CHRISTENDOM GRADUATE SCHOOL

MA Thesis Application Form

This Thesis Application Form is for students who are requesting to write a Master's thesis. **All students who wish to write a Master's thesis must seek official approval from the Dean of the Graduate School.** A matriculating MA student may apply to write a thesis only after completing seven courses (21 credits) towards his or her degree. Students must request approval to write a thesis at least one year before the expected date of graduation. Please note that a Master's thesis is not a universal requirement or a right. **Accordingly, permission to write a Master's thesis may be denied by the Dean of the Graduate School at his or her discretion.** Students found eligible for thesis work must have demonstrated excellent research and writing abilities in their other classes. After obtaining permission from the Dean, a student must contact a member of the faculty who is willing and able to direct the student's thesis. Students who intend to pursue a more advanced graduate degree are strongly encouraged to consult their advisor about writing a thesis.

The thesis must be an original piece of research. It should follow Turabian formatting, and it should be between 50 and 100 pages in length (typed and double spaced). The thesis must be completed and successfully defended within two years of approval for the project. While a student may take more than one semester to write his or her thesis, the transcript will only reflect enrollment in a single semester of thesis work. A Master's thesis is worth six graduate credits and costs the equivalent of two standard graduate courses. The student will not be charged tuition for a thesis until the Dean approves the proposal. A registration fee applies as usual. For further questions regarding payment, please contact the Business Officer at: vladimir.rudenko@christendom.edu. To register for the MA Thesis, please email the Registrar at: mary.castano@christendom.edu.

The student must submit the final draft of the thesis to his or her thesis director at least two months prior to the planned oral defense. At this time, the student notifies the Dean of the Graduate School, who arranges for additional thesis readers and schedules the oral defense of the thesis at a mutually convenient time. The student will provide final copies of his or her thesis to the Dean and the faculty readers at least two weeks before the scheduled defense. The thesis defense lasts at least one hour: the student provides a twenty-minute oral presentation of the thesis, and then responds to questions from the readers. The grade is determined by the director and the readers, and is based on the research, the thesis itself, and the defense. For an exceptional performance on the thesis and the defense, a student may earn a distinction on his or her thesis. The student must provide the library with a bound copy of his or her thesis before graduation.

To submit a Master's thesis proposal, please take the following steps:

1. State your interest in writing a thesis to the Dean of the Graduate School and secure his or her provisional approval to proceed with the formal proposal process.
2. Speak with your professors and locate a director for your MA thesis.
3. In conversation with your thesis director, compose a Master's thesis proposal. A Master's thesis proposal comprises: (A) an abstract, (B) an outline, and (C) a bibliography. Please see the attached sheet for further guidance.
4. Complete this MA Thesis Application Form and submit it with your proposal to the Dean of the Graduate School.

Requested Semester for Beginning Thesis: _____

Supervisor Name: _____ _____
Print Signature

Student Name: _____ _____
Print Signature

Full Title of Thesis: _____

_____

*Please attach completed thesis proposal to this form.

MA Thesis Proposal Guidance Sheet

I. Abstract

A. General objective

This section should state the general aim and purposes of the project in light of the project's relevant background. This should be not more than a paragraph or two in length.

B. Thesis

This section should give a crisp articulation, in plain English, of the central argument being made. **The thesis per se should not be more than a sentence or two,** though this section can include limited explanation and articulation. Complexities should be saved for explanation in the body of the project, and jargon should be avoided. The overall length of this section should not be over one paragraph.

C. Warrant

This section should indicate what the justification is for pursuing this investigation. It may refer to any distinguishing characteristics or the originality of the project. Focus for an MA thesis should not be on originality but on substance, potential for student formation in understanding key aspects of the tradition, and development of intellectual skills and abilities. This section should be a paragraph or two in length.

D. Methodology and Form

This section should indicate the approach taken in the project and summarize the anticipated structure and content, demonstrating a coherent train of thought. This section should also reflect adequate breadth of reading, in order to demonstrate that the student has sufficiently grasped the lay of the land and has a sense of direction through the topic. Around three paragraphs should be considered the maximum length.

II. Outline

This should at least indicate chapters and chapter subdivisions. The point of each chapter should be clearly stated in one sentence. It is best for the outline to be as detailed as possible for this stage of the research process. The student will have done enough reading on the topic to produce a fairly detailed outline.

III. Bibliography

It is usually helpful to categorize and/or annotate this working bibliography. Not every source needs to be annotated. Annotations should be made as useful for guiding and summarizing research. At this point, the bibliography should be viewed as a work in progress that serves as a research aid for the student. This will grow and develop over the course of the project, but 2-3 pages for starters is about right, given the scope of an MA thesis. Appropriate breadth of sources should be reflected: seminal works relevant to the project, primary/secondary sources, type of literature (reference books, articles, monographs, etc.), authorial perspective (dealing with opposing sides of an issue, etc.).

*Please contact your thesis director for guidance if you have any questions not answered by this sheet.