

**[Thesis Timeline](#) for MA in Liberal Arts**  
American Studies, Film Studies, Humanities Concentrations

**STEP 1**

**Discuss your anticipated thesis topic** with a faculty member who would be an appropriate major professor for the project. They should be someone with whom you have taken courses and who knows your work well. If you are having trouble developing a topic or finding an appropriate major professor, consult the Graduate Adviser.

**Choose a major professor** who has graduate faculty status in HCS. In consultation with the major professor, select two additional HCS faculty members to serve on your thesis committee. Discuss your thesis project with these faculty members and ask them if they are willing to serve on your committee. **NOTE:** It is possible to have a committee member from outside HCS. Consult your major professor and the Graduate Adviser to this end.

Once three members agree to serve on your committee, **complete the [Graduate Student Supervisory Committee Appointment Form](#)**, acquire faculty signatures, and submit it to the Graduate Adviser, who forwards it to the Office of Graduate Studies.

If you are a full-time student, complete STEP 1 during the spring semester of your first year.

**STEP 2**

**Write your thesis proposal** in close consultation with your major professor, using the department's [Thesis Proposal Guidelines](#). HUM 6815: Research Seminar, taken during the fall semester of your second year, provides a framework for completing this document. If you are a full-time student, begin work on your thesis proposal in the summer between your first and second years, registering for HUM / AMS 6915: Directed Research and / or HUM / AMS 6971: Thesis, as appropriate.

**STEP 3**

After your major professor approves your thesis proposal, they **schedule an oral defense** of with the members of your committee. Submit the thesis proposal to your committee **at least one week prior** to the defense.

Following a successful defense, your major professor completes the [MA Proposal Defense Form](#) and submits it to the Graduate Adviser.

If you are a full-time student, plan to defend your thesis proposal early in the fall semester of your second year. **NOTE:** You are not permitted to apply for graduation or defend your thesis in the same semester that you defend your thesis proposal.

#### **STEP 4**

**Write the thesis** with your major professor's guidance and regular input from your committee members. Thesis projects are **25 to 40 pages long**. Keep the Graduate Adviser informed of your progress and regularly share drafts of your thesis with your major professor.

**NOTE:** While you are not required to meet with your committee members as often as your major professor, you must give them opportunities to read, comment, and make suggestions to the document throughout the writing process. The thesis must be acceptable to all committee members before the defense is scheduled.

#### **STEP 5**

**Register for at least 2 credit hours** during the term you wish to graduate.

Attend to the following deadlines:

- [Registering with ETD](#): early January
- [Applying for Graduation](#): early February
- [Submitting Thesis to ETD](#): mid-March

Visit the [ETD Resource Center](#) regularly for important dates and information regarding thesis submission. Consult the Graduate Adviser with any questions. **NOTE:** Thesis defenses must be completed at least one week prior to the ETD submission deadline.

#### **STEP 6**

When you are prepared to defend your thesis, your major professor **schedules the oral defense**. **Share the final draft** of your thesis with your committee members **at least one week prior** to the defense. Defenses are open to the public and other faculty members and students are encouraged to attend.

The thesis must include an ETD-approved [Title Page](#). Complete the [ETD Certificate of Approval](#) and bring it to the defense for your committee to sign. Following the defense, forward the certificate to the Graduate Adviser who signs and returns it to you. Submit the completed form to the Office of Graduate Studies along with the required [Plagiarism Check](#).

Your major professor brings the [Successful Defense Form](#) and [MA Thesis Defense Rubric](#) to the defense. Following the defense, they forward the defense form to the Graduate Adviser and the rubric to the Graduate Coordinator.

If you are a full-time student, plan to defend your thesis proposal early in the spring semester of your second year. **NOTE:** Students who wish to postpone their thesis defense to the summer or fall term must consult with their major professor and the Graduate Adviser.