

Guidelines for Thesis Students (updated July 2020)

Note: I have ‘inherited’, and adapted, these guidelines from one of my own first university professors, Nancy Isenberg, and have always found them to be very clear and useful. Please follow them closely before submitting any work to me. *Do not write/come to propose a thesis without having read these guidelines.*

Requesting assistance from a thesis/dissertation advisor: Before proceeding with the indications below, you must come to my office hours to discuss a prospective thesis topic with me and have it approved. It is always best to discuss the proposal in person, but if you write me an email, for example during the Covid 19 emergency, remember to provide salient information such as your degree course, how many exams are still pending, when you think you would like to graduate, etc.

Do not vaguely request a thesis in an area of study, but propose two specific topics we will choose from.

Please note that English Language and Translation is a highly requested subject for final dissertations and it is not usually possible to obtain approval to graduate in a few months’ time. Plan accordingly.

Approach a professor with whom you have studied before: a final dissertation should not be an exploration of a subject you have never studied, but rather an occasion to deepen your knowledge on subjects you have studied during your degree course.

Areas in which I have taught courses and may thus consider thesis applications for include:

translation studies, textual analysis and teaching strategies, history of the English language, history of translation, discourse analysis, pragmatics, stylistics, literary linguistics.

Only when your topic has been approved, move on to the indications listed below.

Follow these indications in the order in which they appear here.

You will be handing in to me, in this order:

1. calendar
2. bibliography
3. outline
4. chapters of the thesis, one by one
5. complete thesis
6. complete thesis, trial printing of paper version
7. final bound copy of printed version

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CALENDAR: Establish a **calendar** of the work to be done for the thesis. Keep in mind that when you hand in work to be checked, you must allow up to two weeks to have feedback. Your calendar should end with the date you send me a copy of the complete thesis for final approval, at least two weeks before the deadline for handing in the final version. Send me a copy of the calendar, and whenever you need to revise the calendar, make sure you send me a revised copy. Keep in mind that I am not available during Christmas and Easter vacations and during the month of August.

Your calendar should include:

1. deadlines for handing material in to me (allowing 1-2 weeks for me to return it)
 2. time for revising
 3. deadlines for resubmitting it to me for final approval
 4. submitting the completed thesis for approval (allowing 2 weeks for me to return it)
 5. time for revising final completed thesis
 6. deadline for submitting printed version
- **BIBLIOGRAPHY:** Begin research for bibliographic material. You might want to start by using the MLA on line bibliography, which can be consulted from any computer in the university, or in libraries like the Biblioteca Nazionale Centrale. Start compiling your **bibliography** using an acceptable format: you may refer to the **Norme per la redazione della tesi**, also available in the Dispense section, which outlines our procedures for the entire Lingua e traduzione inglese area.
 - **OUTLINE:** As you read the material you have included in your bibliography, take notes and begin to organize an **outline** for the thesis (this will be similar to the table of contents but will be much more detailed.). Once you have a complete outline, hand it in to me. As you proceed in your work on your thesis, you will probably find that you want to make changes in the outline. Whenever you do this, send me an updated version. (You may want to consult one of the many **books available on how to write a thesis** as they offer advice on how to compile a bibliography, take notes and keep large quantities of information organized, structure a complex and extended piece of writing.)
Ideally your outline should follow this structure:
 - **Introduction (in which you present your topic and the critical approach you will be using)**
 - **2-4 chapters(in which you discuss aspects of your topic)**
 - **Conclusion (in which you summarize the main points of your thesis and possibly make draw comparisons among the separate chapters and draw conclusions based on such comparisons)**
 - **CHAPTERS:**
 - **Before handing in each chapter, reread it at least twice, slowly, carefully and critically. Then wait at least 3 days**

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and read it through again. Finally, go through the items on this check list:

- Run a spell check using the 'Controllo ortografico' tool in WORD
- Check all punctuation, and spacing.
- There should be no space between a punctuation mark and the last letter of the word preceding the punctuation mark.
- There should be one space after a punctuation mark.
- Quotation marks are an exception to the above rules: There should be no space between the quotation marks and the quotation.
- Make sure there are no double spaces between words (This can be done by using the 'Trova' tool in 'Visualizza' and hitting the space bar two times.
- Make sure every source cited in a footnote is included in the bibliography
- Double check that you have copied English words and quotes correctly, respecting the use of punctuation and upper case letters in the original.
- All titles must be in Italics or in quotation marks: Italics for complete works; quotation marks for works published within a larger collections.
- Most students like to begin the **writing process** with an **Introduction**. They find it helps them clarify their ideas and order them rationally. However, expect to have to go back to this introduction, once you have finished writing the body of the thesis, as only then will you really know exactly what you are introducing. **Do not send me work you have just finished writing. Make sure you have checked it over as instructed.**
- **Revisions:** As a rule I will read each section twice. Once to make suggestions, and once to check how you have dealt with them.
- **Quoting and Translating: Remember** that if you copy or translate words in a row from a text, you must use quotation marks, and cite your source in a footnote. If you use someone else's ideas, even if you express them in your own words, you must cite the source, either in your text or in a footnote. **Footnotes**, like the bibliography, should follow the format conventions of an academic publication of your choice.
- **FORMAT:** open a Word document, change the line spacing to double, widen the left margin a cm or two to accommodate the thesis binding. Type in New Roman Times, type size 12 or 14.
- **FINAL THESIS:**
 - Electronic version: once you have completed your final revisions to all the sections, including introduction and conclusion, notes and bibliography, **go over all the procedures in the checklist above. Again, you should re-read your work carefully and critically, several times over a period of several days before sending me your final copy.**

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- Trial paper version. Allow 1-2 weeks for feedback.
- **DEFINITIVE PAPER and PDF COPIES:** The copy of the thesis for me should be in a soft, flat binding.

PLAGIARISM CLAUSE:

By submitting a thesis to me, you declare that it is your own work.

All work submitted will be checked for plagiarism – which is using any combination of words, however short, lifted from a source without citing it correctly and without quotation marks – by means of plagiarism detection software and manual Google checks. Any instance of plagiarism will mean that your thesis will be rejected and you will not be able to re-submit it to me before two Laurea sessions have passed.