

M.A. Degree Requirements and Schedules

1. M.A. Credit Track

All Master's students begin their studies on the credit track. A student automatically remains on the credit track until graduation unless s/he subsequently enters the thesis track. Credit-track graduation requirements are: 1) accumulation of 30 course credits; 2) continuous registration for "Research Guidance" (0 credit) under the name of the student's advisor from the first semester until the graduating semester (only for students who entered in April 2011 or after); 3) submission of a graduation project. In the semester of intended graduation, a student registers for "Graduation Project" (0 credit). Students on the credit track who expect to graduate in less than four semesters must apply for "Early Graduation" in the semester of intended graduation (please see p. 17).

Overview

The credit track emphasizes coursework, with a graduation project. The project allows students to further their knowledge of a topic or issue they encountered in a course. The project is a research paper, unless the student requests another format. The research paper is undertaken in the student's final semester and is supervised and evaluated by a professor of the student's choosing in the student's degree area.

The Graduation Project

The graduation project typically expands on a topic that the student encountered in a course through further research and writing. Students can use secondary sources, primary sources or a combination thereof. The final paper is 30-40 pages in length, including notes and references.

Selecting an Advisor

At the end of the second-to-last semester or beginning of the last semester, students ask their advisor to supervise the graduation project. Should students find a professor other than their current advisor better suited for supervision, students can ask their preferred professor to become the new advisor and, upon the professor's agreement, inform the GPGS office of the change.

Typical Graduation Project Schedule (final semester)

Month 1: The student works with the advisor to develop the paper's focus through consultations. By the end of the month the student has a paper outline, bibliography, and schedule.

Months 2-3: The student does reading and research for the paper and writes a first draft

Month 4: The student submits the first draft to the advisor for comments and then revises the paper accordingly. S/he then submits two copies of the final draft on the day stated on the academic calendar, one to the advisor and one to the graduate program office.

2. M.A. Thesis Track

Students who wish to write a thesis apply for the thesis track after enrollment in the GPGS, usually at the end of the first semester. Acceptance into this track is a two-step process consisting, first, of the evaluation of a student's potential for writing a thesis after the submission of the "Thesis Intention" form and, second, evaluation of a student's thesis proposal at the official proposal defense. Satisfying the graduation requirements of this track typically requires four semesters. Entry into the thesis track can be initiated after the first semester, but this will likely prolong a student's time in the GPGS. Thesis-track graduation requirements are: 1) accumulation of 30 course credits; 2) continuous registration in "Research Guidance" (0 credit) under the name of the student's advisor from the first semester until the graduating semester (only for students who entered April 2011 or after); 3) submission of a Master's thesis. In the semester of intended graduation, students who entered in April 2011 or after should register for "Thesis Seminar" (4 credits) and "Master's Thesis" (0 credit) while students who entered before 2011 should register for "Thesis Guidance" (4 credits) and "Master's Thesis" (0 credit).

Overview

The thesis track enables a student to pursue independent research under the supervision of a faculty member. The final result should be a paper that makes an original contribution to knowledge in a designated academic discipline.

The Thesis

The thesis is an argument supported by primary data, and/or secondary data to which an original methodology/interpretation is applied that is positioned in and makes a contribution to a debate in a scholarly discipline. A thesis paper is typically 40-60 pages in length.

Seeking an Advisor

In the semester of intended application to the thesis track, students need to obtain the signature of their advisor who is willing to guide the students in developing a thesis proposal and then supervise the research and writing of the thesis. Should students find a professor other than their current advisor better suited for supervision, students can ask their preferred professor to become the new advisor and, upon the professor's agreement, inform the GPGS office of the change.

Forming a Thesis Committee

Once students have successfully defended their thesis proposal, a committee consisting of the advisor and two readers will be formed. The designation of the two readers is at the discretion of the advisor, in consultation with students.

Typical Thesis Track Schedule (3 semesters)

Semester 1	a) submit "Thesis Intention" form by last day of classes Evaluation criteria are: - overall quality - availability of a mentor - academic performance (minimum 3.5 GPA based on at least 8 credits of coursework) b) notification of evaluation result before start of next semester
Semester 2	a) develop thesis proposal b) defend thesis proposal at the end of the semester
Semester 3	begin research and writing of thesis
Semester 4	a) thesis outline due before classes start b) students who entered in 2008-2010: register for "Thesis Guidance" (4 credits) and "Master's Thesis" (0 credit) students who entered in 2011 or after: register for "Thesis Seminar" (4 credits) and "Master's Thesis" (0 credit) c) submit thesis draft d) revise thesis e) submit final draft f) defend thesis For dates of c, d, e and f, see academic calendar inside front cover.

Note: Detailed information on the M.A. degree and the two tracks is available on the GPGS website.