

## Essay Option for Comprehensive Assessment

### MA Essay

In order to complete the last requirement for the MA program, a student may opt to write, under the guidance of a faculty member, an essay that will meet publishable standards and help him/her become familiar with advanced research methods and academic publishing in the field of Hispanic Studies.

The **preparation process** will start at the beginning of the semester prior to the last term of enrollment in the program. During this semester the student will:

- identify 1) a paper that s/he already wrote for a previous seminar, or 2) a topic for a final paper to be developed within a seminar where s/he will be enrolled that semester;
- designate a graduate faculty member who, upon agreeing, will serve as the student's adviser; and
- coordinate with the designated adviser throughout the semester to prepare for the submission of the proposal.

The **main process** will start at the beginning of the last semester. The student will

- submit the proposal to the adviser no later than the end of the add/drop period [see [proposal guidelines](#) below].
- decide upon the names of two graduate faculty members of his/her choice who will serve as readers of the comps essay. The readers will receive a copy of the proposal from the student upon approval from the adviser, and may submit feedback to the student to work on during the semester and towards the final version of the essay (not a revised new proposal).
- agree, at the beginning of the semester, with the adviser on 1) a schedule for meetings with the student, 2) due dates for the drafts and the final version of the essay, and 3) the date of the oral defense. In the first meeting, the adviser will also inform the student about guidelines regarding length, format, and other requirements for the essay.

Typically, a student in the last semester of study takes one seminar (sometimes two), so s/he is expected to devote a substantial amount of time to research and writing for the final project. Throughout the semester, the student will revise, develop and expand the chosen essay to meet publishable standards in close consultation with the adviser. The student should observe the following **important deadlines**:

- a **first full draft** should be ready for submission to the adviser by the end of week 10;
- the **final draft** will be submitted to the adviser by the end of week 12, which will upon approval be circulated to the participating readers;

- an **oral defense** of the essay, in front of a defense committee consisting of the adviser and two readers, will be scheduled no later than the end of week 14.

The long essay is not a thesis and is not to be deposited with the Office of the Vice Provost and Dean of Graduate Studies.

### Proposal Guidelines

The proposal will consist of the following:

- a 1-page document (Times New Roman 12, single-spaced, 1-inch margins) containing
  1. working title
  2. background and statement of the problem
  3. thesis statement
  4. methodology
- 1-page tentative bibliography
- appendix containing the paper that the student will use as starting point.

One of the goals of our MA program is to further the student's competence in the target language at the academic/research level. As the culminating project of the program, the MA essay (including the proposal and the oral defense) will be completed in Spanish.

### Essay Guidelines

Typically, the final draft of the essay will have the length of a standard journal article: 25-30 pages, Times New Roman, size 12, double-spaced, 1-inch margins.

As a general rule, the student will adhere to the formatting guidelines in the *MLA Handbook*, 8<sup>th</sup> edition, 2016. If a different format is preferred (e.g. Chicago Style), this should be approved in advance by the adviser.