

Thesis/Non-Thesis Project

Assistance in Writing and Completing Your Thesis/Non-Thesis Project

GINSP Thesis/Non-Thesis Blackboard Site

GINSP has set up a permanent website on Blackboard, a web-based course software system, entitled GINS THESIS AND NON-THESIS PROJECT.

The Course Documents section contains, among other topics, information on:

- Conceptualizing and Researching
- Effective Writing
- Critical Analysis
- Useful Software Programs
- Working with Your Committee
- KU Writing Assistance
- GINSP and University Procedures, Forms, and Websites
- Professionalization

(If you have problems accessing this resource, please contact the GINSP office.)

Access is via the following website: <http://courseware.ku.edu>

See University Services in previous section for information on the Writing Center, Graduate Writing Courses, and Graduate Writing Groups.

Enrollment and Grading Information

Enrollment

- You will not be permitted to enroll for Thesis/Non-Thesis credit or hold a Thesis/Non-Thesis Proposal meeting until you have completed all three required GINSP courses and completed all necessary incompletes required for graduation.
- You must enroll in at least three credit hours of Thesis Research 898 or Thesis 899.
- You may enroll in more than three (3) hours of Thesis/Non-Thesis credit, but no more than three hours can be applied to the 30 credit hour minimum.
- Students who have completed all of their required coursework except the Thesis/Non-Thesis Project must remain continuously enrolled in at least one (1) credit hour during each Fall and Spring semester until graduation.

Grading

- If you have satisfactorily turned in your work, your Thesis/Non-Thesis Committee Chair will assign you a “P” (for “Passing”) until you have completed your project.

- After you have completed your Thesis/Non-Thesis project, your Committee Chair will replace the “P” with the appropriate letter grade.

The Purpose of a Thesis or Non-Thesis Project

Thesis

The purpose of a Master’s thesis is to demonstrate your ability to:

- Identify and analyze an original issue, question, or problem of importance to Global Indigenous Nations Studies.
- Conduct original, systematic research that applies the skills of critical thinking to relevant information.
- Apply the appropriate methodological tools and concepts to your analysis.
- Generate *new* knowledge in the form of data, ideas, and opinions that stand up to careful scrutiny by individuals knowledgeable about the topic.
- Communicate and support your conclusions in writing in an organized and professional manner.
- Make an academic contribution that furthers the goals stated in the GINSP Mission Statement.

Non-Thesis Project

The Non-Thesis project option offers you the opportunity to complete an approved academic project other than a written Master’s thesis. The Non-Thesis project must be based on an original idea and must represent the results of systematic research necessary to bring the idea to completion.

Your project may include, but is not limited to, innovative and/or artistic scholarly projects using methodologies, such as visual and/or audio documentation, other than academic writing.

The final product must include a written section describing the application of the theoretical, academic, and/or practical tools and concepts as well as an explicit description of how your Non-Thesis project contributes to the goals in the GINSP Mission Statement.

Procedures for Completing your Thesis/Non-Thesis Project

Committee for Thesis/Non-Thesis

- You are responsible for choosing a Regular or Affiliated GINSP faculty member to chair your Thesis/Non-Thesis Project Committee.
- After consulting with your Chair, you must ask two additional committee members to serve on your Committee.
- At least two members of your Committee must be GINSP faculty members.

- A Committee member from an appropriate discipline may serve as a Committee member if the project involves a topic outside of the scope of study and/or artistic knowledge of GINSP faculty.
- The Committee Chair and GINSP Director must approve all outside Committee members. Outside members must satisfy the Graduate School requirement for appointment.
- Students are required to meet with their Committee to obtain approval of their Thesis/Non-Thesis Proposal.

Proposal

Format (Suggested, Not Required)

- **Title**
Write a one-line title that expresses the main purpose of your Thesis/Non-Thesis project.
- **Abstract**
Write a brief, one-page overview of your project. Explain why you are choosing this topic, what you hope to accomplish, why the research is important to Indigenous communities, and how it contributes to the goals in the GINSP Mission Statement.
- **Thesis Statement**
In 1 - 3 sentences, state the purposes, hypotheses, or central questions of your research.
- **Methodology (or Approach)**
Explain by what means you plan to answer, determine, or evaluate your hypothesis or thesis statement. It is especially important that your methodology be appropriate to the issues or questions you are investigating, the available data, and both legal and ethical considerations pertinent to your field of study. Depending on your topic, methodology, and field, this section may include a wide diversity of sources, including: primary documents, secondary sources, and interviews and/or questionnaires. Please note that human subject research, including interviews and questionnaires, requires approval prior to the start of your research by the Human Subjects Committee-Lawrence Campus.
<https://documents.ku.edu/policies/research/humansubjects.htm>
- **Overview of Content**
Provide an outline of your chapters, sections, and subsections.
- **Bibliography**
List of articles, books, and other identified, relevant resources you will be using.
- **Length**
Note that the length of your proposal will depend upon the recommendations of your Thesis/Non-Thesis chair and Committee.

Proposal Committee Meeting

You are required to meet with your full Committee to obtain approval of your Thesis/Non-Thesis Proposal.

You must provide your Committee members with a copy of your Proposal two weeks prior to your Proposal meeting.

The GINSP is an interdisciplinary program that integrates the knowledge, perspectives, and expertise of faculty from several University departments and schools. Given that each discipline possesses its own standards, methodologies, theories, and rules of presentation and mechanics (formatting, citations, etc.), you are urged to clarify with your Committee, either prior to or during your proposal defense, each member's expectations regarding:

- Standards
- Theories
- Methodologies
- Rules of Presentations
- Citation Form
- Further Issues of Importance to Your Particular Discipline

Following the Committee's approval of your Proposal, you must provide the Administrative Associate with **Form D: Approval of Thesis/Non-Thesis Proposal** signed by your Committee members.

Oral Defense

- You must "defend" your project before your Committee in a public forum. This is an oral presentation of your project followed by questions from the Committee and other individuals in attendance.
- Use the Oral Defense to relate your topic to the broader thematic issues covered in the program's core courses and to the GINSP Mission Statement.
- The Oral Defense fulfills the CLAS requirements for a Master's examination.
- You are required to provide each Committee member with a copy of your Thesis/Non-Thesis Project *at least one month* before your expected Oral Defense date. Committee members who do not receive their copy one month prior to the defense may refuse to participate and prevent the oral defense from proceeding.

Before you can set an Oral Defense date, CLAS must confirm that you have met all of the CLAS M.A. requirements. This requires you to submit the **Progress to Degree Form** to CLAS for approval *at least two weeks* before your expected defense date. You can obtain this form from the GINSP office.

You are required to:

- Ensure completion of all paperwork before and following the Oral Defense, including **Progress to Degree Form to CLAS**, and **Forms D, E, and G (Appendix G)**.
- Work directly with the GINSP staff to reserve a room for the Oral Defense as well as any necessary equipment (computer, digital projector, etc.).

Evaluation of the Thesis/Non-Thesis Project and Oral Defense

Committee members will assign one of the three following evaluations to your project and Oral Defense performance:

- Honors
- Satisfactory
- Unsatisfactory

Failure to Pass Oral Defense

- You may attempt an Oral Defense for the M.A. degree a maximum of two (2) times. Beginning a defense constitutes an attempt at the defense, even if you choose to abort the session.
- Your second defense should occur within one month of your first attempt. The faculty committee for the first defense also administers the second defense.
- Failure on the second attempt will result in termination from the program.
- Students may appeal a Committee's negative decision to the GINSP Executive Committee.
- Your Thesis-Non-Thesis Committee Chair shall inform you and the Graduate Coordinator of the outcome of each defense attempt.

Submission and Distribution of Copies

To the Office of Research and Graduate Studies

The Office of Research and Graduate Studies requires an electronic submission of Theses. You are not required to submit a copy of Non-Thesis projects.

Complete information on the following, and additional topics provided at:

www.graduate.ku.edu/04-02_etd.shtml

- Preparing Your Manuscript
- Responsible Research
- Formatting Instructions and Title and Acceptance Pages
- Creating PDF Version of Your Manuscript
- Submitting Your Thesis/Dissertation Electronically
- KU ScholarWorks

To GINSP Office

You are required to provide the GINSP office with the following:

- An electronic copy of your Thesis/Non-Thesis project.
- Coversheet signed by you and your Committee Chair.
- A signed copy of **Form K: Agreement for GINSP Use of Student Materials (Appendix G)**.
- Non-Thesis Projects that include models or presentations must include digital images of these models, presentations, etc. to accompany your written work.
- It is your responsibility to ensure that the GINSP office has confirmed receipt of an electronic copy of your work.

Preservation and Use of Thesis/Non-Thesis Projects

- You must provide the GINSP office with a bound paper copy and an electronic copy of all Thesis/Non-Thesis projects. You may decide upon the particular binding method. The only requirement is that the chosen binding method must prevent the addition or removal of pages.
- See **Appendix F** for information regarding two University-recommended binders.
- The paper copies remain in the GINSP office at all times. The staff will provide individuals with electronic copies of projects upon request.

Thesis/Non-Thesis Materials for GINSP Website

In furtherance of the GINSP Mission Statement, students are encouraged to develop materials from their Thesis/Non-Thesis projects that GINSP can post on the GINSP website as educational, informational, or instructional resources for use by Indigenous communities, organizations, and individuals, subject to the discretion of the Executive Committee. The GINSP Executive Committee retains the exclusive authority to determine whether to post specific student material on the GINSP website.

Signed copies of **Form K: Agreement for GINSP Use of Student Materials (Appendix G)** must accompany all Thesis/Non-Thesis Projects.