

# **FRANCISCAN SCHOOL OF THEOLOGY**

## **THESIS GUIDELINES**

**Master of Theological Studies (MTS)**



**August 2008**

# FRANCISCAN SCHOOL OF THEOLOGY

## Thesis Guidelines Master of Theological Studies (MTS)

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## Thesis Guidelines Master of Theological Studies (MTS)

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### OVERVIEW OF THE MTS THESIS

The MTS thesis is a requirement for the MTS degree. It should demonstrate the ability to develop a coherent, sustained theological argument reflecting an in-depth study of a theological topic.

- Your thesis should demonstrate skill in developing a theological framework to situate a topic within the commitment of faith, and the ability to develop a theological argument. As such it will contain a thesis statement, coherent organization of data, evaluation of evidence, a cogent argument to a conclusion.
- Your thesis should demonstrate a general academic knowledge of the Catholic theological tradition construed broadly enough to include the interrelationship of a specialized interest with other theological disciplines. For example, if the thesis is primarily in moral theology, it should be able to show the biblical and systematic foundations for it.
- Your thesis should demonstrate skill in the interpretation and use of theological sources relevant to the topic. Not all theological writers carry equal weight; therefore, you are expected to be aware of recognized authoritative sources, both those that agree and those that disagree with your view of the subject, to make sound interpretation of their contributions, and to document accurately your use of them.
- The thesis may include an experiential component integrating personal, professional, and pastoral concern. For example, you can give the personal or pastoral context for your project by including a statement about what first interested you in this project, as well as a statement that identifies what might be happening in this area that makes your project worth pursuing.
- Your thesis should demonstrate skill in the proper use of notes, references, and bibliographical materials normally according to the Turabian style, unless another style has been approved by your thesis committee. For further information about preparing a typographically perfect thesis, consult the latest edition of Kate Turabian, *A Manual for Writers of Term Papers, Theses, and Dissertations*.

***Introduction or First Chapter.*** The introduction or first chapter of the MTS thesis must delineate the main lines of your entire thesis. It should contain at least:

- A statement of the thesis, crafted as succinctly and precisely as possible. (“I want to show that...”)
- The significance of the thesis. There should be a statement as to why this topic is worth pursuing.

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- The setting and background situating the thesis in its historical, cultural, religious, pastoral, and personal background.
- The method of the argument. What will be the flow of your development? What major resources will you use? What are the major divisions of the topic? What is your likely conclusion?

### STUDY SKILLS RESOURCES

MTS students are required to attend workshops in academic research and writing offered throughout the year. In addition, the materials used in the workshops are available on Professor Darleen Pryds's website at: <http://courseweb.fst.edu/pryds>. Click on "Research and Study Skills". Topics include:

- How to Take Notes
- How to Research and Write
- Analytical Writing
- How to Start Writing
- How to Write and Survive a Thesis
- Writing a Thesis Proposal
- Creating a Thesis-Writing Group
- What Makes a Good Oral Presentation
- Managing Time
- How to Read in Graduate School

You may borrow copies of former students' theses for reference. They are stored in the copy room on the first floor.

Consult the GTU Reference Librarian for further assistance.

### SETTING UP YOUR THESIS COMMITTEE

During the first year in the MTS program, you request to form your Thesis Committee, and agree on responsibilities and scheduling of your program. The Committee consists of a thesis director and a second faculty reader chosen from FST faculty.

#### Thesis Directors' Responsibilities

- Faculty normally serve on an MTS committee for 2 to 4 years.
- The thesis director normally reads chapters in draft form. The second faculty reader normally reads only the completed thesis.
- The thesis director's comments on your thesis will be in written form and will be sufficiently detailed to give concrete guidance for revision.

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- The thesis director will typically respond within 2 weeks of receiving your chapters.
- When your thesis has been approved, your thesis committee will complete an *MTS Thesis Evaluation* with their final assessment and a letter grade.

### Changes in Committee Membership

You may request changes to your committee members up until the beginning of the semester in which you expect to finish your thesis. Changes must be negotiated with the Academic Dean in consultation with the current committee members.

### THE MTS THESIS PROCESS

The chart below delineates the specific steps you should take throughout the process of writing your MTS thesis, and the due dates for each step. Due dates are provided for students starting the MTS program both in the fall and spring semesters. A high-level checklist of these steps is in your folder so you and your advisor can track your progress.

#### During the FIRST Year of Your MTS Program

Steps	Fall Start	Spring Start
1. Choose a thesis topic.	April 1	November 1
2. Choose a thesis director from the FST faculty who has competency in your area of specialization. Your academic advisor can guide you in selecting your thesis director. You may also request that your thesis director become your academic advisor.		
3. Obtain the thesis director's signature on a <i>Request for Approval of MTS Thesis Committee</i> as his or her agreement to guide your thesis. (The form is included at the back of this Guide, or you can obtain one from the Front Office.)		
4. Discuss with your thesis director how best to take advantage of the Study Skills Resources. (See page 2.)		
5. Consult with your thesis director to ensure that your thesis is manageable in scope and that there are adequate resources available for completing it.	Between April 1 and May 1	Between November 1 and December 1

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### During the FIRST Year of Your MTS Program

Steps	Fall Start	Spring Start
<p>6. With your thesis director, establish responsibilities and scheduling of your program:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>a. Establish clear expectations regarding how work must be submitted, for example, must all footnotes be in proper form even in draft chapters?</li><li>b. Determine whether chapters must be submitted on paper, or whether email attachments are acceptable.</li><li>c. Agree on a meeting schedule. Typically, meetings are held every three weeks, but may be more frequent at the beginning of the process, tapering off as writing proceeds. Establish a schedule for submitting materials sufficiently far in advance of a meeting to allow time for your director to read and respond to your work.</li><li>d. Clarify issues such as the use of home telephone numbers and meeting at home, etc.</li><li>e. If your thesis director will be on sabbatical during your MTS thesis program, clarify how you will work together. He or she continues to be responsible while on sabbatical; however, you may have to negotiate additional time for responding to materials submitted.</li><li>f. If you plan to submit chapters to your director over the summer, clarify how you will work together.</li></ul>	Between April 1 and May 1	Between November 1 and December 1
<p>7. Select a second faculty reader and obtain his or her signature on the <i>Request for Approval of</i></p>	May 1	December 1

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### During the FIRST Year of Your MTS Program

Steps	Fall Start	Spring Start
<p><i>MTS Thesis Committee</i> as agreement to participate in guiding your thesis. The second faculty reader does not normally meet regularly with the student.</p> <p>8. Prepare a one-page description of your thesis and a working bibliography, and submit them to your second faculty reader.</p>		
<p>9. Once your thesis topic has been determined, and your thesis director and second faculty reader have agreed to serve, obtain the Academic Dean's signature on the <i>Request for Approval of MTS Thesis Committee</i> as final approval, and submit it to the Dean's assistant.</p>	May 15	December 15

### During the SECOND Year of Your MTS Program

Steps	Fall Start	Spring Start
<p>10. Meet with your committee members to establish the timeline for submitting draft chapters, and the role of each in reading and suggesting revisions.</p>	September 15	April 15
<p>11. Submit a completed draft of the full thesis to both committee members incorporating all major revisions recommended during the preparation of previous drafts.</p>	March 1	October 1
<p>12. Obtain approval of the completed thesis from both committee members. This version should require only minor revisions, if any at all. (The committee members will complete an <i>MTS Thesis Evaluation</i> and submit it to the Academic Dean's assistant.)</p>	April 1	November 1
<p>13. Submit two copies of the final thesis to the Academic Dean's assistant:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The original unbound printed on white,</li> </ul>	May 1	December 1

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### During the SECOND Year of Your MTS Program

Steps	Fall Start	Spring Start
25% cotton, acid-free paper <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>The copy velo bound printed on white 25% or 10% cotton, acid-free paper</li></ul>		

### PHYSICAL FORMAT OF THE MTS THESIS

**Number of Pages.** The MTS thesis should be between 50 and 75 pages long and contain at least three chapters, an introduction and a conclusion.

**Title Page.** The title page must conform to the illustration on page 8.

**Margins.** Observe the following margins:

Left	1-1/2 inches
Right	1 inch
Top	1 inch
Bottom	1 inch

**Spacing.** Double space the main body of the thesis except in those places where conventional usage calls for single space, for example, footnotes, indented quotations, tables, etc.

**Type Size.** Use 12 point throughout. Type size for charts, drawings, graphs, tables, etc., may differ according to format and space requirements.

**Print.** Print should be letter quality with dark black characters that are consistently clear and dense.

**Order of Materials and Pagination.** Organize the thesis and number the pages as follows:

Title page	not numbered
Preface, Dedication, Table of Contents, etc.	Numbered separately in lower case Roman numerals (i, ii, iii) at the bottom middle of the page
Main Body of Text	Numbered with Arabic numbers at the top middle of the page except for the first page of each chapter, which should be numbered at the bottom middle of the page. Pagination of the main body of the text should include illustrations.

**Illustrative Material.** If photographs (positive prints) are used, they must be originals. Any original illustrative material should be rendered with permanent, non-water soluble, black ink. Reduced copies of graphs, charts and similar material must be:

- Reproduced on the same quality of paper as that used for the text

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- Clearly legible
- Avoid colors that cannot be distinguished in microfilm copiers
- Prepared using the archival process to insure permanence and prevent fading

***Other Media.*** The use and format of all other media must be approved by your committee members before submitting the thesis.

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### MTS Thesis Title Page Format

(6 spaces down from top)

**TITLE IN CAPS**

(4 spaces)

**A thesis by**

(3 spaces)

**(your name)**

(5 spaces)

**Presented to**

(3) spaces

**The faculty of**

(2 spaces)

**Franciscan School of Theology**

(3 spaces)

**in partial fulfillment of the**

(2 spaces)

**requirements for the degree of**

(2 spaces)

**Master of Theological Studies**

(3 spaces)

**Berkeley, California**

(3 spaces)

**(month and year of filing)**

(6 spaces)

**Committee Signatures:**

\_\_\_\_\_  
**(typed thesis director's name)**

**Date**

\_\_\_\_\_  
**(typed second faculty reader's name)**

**Date**

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### **FORMS**

Request for Approval of MTS Thesis Committee

MTS Student Checklist

MTS Thesis Evaluation

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## Request for Approval of MTS Thesis Committee

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**Fall Semester Start:** Submit to Academic Dean by May 15.

**Spring Semester Start:** Submit to Academic Dean by December 15.

Student Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

The proposed topic of my theses is: \_\_\_\_\_

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I request that the following faculty members be approved as the thesis director and second faculty reader for my MTS thesis.

- I request that my thesis director serve as my academic advisor for the remainder of my program.
- I DO NOT request that my thesis director serve as my academic advisor.

Student's Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Thesis Director: \_\_\_\_\_

Thesis Director's Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Second Faculty Reader:  
\_\_\_\_\_

Second Faculty Reader's Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Academic Dean's Approval: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

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## MTS Thesis Checklist

NAME: \_\_\_\_\_ SEMESTER / YEAR BEGUN: \_\_\_\_\_

<b>FIRST YEAR</b>			
Step	Fall Start	Spring Start	Date Completed
<input type="checkbox"/> 1. Choose thesis topic.	<b>Apr. 1</b>	<b>Nov. 1</b>	
<input type="checkbox"/> 2. Choose thesis director.			
<input type="checkbox"/> 3. Obtain thesis director's signature.			
<input type="checkbox"/> 4. Discuss Study Skills Resources.			
<input type="checkbox"/> 5. Clarify thesis topic and scope.	<b>May 1</b>	<b>Dec. 1</b>	
<input type="checkbox"/> 6. Establish responsibilities and schedule.			
<input type="checkbox"/> 7. Select second faculty reader.			
<input type="checkbox"/> 8. Prepare thesis description and bibliography for second faculty reader.			
<input type="checkbox"/> 9. Obtain Dean's approval of thesis topic and thesis committee.	<b>May 15</b>	<b>Dec. 15</b>	
<b>SECOND YEAR</b>			
<input type="checkbox"/> 10. Establish roles and timelines with thesis director and second faculty reader.	<b>Sep. 15</b>	<b>Apr. 15</b>	
<input type="checkbox"/> 11. Submit completed draft to thesis director and second faculty reader.	<b>Mar. 1</b>	<b>Oct. 1</b>	
<input type="checkbox"/> 12. Obtain approval from thesis director and second faculty reader.	<b>Apr. 1</b>	<b>Nov. 1</b>	
<input type="checkbox"/> 13. Submit two copies of Dean's assistant.	<b>May 1</b>	<b>Dec. 1</b>	
<b>RESEARCH SKILLS WORKSHOPS</b>			
<b>Check Workshops Required:</b>			<b>Date Taken</b>
<input type="checkbox"/> How to Take Notes			
<input type="checkbox"/> How to Research and Write			
<input type="checkbox"/> Analytical Writing			
<input type="checkbox"/> How to Start Writing			
<input type="checkbox"/> How to Write and Survive a Thesis			
<input type="checkbox"/> Writing a Thesis Proposal			
<input type="checkbox"/> Creating a Thesis-Writing Group			
<input type="checkbox"/> What Makes a Good Oral Presentation			
<input type="checkbox"/> Managing Your Time			
<input type="checkbox"/> How to Read in Graduate School			

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## MTS Thesis Evaluation

Student Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Thesis Title: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**0=NA / Unable to Discern    1=Beginning    2=Developing    3=Accomplished    4=Exemplary**

	<u>0</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>4</u>
Thesis demonstrates a coherent, sustained theological argument	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Thesis reflects an in-depth study of a theological discipline	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Thesis demonstrates an academic knowledge of the Roman Catholic theological tradition	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Thesis demonstrates skill in the use and interpretation of relevant biblical texts	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Thesis situates the topic in a theological framework within the commitment of faith	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

**Final Grade:** \_\_\_\_\_

Thesis Director's Comments: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Thesis Director's Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Second Faculty Reader's Comments: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Second Faculty Reader's Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_