

Guidelines for the M.A. Thesis

The M.A. thesis shall be a research paper of approximately 35-50 pages in length, excluding bibliography and illustrative materials. The topic shall be chosen with the assistance of the student's first faculty reader (normally the Advisor) and its scope shall be consistent with the space limitations prescribed. The M.A. thesis is not necessarily intended to produce original conclusions or a publishable work, although such results are of course laudable. The thesis is designed, at the very least, to demonstrate the student's ability to define a research topic; master the appropriate bibliographical sources; outline the present state of the question; present consistent arguments using clear expository prose; exhibit critical thinking; and support conclusions using correctly formatted footnotes and a full bibliography.

The M.A. thesis may be:

- 1) an entirely new research topic;
- 2) a reworked and expanded paper from a previous course; or
- 3) a reworked or updated M.A. thesis, for students admitted to NELC with an M.A. from another institution, subject to the approval of the two faculty readers.

The M.A. thesis will be graded on the basis of how well it meets the criteria listed above, which are in turn intended to show the degree to which the student is prepared to tackle the more formidable challenge of proposing, researching, and writing a dissertation.

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