GETTING STARTED ON THE THESIS

Advice for Graduate Students

Graduate Resource Center
www.calstatela.edu/graduatethesis
Introductions

- Name
- Department
- Stage in thesis process
IT ALL STARTS WITH A QUESTION.
Break It Down — The Thesis

State Question
aka
Identify Problem

State Assumptions

Determine Sources and Methods

Analyze Data

Conclude or Recommend
Break It Down — The Project Report

1. Project "The Question"
2. Significance
3. Objectives
4. Methodology
5. Conclusion or Recommendation
Let’s Get Started

Prepare It
• Ask questions

Research & Write It
• Examine questions

Submit It
• Finalize answers
PREPARE IT

Ask Questions
Establishes Committee

Due to your college by end of semester prior to submission

This may change in future — check with your college about deadlines and updates!
Establish Department Protocol

Check with your department regarding protocol and process.

- Forming the committee
- Submission of prospectus or proposal
- Format of performance or exhibition
- Defense or presentation of thesis/project

When in doubt, ask your department!
Forming the Committee

- Area of research expertise
- Methodology expertise
- Style of mentorship
- Availability

**ALSO:** Network with alums and peers in your field!
Research with Human Subjects & IRB

- For spring semester completion, ideally apply to IRB early in fall.
- Check to see if you need to apply to another institution’s IRB.
- See Office of Research, Scholarships, and Creative Activity website: www.calstatela.edu/orad
Data Analysis

- Access to data
  - Public domain vs. Private source
- Make sure there’s enough data to answer your question!
  - Lit review
  - Prospectus
Funding Your Thesis

- Culminating Project Fund (Graduate Studies)
- Seek out grants and scholarships
  - National and International Scholarship and Fellowship Programs (NISFeP) — Moodle
- Graduate assistantships in labs or with faculty to access datasets
- Work study on research teams
Creating a Timeline

✓ One year is short! Be concise.
✓ Find out all deadlines (e.g., department, university, etc.).
✓ Work backwards from deadlines to create timeline.
✓ Schedule time for thesis, like a class.
✓ Seek out best practices. Don’t reinvent the wheel!
✓ Aim to have bulk of work done by beginning of final semester.
RESEARCH & WRITE IT

Examine Questions
First of all…

TALK TO YOUR COMMITTEE!!
In addition to your committee

- Writing consultants
- Library reference liaisons
- Style manual
- GRC Workshops
- Peer writing groups
Avoid Plagiarism

No co-authorship of thesis or project report (per Title 5).

- Citation manager (e.g., RefWorks)
- Anti-plagiarism software (e.g., TurnItIn)
- Library research consultations
- Library reference liaisons
Software

- Confirm correct software with advisor.
- Tables and figures should be created in the same software as template.
- Use only MS Word or LaTeX to format.
- Get tech help if you need it (e.g., lynda.calstatela.edu)

**TIP!** Download MS Office free, get Adobe Creative Suite cheap.
Feedback

- Seek feedback from committee chair *and* members.
- Consider all feedback, even if you don’t use it.
- Keep all feedback and drafts.
Take care of yourself!

- Get sleep. Stay hydrated. Eat well.
- Use health services.
- Take breaks. Exercise.
- Plan ahead!
Plan for the Unexpected

✓ In case of emergency, contact your committee and GRC.
✓ You must be enrolled in order to file thesis
  • UNIV 9000 option
✓ Backup all the things!
✓ Complete thesis before classes expire at 7 years.
✓ Renew IRB before it expires after 1 year.
SUBMIT IT

Finalize Answers
Formatting and Submission

- Deadlines in fall, spring, and summer
- Workshops every term
- Electronic submission — online repository
- Your style manual is your new best friend!
- Thesis reviewers (graduate student employees)
- Hire editor if needed.
Contact Us

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