

## ***Thesis for Completion of the M.A. in Theology (THST 693 and 694)***

*The thesis provides an opportunity to engage in a deep study of a topic with a particular focus; it presumes some prior study of the general topic to be considered and it requires sustained commitment to writing and individualized learning.*

### ***Getting Started on a Proposal:***

1. Talk with your faculty advisor about completing a Thesis and begin to define a topic. This can be done as early as you determine that you wish to do a Thesis (rather than Comprehensive Exam option). Ideally the student determines this by the time of completion of 18 units.
2. Begin by writing! Write a one paragraph description of what you *think* you may want to do – this can always be revised and focused later, once you are working with a Thesis Director. Give this one paragraph description to your faculty advisor and a copy to the Graduate Director using the form described below in point #3. This step can be done as early as you begin to limit and name a topic of interest. It will assist your faculty advisor in guiding the remainder of your course selection, and it will assist the graduate director in identifying future needs for faculty members to direct and read the Thesis.
3. Complete the form for ***Preliminary Application To Write A Thesis*** that can be found on the web site and attached to this material. [Also available outside Program Coordinator Jennifer Scott's office.] Include a TITLE and a now-refined one paragraph description of the Thesis mentioned above in point #2. This can be done as early as you are able, but certainly should be completed in the semester before you register for THST 693 (Thesis part 1)

Write in the names of the REQUESTED Director and two Readers for the Thesis on the Application form. Please remember that these are *requests*, and the Department of Theological Studies will try to honor them but we cannot guarantee them. Note that the Thesis Director and two Readers are appointed by the Department Administration and not by the student. Be sure to include your relevant contact information, especially your current e mail and land addresses and phone numbers.

4. Register for THST 693 (part 1; 3 units).
5. Wait to hear from the Graduate Director. If you have not heard within three weeks please contact the Graduate Director about your application. When you have received an e mail confirmation of the names of your Thesis Director and Readers from the Graduate Director, you should contact the named Thesis Director to

continue work on refining the Thesis title and description found in your Application. Your Thesis Director will determine when the Thesis Proposal is ready for approval and signatures. At that time you should work with your Thesis Director to (1) collect the signatures of the Thesis Director and Readers on the final draft of the Thesis Proposal, and (2) be certain that a copy of this signed and approved Thesis Proposal goes to the Graduate Director. Keep a copy for yourself.

### ***Writing Process for THESIS***

6. The Thesis seminar (THST 693) will meet occasionally and will have an assigned faculty contact for the Thesis. The second semester of Thesis work will be THST 694 (part 2; 3 units). The majority of the work is individual work – you are responsible for setting appointments with your Thesis Director and staying on course with the calendar for completion of sections of the Thesis. Your Thesis Director will determine when and how to involve the Readers. Readers must read the final submission, but the Thesis Director may choose to ask them to review some earlier draft(s) along the way. This is the Thesis Director's decision.
7. The style for the Thesis is Chicago Manual of Style. Normally the length is approximately 75 pages, typed double spaced, 12 point font. A minimum length of 60 page and a maximum of 100 pages are strictly enforced. Your Thesis Director will have advice about ways to stay with the writing, within the limits of the topic and will encourage you to connect with others who are writing the Thesis.
8. Watch for Thesis Writing Support Group announcements through the Department's e mail announcements and web site. The Support Group will provide peer support as well as a structure for peer feedback as your writing proceeds. Your Thesis Director also will agree to deadlines and markers by which to measure your progress from outline to writing prose, from chapter to chapter, etc.
9. Thesis direction takes place during the academic year only. No Summer thesis direction is allowed by policy, out of respect for faculty schedules and faculty contracts.

### ***Approval Process for THESIS and Conclusion***

10. Your Thesis Director will determine when the written chapters/material (in parts or in whole) should be given to the appointed faculty Readers to review. Some Directors like to get the Readers involved at various points; others would rather wait until your work is more polished. This is the Thesis Director's decision. The Director and the Readers confer and determine the revisions that may be needed. Once you have made the necessary revisions and the Thesis Director and

Readers have agreed, your Thesis Director will inform you that the thesis is ready for final printing. You must print 3 copies: One for Thesis Director, one for THST Department to be given to Graduate Director, one for yourself. In addition, you may wish to give a copy to each Reader – that is your choice.

11. Grading the Thesis: The Thesis Director assigns a grade (A, B+, B are the acceptable grades) for your Thesis, and forwards an e mail to the Graduate Director. This e mail recording must be done by the last week of classes for that grade to be posted in that semester. A *Notice of Successful Completion of Thesis* form will follow for your records; this will be arranged by the Graduate Director. If you do not receive a grade from the LMU Registrar, contact your Thesis Director. (Note: DO NOT contact the Registrar.)
12. Binding and Deposit of the Thesis: See the direction on the department web site link to the LMU Library web site for specific details on how to arrange for the Binding and official Deposit of the Thesis.

### ***Non-Completion of Thesis***

It is the policy of the Department of Theological Studies to offer Thesis direction for two semesters (3 units each – THST 693 and 694) as the graduate student moves toward completion of the Thesis. The following are the policies in place the case of a student who has completed two semesters (THST 693 and 694) but has not completed and submitted a full draft of Thesis:

13. A student who completes 75% of the Thesis may “walk” at graduate commencement with the permission of the Thesis Director and Graduate Director. Note: this % is determined by the Thesis Director and the Graduate Director in consultation with the student.
14. A student who completes 50% of the Thesis may continue beyond the semester deadline by working on one’s own. The Student must stay in contact with the Thesis Director in the subsequent semester(s). A Continuation Fee [equivalent to tuition for one (1) graduate unit] is due to the Department of Theological Studies by the end of the first week of class in each subsequent semester that the student continues. Note: this % is determined by the Thesis Director and the Graduate Director in consultation with the student.
15. Students who want to finish their thesis after commencement may do so if they agree to meet monthly with the Thesis Director in the subsequent semester. (If not finished in Spring, this means the Fall semester.)\* Students may continue for 2 subsequent semesters maximum. A Continuation Fee equivalent to one (1) unit is due to the Department of Theological Studies by the end of the first week of class in each subsequent semester that the student continues.

16. A student who completes less than 50% of the work associated with the Thesis after two semesters (THST 693 and 694) will be counseled to complete the MA by another option; that is, to take the required number of units of course work and Comprehensive Examination for the completion of MA studies. Note: this % is determined by the Thesis Director and the Graduate Director in consultation with the student.

*\*NOTE: Thesis direction takes place during the academic year only. No Summer thesis direction is allowed by policy out of respect for faculty schedules and faculty contracts.*

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