additional sources). If you are developing a seminar paper, the seminar paper should also be submitted to the committee at this time.

Week 2-3 – Meet with committee to discuss your topic or research area, and to develop the research question along with identifying the appropriate research methods. The expectation is that the thesis project will be an original research project that demonstrates substantive engagement with the field(s) relevant to the topic.

Weeks 4-10 – Develop rough draft in consultation with your committee chair.

Week 11 – After consultation and approval from your committee chair, submit rough draft of the thesis to full committee for feedback.

Week 13 – After incorporation of feedback from committee, submit the rough draft to the committee for approval. If this step is not completed during the penultimate semester, you will be rerouted to the comprehensive exam track to complete the program.

Before Final Semester –The Graduate College of the university lists strict guidelines for formatting the thesis, which must be successfully followed by the student in order to complete the thesis. It is the student's responsibility to comply with all requirements. Between semester, review these guidelines and acquire a copy of Wendy Belcher's *Writing Your Journal Article in 12 Weeks*. Complete Week 1 of the Belcher workbook prior to the start of your final semester.

Final Semester

Week 1 –Submit final revised Plan of Study and register for 3 credits of Master's Thesis work with your committee chair as the Instructor of Record. Complete Week 2 of the Belcher workbook. You will continue to work through Belcher's guide week by week, doing the daily exercises for each week and following the timeline agreed upon with your committee chair, throughout the semester as you prepare your thesis as a publishable article.

Week 3 – Submit Application for Degree – Graduate School requirement.

Week 8 – Submit thesis to Advisor and Advisory Committee.

Week 10 – Oral Defense of thesis.

Week 12 – Submit thesis to Graduate Office.

Thesis Rough Draft Guidelines

The rough draft of the thesis should address an original research question with WGSS and use appropriate research methods, evidence, and citation styles to advance an argument appropriate to a 8,000-10,000 word essay. Students are encouraged to select 3-4 recent academic articles in their subfield(s) and analyze these articles with their committee to understand the structure and argumentation typical within their subfield.

The rough draft should be at minimum 5,000 words and include a review of the most important literature on the proposed topic as well as the theoretical approach(es) use. The rough draft must include a

bibliography.

Additionally, the rough draft should include:

- a) Full title
- b) Abstract: 1-2 paragraphs, no more than one page in length, indicating the central research question, research methods, and evidence/cases examined in the rough draft.

Creative or Alternative Approaches

In consultation with their committee chair and the Director, a student may propose a creative or alternative thesis that does not take the form of a publishable article. In that case, the student must still produce a proposal or rough draft during their penultimate semester, receive approval from the committee to continue, and complete the thesis project itself during the final semester following the schedule outlined.