



Master of Arts Thesis Preparation Manual

This manual describes the elements, mechanics, and procedures for the M.A. thesis required by Hartford Seminary. The final deposit of the paper to the Seminary Academic Advisor will not be accepted unless it conforms to the standards outlined below.

The M.A. student who is entering the thesis phase of his/her program should read this manual carefully. An additional document is also relevant and necessary for preparing for the thesis:

Guidelines for Writing a Research Paper (available on the Student Writing Resources page).

ELEMENTS OF THE THESIS

Typically, the thesis consists of three parts:

- I. The preliminaries (*should appear in this order*)
 - title page
 - certificate page
 - abstract
 - dedication (*optional*)
 - epigraph (*optional*)
 - acknowledgments (*optional*)
 - table of contents
 - list of tables (*optional*)
 - preface (*optional*)
- II. The text
 - the body of your paper (*Introduction—if you have one, and chapters*)
- III. The reference materials (*should appear in this order*)
 - appendix (*or appendices*)
 - endnotes (*if you chose endnotes instead of footnotes—this is strongly discouraged*)
 - bibliography or list of references

I. The Preliminaries

Important note: All preliminary pages are to be numbered consecutively in lower case roman numerals, beginning with “ii” on the first page to follow the certificate page. The title page is considered “i,” but the number is not to appear on that page. The certificate page is the only page that is not counted or numbered. For preliminary pages only, the page numbers are to be centered, without punctuation marks, $\frac{3}{4}$ inch from the bottom edge of the paper.

TITLE PAGE (*see attached sample*)

1. The title appears in all capital letters and each line of it is centered.
2. The author’s name is to be in upper and lower case, with no indication of academic or other titles.

3. The project advisor's name should include the title "Professor."

CERTIFICATE PAGE (*see attached sample*)

1. The certificate page will contain the signatures of your examiners. You must prepare this page, using the sample page at the end of these guidelines as your model.

ABSTRACT

1. The abstract should be no less than 200 words, no more than 350 words. It is an overview of your topic, argument, and conclusions.
2. The abstract should be double-spaced.
3. The title ABSTRACT should appear in all capital letters, 2 inches down from the top edge of the paper, and centered left to right. The text begins on the fourth line below this heading.

DEDICATION (*optional*)

1. The dedication is to be brief, centered on the page left to right, slightly above the center vertically, and single-spaced. No heading is necessary.

EPIGRAPH (*optional*)

1. The epigraph is a quotation from another author that summarizes a central element of your thesis, or gets the reader thinking in a direction conducive to appreciating your project. The source of the quotation is neither footnoted nor endnoted, but given directly below the quotation and aligned to end at the right margin. Citation information is limited here to the author's name and the title of the work. There is no heading for this page, and it is single-spaced.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS (*optional*)

1. This page begins with the heading ACKNOWLEDGMENTS, which should appear in all capital letters, 2 inches down from the top edge of the paper, and centered left to right. The text begins on the fourth line below this heading and is double-spaced.
2. May include expression of gratitude to individuals, authors, or organizations for assistance offered or permission granted in the work of the thesis.

TABLE OF CONTENTS (*see attached sample*)

1. The heading TABLE OF CONTENTS should appear in all capital letters, 2 inches down from the top edge of the paper, and centered left to right. The listing of the contents begins on the fourth line below this heading and at the left margin.
2. If the table of contents continues to subsequent pages, these pages should have *no* heading or continuation notice.
3. All contents in the paper following—*but none preceding*—the table of contents are to be listed in it.
4. Place page numbers opposite the *last* line of each entry in the table of contents, with last digit of the page numbers aligned flush right. Connect entries to page numbers with a line of elipses (.).
5. Include only major divisions (chapter titles) and first-order subheadings (see below, under "SUBDIVISIONS").

LIST OF TABLES (*optional*)

1. The heading LIST OF TABLES should appear in all capital letters, 2 inches down from the top edge of the paper, and centered left to right. Listing of contents begins on the fourth line below this heading.
2. Captions are to be listed exactly as they appear in the body of the paper.
3. Place page numbers opposite the *last* line of each entry in the table of contents, with last digit of the page numbers aligned flush right. Connect entries to page numbers with a line of elipses (.).

PREFACE (*optional*)

1. If you determine that a preface is necessary, keep it *brief*. Limit it to commenting on your interest in the project, or the issue that motivated the project, or on a unique method you may have employed that is central to the overall project.

2. The heading PREFACE should appear in all capital letters, 2 inches down from the top edge of the paper, and centered left to right. The text begins on the fourth line below this heading and should be double-spaced.

II. The Text

Important note: All text pages (the “text” begins with the INTRODUCTION, or, if there is no INTRODUCTION, with CHAPTER ONE) are to be numbered consecutively in arabic numerals, beginning with “1” on the first page to follow the preliminaries. These page numbers are to be placed, without punctuation marks, in the upper right-hand corner 1 inch from the right edge of the paper and ¾ inch from the top edge of the paper.

MAJOR DIVISIONS

1. Your Introduction (if your paper includes one), Chapters, and Conclusion are referred to as “major divisions.”
2. Each major division must begin on a new page. Headings for major divisions are to appear in all capital letters, 2 inches down from the top edge of the paper, and centered left to right. The text begins on the fourth line below the last line of this heading and should be double-spaced.
3. The heading for a major division consists of a chapter designation on the first centered line, and the descriptive title on the second centered line (and subsequent line(s) if it is a long title). The heading may be either single- or double-spaced. Example:

CHAPTER I

THE RITE OF MARRIAGE IN THE ARMENIAN CHURCH

For the INTRODUCTION and CONCLUSION, do not include a numbered chapter designation. Simply use INTRODUCTION or CONCLUSION as the heading.

SUBDIVISIONS

1. The subsections of a major division are referred to as “subdivisions.” There are first-, second-, third-, etc., orders of subdivisions. In outlining your paper you have probably thought the organization through in these terms, which could be diagrammed as follows:
 - II. The Marriage Rite in a Blended Immigrant Parish (*major division—chapter title*)
 - A. A Short History of St. Gregory’s Parish in Springfield (*first-order subdivision*)
 1. The First Wave (*second-order subdivision*)
 - a. A Cohesive Community (*third-order subdivision*)
 2. The Second Wave (*second-order subdivision*)
 - B. Points of Stress in Current Practice of the Rite (*first-order subdivision*)
 1. Language Barriers (*second-order subdivision*)
2. Within the chapters, you must choose a style that distinguishes *each* level of subdivision and use it *consistently* throughout the paper. Ways to distinguish levels include location of the subdivision title (flush left, indented, centered), italicization, underlining, bolding, all capital letters. So for instance, within the text of the chapter outlined above, the divisions above could appear as follows:

CHAPTER II

THE MARRIAGE RITE IN A BLENDED IMMIGRANT PARISH

A Short History of St. Gregory's Parish in Springfield

Xxxx xx xxxxxx xxx xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx xx xxxxxx xxxx xxx xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx xx xxxx xx xxxxx.

Xxxxxxx x xxx xxxxxxxx xxxx xx xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx xxx x xxxx....

The First Wave

Xxxx xx xxxxxx xxx xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx xx xxxxxx xxxx xxx xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx xx xxxx xx xxxxx.

Xxxxxxx x xxx xxxxxxxx xxxx xx xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx xxx x xxxx....

A Cohesive Community

Xxxx xx xxxxxx xxx xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx xx xxxxxx xxxx xxx xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx xx xxxx xx xxxxx.

Xxxxxxx x xxx xxxxxxxx xxxx xx xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx xxx x xxxx....

The Second Wave

Xxxx xx xxxxxx xxx xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx xx xxxxxx xxxx xxx xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx xx xxxx xx xxxxx.

Xxxxxxx x xxx xxxxxxxx xxxx xx xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx xxx x xxxx....

Points of Stress in Current Practice of the Rite

Language Barriers

Xxxx xx xxxxxx xxx xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx xx xxxxxx xxxx xxx xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx xx xxxx xxx. Xxxxxxx x

xxx xxxxxxxx xxxx xx xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx xxx x xxxx....

3. *Never* divide one subdivision from another by beginning a new page, unless the preceding subdivision ends very close to the bottom of the page. At most, insert a triple-space between the last line of one subdivision and the title of the following subdivision.

III. The Reference Materials

Important note: All reference pages (appendix, endnotes if used, and bibliography) are to be numbered consecutively in arabic numerals, *in continuation* with the numbering used in the “text.” If, for example, the final page of your last chapter is “110,” the first reference page which follows will be numbered “111.” These page numbers are to be placed, without punctuation marks, in the upper right-hand corner 1 inch from the right edge of the paper and $\frac{3}{4}$ inch from the top edge of the paper.

APPENDIX (or Appendices)

1. It is common for M.A. theses to have at least one APPENDIX. Materials appropriate for appendices include tables, questionnaires, survey results, etc.
2. It is recommended that the first page of each appendix offer a listing of what it includes.
3. Remember to preserve your margins (left=1 ½ inches, right=1 inch, top and bottom=1 inch) in assembling the materials included in the appendix.

ENDNOTES (if you have not used footnotes)

1. Footnotes are required for theses. The reason for this is that the theses may be archived on microfilm or cd-rom, and footnotes allow a paper to be read without the necessity of jumping to the end of the film or disk to locate the references. The only exception to this requirement is if your word processing program is not capable of formatting footnotes. This exception must have your advisor’s approval.
2. If you do use endnotes, they are to be placed after the APPENDIX, and before the BIBLIOGRAPHY.
3. The heading NOTES should appear in all capital letters, 2 inches down from the top edge of the paper, and centered left to right. The listing of references begins on the fourth line below this heading and at the left margin. See *Hartford Seminary General Guidelines for a Research Paper* for instructions and samples on the formatting of notes. If this document does not include an example of the kind of resource you are citing, refer to either Kate Turabian’s *A Manual for Writers*, or *The Chicago Manual of Style*, the standard upon which she relies.
4. An M.A. thesis that does not observe the citation style prescribed by these style guides will be returned to the student for corrections.
5. Individual entries are single-spaced, with double-spacing between the entries.

BIBLIOGRAPHY (or LIST OF REFERENCES)

1. The BIBLIOGRAPHY/LIST OF REFERENCES is the *last* thing that should appear in your paper, *without exceptions*.
2. The heading BIBLIOGRAPHY or LIST OF REFERENCES should appear in all capital letters, 2 inches down from the top edge of the paper, and centered left to right. The listing of references begins on the fourth line below this heading and at the left margin. See *Hartford Seminary General Guidelines for a Research Paper* for instructions and samples on the formatting of entries. If this document does not include an example of the kind of resource you are citing, refer to either Kate Turabian’s *A Manual for Writers*, or *The Chicago Manual of Style*, the standard upon which she relies.
3. An M.A. thesis that does not observe the citation style prescribed by these style guides will be returned to the student for corrections.
4. Individual entries are single-spaced, with double-spacing between the entries.

MECHANICS OF THE THESIS

MARGINS

1. Margins should be: Left: 1 ½ inches Right: 1 inch
 Top: 1 inch Bottom: 1 inch
2. These margins must be observed throughout the paper, including the Preliminary pages, the Text, and the Reference Materials. It is advised that students observe these margins beginning as early as possible, because altering margins can sometimes wreak havoc with pagination and footnotes.
3. The reason for the wide left margin is that the final deposit copy will be bound, and approximately ½ inch of paper is required in the binding process.
4. Anticipate these margins when assembling your appendix, as well. Sometimes it is necessary to use a copier to reduce the size of the image in order to preserve the necessary margins. If the margins are less than those specified above, part of the image may be lost in the binding.

PAPER AND PRINTING OF THE FINAL DEPOSIT

1. The “final deposit” of the thesis is made to the Seminary Academic Advisor *after* the Final Oral Examination has been passed and the advisor and all readers have signed off. In most cases there are at least minor revisions that will be necessary after the Exam.
2. Paper used for the final deposit copy must be a high quality cotton or rag bond, acid-free, white paper, 20 to 24-pound weight. This paper has a shelf life of one hundred years, in contrast to regular paper, which begins to deteriorate in about twenty-five years. Because the Seminary has the final deposit copy bound and adds it to the Seminary Library’s permanent collection, it is necessary that cotton or rag bond paper be used. This paper, sometimes called “thesis paper,” is available at office supply and stationery stores.
3. Printing of the paper should be done on a laser or inkjet printer using exclusively black ink or toner, or on a ribbon printer using a film (instead of a fabric) ribbon. The printed image must be a crisp black in order to be microfilmable/scannable. This may be a difficult guideline to follow regarding some of the materials contained in your appendix, but even here, attempt to achieve high contrast between the white paper and the image.
4. The typeface must be a standard bookface type (e.g., Times New Roman, Courier), 12 point font in size. This is true *throughout* the paper, including titles, headings, subheadings, footnotes and endnotes (although the superscripted number identifying citations may be a smaller font). The only exception that will be allowed is in materials that are included in the appendices.
5. Two copies of the paper, printed on the high quality paper, are required for the final deposit.
6. The final deposit copies must not be in a binding, or drilled, punched, or stapled. The pages should be loose and submitted in a manila file folder or box.

PROCEDURES FOR MOVING INTO FINAL PHASE OF M.A. PROGRAM

BEFORE THE THESIS ORAL EXAM

1. Every M.A. student must go before a faculty committee for an oral examination when the thesis is complete and has satisfied the student’s advisor.
2. When a draft of the thesis has met with the advisor’s approval, it is the student’s responsibility to begin the exam scheduling process. In order to schedule an exam, the student must contact the Dean’s Assistant. This process requires a minimum of *three weeks* from the date of the first contact. In preparation for the *first* contact, the student must have consulted with his/her advisor and the two need to have agreed on 3 alternative dates for the exam.

3. It is expected that the student has conformed his/her thesis to the technical and stylistic standards outlined in the Seminary's "Hartford Seminary General Guidelines for a Research Paper" and "M.A. Thesis Manual" *before* the exam occurs—with the exception of the acid-free paper. The student should confirm with his/her advisor, in advance, that these standards have been met.
4. After consulting with each other, either the advisor or the student may *suggest* second readers who have expertise relevant to the student's paper. This will be listed on the "Exam Checklist" which the student will fill out in the process of scheduling the exam. But selection of faculty readers is done finally by the Dean, who will consider an equitable distribution of exam workload among faculty and faculty availability, as well as expertise.
5. In preparing for an oral exam, it is the student's responsibility to provide the Dean's Assistant with two copies of the thesis (the draft that has been approved by the advisor) for her to distribute to the advisor and the other faculty reader. These copies should not be bound, but simply loose pages, printed or copied on regular paper, inserted in a manila file folder. It is acceptable for the exam for the pages to be printed or copied on both sides of the paper.
6. Immediately following the exam, the student is to meet with the Seminary Academic Advisor for a debriefing. At this time, details about the final deposit of the thesis, paperwork necessary for graduation, and information about how the degree will be conferred will be discussed. The Dean's Assistant will arrange an appointment for this debriefing.

AFTER THE THESIS ORAL EXAM

1. If your examining committee has determined that you need revisions on your thesis, you must complete the revisions and submit your revised thesis to your advisor or revision review committee as soon as possible. Your degree will not be voted at the Academic Council or Board of Trustees meetings until after all revisions are approved and the final deposit of the thesis has been made.
2. After the final deposit of the thesis has been made, all bills paid (including the graduation fee), and all final paperwork submitted, the student's name and a description of the thesis will be brought before the next Academic Council meeting by the Dean, and voted on by all core faculty present. From here it will go to the Seminary Board of Trustees for a vote. It is only with the final vote of the Board of Trustees that the awarding of the degree is approved.
3. Master of Arts degrees are conferred on the recipient at graduation in late May/early June of each year.
4. *Hood and gown:* Masters' hoods and gowns are rented by the Seminary for each graduating student to use at the graduation ceremony.

SAMPLE PAGES FOLLOW:

1. Title page
2. Certificate page
3. Table of contents