SACRED HEART
MAJOR SEMINARY

LT Thesis Guidelines

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Process for Approval of LT Thesis Proposal

Purpose of the LT Thesis

The purpose of an LT thesis is to provide students with an opportunity to apply what they have learned in the LT program to an important issue either for the Church as a whole, or for the particular Church or the demographic in the Church which the student serves. It should be directed towards developing an understanding or approach that will serve the New Evangelization. In the thesis the student should demonstrate the ability to consult and utilize relevant scholarly resources and other modes of analysis pertinent to the topic and to present that material in a competent fashion.

Approval of the Thesis Proposal

The student must be thoroughly acquainted with the Thesis Grading Rubric (below) which lays out the expectations for the thesis and be familiar with the current list of authorized directors (below).

1. **Choosing a topic:** The student should undertake discussions regarding possible thesis topics early in graduate studies, normally not later than the half-way point of course work. These discussions are informal and may take place with a number of potential directors, professors, and advisors simultaneously. Early selection of a topic enables students to shape course work with a view to the thesis.
2. **Finding a director**: Once the student has found a faculty member willing to be his director, he must seek the approval of the academic dean by submitting the appropriate form (available soon on the SHMS website).
3. **The thesis proposal**: The thesis proposal (normally no longer than 5 pages) must include
    1) a clear, brief thesis statement (of no more than 3-5 sentences) that states precisely the issue the student intends to critically examine and the understanding or approach to the New Evangelization that the student will propose and demonstrate.
    2) a general outline of the proposed thesis with a brief explanation of the content of each major division;
    3) a basic bibliography that demonstrates familiarity with the relevant sources.
4. **Submitting the thesis proposal to the LT degree committee:** The thesis director will submit the thesis proposal to the LT committee degree committee chair who will send it to the LT thesis proposal reviewer.

a. The thesis director is to ensure that the proposal has been proof-read, that the bibliography is in proper form, that the proposal and outline are suitable for the topic chosen, and that it includes a thesis statement.
b. The thesis proposal reviewer will note obvious errors and inadequacies likely to slow down the approval by the LT degree committee. The approval of the proposal by the thesis proposal reviewer does not speak to the suitability of the thesis statement and thesis method; the LT degree committee makes that judgement.
c. The LT degree committee chair will be copied on all communications between the thesis proposal reviewer and the thesis director.
d. The thesis proposal reviewer will
    1) cease reading—and return—proposals when there is an excess of errors (3 or more page) that should have been caught when proof-read;
    2) return proposals in need of some revision to the thesis director who will work with the student to make the revisions and who will then resubmit the proposal to the thesis proposal reviewer;
    3) or, approve the thesis proposal as suitable for submission to the whole LT degree committee and return it to the LT degree committee chair for submission to the committee.
e. The above process may require multiple revisions and resubmissions.
f. All changes must be made with the "Track Changes" tool.
g. When the thesis proposal reviewer deems the proposal suitable for submission to the LT degree committee, the reviewer will return the approved proposal to the thesis director and inform the director that the proposal is being submitted to the LT degree committee.

5. **Confirmation of the thesis statement:** Once the thesis proposal has been approved, the LT degree committee chair will invite the thesis director to submit the **thesis statement** to the theology faculty for confirmation.
    1) If the theology faculty does not confirm the thesis statement, it will be returned to the LT degree committee.
    2) Once revisions are made and approved by the LT degree committee, the thesis statement will be resubmitted to the theology faculty.
6. **Appointing a reader**: Once the thesis statement is confirmed, upon consultation with the director, the academic dean will appoint a reader,

Approval of the Thesis

1. After a thesis statement is confirmed by the theology faculty, the director and student interact as mutually convenient.
2. **Style**: The thesis is to be 75-100 pages in length including the footnotes, but not the title page, table of contents, or bibliography. It shall be presented in a font size that is equal to 12-point Times Roman, and double spaced, although footnotes must be single-spaced in a slightly smaller font. The inside margin must be 1.5 inches and the outside margin

must be one inch, with reasonable margins at the top and bottom. It is to follow the norms of style for written work contained in the latest edition of the Turabian manual and the Sacred Heart Major Seminary Writer's Checklist.

3. When the student delivers a final draft of the thesis to the director, the director has *four weeks* to assess this draft and to seek the reader's evaluation. The reader has up to *three weeks* to convey a formal evaluation to the director.
4. **Approval**: If the director, after consultation with the reader, approves the final draft, he or she will return it to the student for minor revisions (those aimed at bringing the thesis up to library-ready quality). The student is responsible for returning the revised draft in a timely manner. The director has *one week* to accept these revisions or to return the revised draft to the student for further minor improvements. When the director certifies the thesis as being "library-ready," he or she notifies the dean and the LT degree committee chair in writing, and directs the student to deliver a minimum of two unbound copies of the thesis to the Szoka library.
5. **Grade:** The thesis director and the reader will agree upon a grade for the thesis: pass with high distinction, pass with distinction, pass, or fail. The Thesis Grading Form requires the signature of both the director and the reader.
6. **Rejection**: If the director rejects the "final draft," he or she will return it to the student for revision. The director has *three weeks* to assess each successive draft and will consult with the reader as may be useful.
7. **Library copy requirements:** The paper used in the copies submitted for the Szoka Library must be plain white twenty-pound bond with at least 25% rag content; these copies must have the original signatures of the director and reader. Ink corrections of any kind are not acceptable. The typeface must be consistent throughout the thesis.

Timeline for Confirmation of the Thesis Proposal

1. The thesis proposal process takes approximately two months. The director should submit the thesis to the LT degree committee chair about one month before the LT degree committee meeting at which the thesis proposal will be considered for approval. The LT degree committee approves proposals at their meetings which take place on the day of the Theology Faculty meetings. Confirmation of the proposal will then take place at the Theology Faculty meeting the following month.
2. The Theology Faculty must then confirm the proposals at their meetings, which take place on the 2nd Tuesday of the month.
    a. Students who wish to enroll in *STL 989 Thesis* during the fall or winter semesters must have their thesis proposal approved by the 2nd Tuesday of the month preceding the late registration deadline (see current Academic Calendar for late registration deadlines). Students will incur a late fee during late registration.
    b. LT candidates who do not complete their thesis during the term they registered for *STL 989 Thesis* must register for *STL 9891 Continuing Thesis Guidance* every subsequent Fall, Winter or Summer semester until the thesis has been completed. **They are not required to register during the spring term**.

c. Any thesis candidate who fails to register for *Continuing Thesis Guidance* in a subsequent semester will be given an "F" for STL 989 and will be required to repeat that course in order to complete the thesis. Per the SHMS grade policy, "Should a student have to repeat a course, only the highest grade earned will be calculated in the GPA. The other mark is left on the transcript but not counted." Thus, the original "F" grade will still appear on the transcript once the thesis is completed and passed. Only the repeated course will receive a final grade.

Degree Completion (Graduation) in Winter-Spring Terms

Students who wish to complete their LT degree requirements during April (winter term) or June (spring term) must apply for graduation by December of the preceding year (see current Academic Calendar for the date of the graduation application deadline). This deadline allows sufficient time for a degree audit to confirm that all course work can be completed by the end of the winter or spring terms.

Participating in Commencement Exercises in April (conclusion of winter term)

Students must complete their thesis and have their *Lectio coram* scheduled by April 1 in order to participate in the April commencement exercises (the *Lectio* presentation itself can occur as late as June 21). Please see the current Academic Calendar for the date for commencement and for the dates of the end of the winter and spring terms.

Faculty Eligible to Direct an LT Thesis:

Name	Area
Dr. Kevin Clarke, PhD	Biblical/Patristics
Dr. Patricia Cooney-Hathaway, PhD	Spirituality/Pastoral Theology
Dr. Robert Fastiggi, PhD	Dogma
Dr. Charles Fox, STD	Sacramental/Liturgical
Dr. Oana Gotia, STD	Moral
Dr. Mary Healy, STD	Biblical
Dr. Daniel Keating, DPhil	Philosophy
Fr. Zachary Mabee, PhD	Philosophy
Fr. Brian Meldrum, STD	Biblical
Fr. Stephen Pullis, DMin	Evangelization
Fr. Peter Ryan, SJ, STD	Moral
Fr. John Vandenakker, STD	Dogma
Fr. Pieter VanRooyen, STD	Dogma
Dr. André Villeneuve, PhD	Biblical
Dr. Peter Williamson, STD	Biblical

SCHOOL OF THEOLOGY

LT THESIS STATEMENT

APPROVAL FORM

The student shall choose a thesis director who will be willing to work with the student for the duration of the thesis. This director shall provide guidance in the choice of topic, in the research, and in the writing of the thesis.

The thesis statement must be accompanied by a basic bibliography and a general outline of the proposed thesis. The director must present these materials to the LT Degree Committee in a timely fashion for approval.

_____

Please Print Student Name

Thesis Statement:

_____ _____

Signature of Thesis Director Date

_____ _____

Signature of Chair of the LT Degree Committee Date

_____ _____

Signature of the Dean of Studies Date

LT Writing-Grading Rubric *(rev.3/24/2024)*

Student's name _____ Date: _____

Evaluated by: _____

Thesis title: _____

Criterion	Level of Achievement			
	High Distinction	**Distinction**	**Pass**	**Fail**
Uses correct grammar and punctuation	Paper adheres to the standards of edited American English and uses correct grammar and punctuation. Sentence structure is varied and engaging.	Paper has a few minor errors in grammar and punctuation with clear language and sentence structure.	Paper has errors in grammar and punctuation, but they do not overly detract from argument.	Paper has frequent errors in grammar and punctuation that damage the argument and credibility of the author. Lacks clear language or sentence structure.
Follows paper or thesis guidelines	Paper perfectly adheres to Chicago Manual of Style and thesis or assignment guidelines, including length, citation methods, font, and layout.	Paper consistently adheres to Chicago Manual of Style and thesis or assignment guidelines.	Paper generally adheres to Chicago Manual of Style and thesis or assignment guidelines.	Thesis fails to adhere to Chicago Manual of Style or thesis/assignment guidelines.
Shows appropriate use of research	Paper demonstrates excellent selection of sources and consistently makes appropriate use of sources.	Paper demonstrates good selection of sources and usually makes appropriate use of sources.	Paper demonstrates adequate selection of sources and less consistently makes appropriate use of sources.	Paper demonstrates inadequate selection of sources and fails to use sources appropriately.
Shows appropriate structure and organization	Paper demonstrates an effective structure that flows clearly from introduction to conclusion and is easily outlined. There are no logical gaps. There is a clear statement of thesis. Supporting points are well developed with clear transitions.	Paper demonstrates elements of good construction. Logical gaps are minimal. Thesis and supporting points are clear.	Paper demonstrates an adequate structure (introduction, body, and conclusion) but argument and transitions are less clear. Supporting points are clear if not always developed.	Paper lacks a discernible structure or thesis. There are logical gaps and lack of transitions. Supporting points are not developed.
Shows an ability to communicate theology effectively.	Paper demonstrates excellent ability to communicate theology in a way that can be grasped easily by the average person and consistently uses clear language to explain theological truths.	Paper demonstrates good ability to communicate theology in a way that can be grasped easily by the average person and generally uses clear language to explain theological truths.	Paper demonstrates adequate ability to communicate theology in a way that can be grasped easily by the average person and an adequate use of clear language to explain theological truths.	Paper does not communicate theology in a way that can be grasped easily by the average person and uses unclear language that fails to explain theological truths in an understandable way.
Shows a command of the subject	Paper demonstrates thorough command of the subject.	Paper demonstrates good command of the subject.	Paper demonstrates adequate command of the subject.	Paper demonstrates inadequate command of the subject.
Demonstrates critical thinking	Paper provides compelling evidence for what it proposes and for responses to counterarguments, and demonstrates excellent critical thinking in its analysis.	Paper provides good evidence for claims and responses to counterarguments and demonstrates good critical thinking in its analysis.	Paper provides adequate evidence or responses to counterarguments. Demonstrates adequate critical thinking in its analysis.	Paper provides inadequate evidence or responses to counterarguments and lacks demonstration of critical thinking in its analysis.

Note: For the LT Thesis, a passing grade on the thesis requires a score of "pass" or better for each criterion.

TITLE OF THE THESIS

by

STUDENT'S NAME

Submitted to the School of Theology
of Sacred Heart Major Seminary
Detroit, Michigan

in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree of Licentiate in Sacred Theology (LT)

YEAR

Director's Approval:
This thesis has been approved.

_____
Director

Date: _____

Reader's Approval:
This thesis has been approved.

_____
Reader

Date: _____

Statement of Originality:
The views presented in this thesis are those of the candidate. All sources employed in drafting this thesis have been acknowledged herein.

_____
Candidate's Signature

Date: _____

Scholastic Integrity Policy (from the SHMS *Academic Catalog*)

In keeping with its mission, Sacred Heart Major Seminary expects each student to be responsible and honorable in course work and in the classroom. A student who is found to be involved in any unethical practices in connection with any work required for a course will be held accountable. A student whose conduct does not meet with the standard of SHMS will be asked to resign from the academic program.

In academic life, there are conventions by which we express our debt to the ideas and language of other writers. To violate these conventions deprives an author of the credit for the originality of ideas and his/her expressions. Students who violate these conventions pass off as their own work that of other minds. This violation is called "plagiarism." This is a form of stealing. Cheating is to deceive fraudulently or to violate the rules dishonestly.

Undergraduate norm: A grade of F will be given for the specific test, paper, or assignment and a copy of the item will be made for evidence.

Graduate norm: Any student cheating on any test, assignment, or term paper, or who commits plagiarism will receive an automatic F for the course.

The faculty member will schedule a meeting with the student at the time of the offense to discuss the situation. The dean of studies will be notified of the meeting and will be given the evidence in a confidential manner.

If the dean of studies receives two notifications of academic dishonesty for any one student, the dean of studies will schedule a conference with the student and the faculty member(s) involved. If the faculty member requests a conference after one notification, then the dean of studies will schedule such a conference. The dean of studies will be an objective observer at all such conferences.

At the time of the conference, the evidence will be presented and a decision rendered. If academic dishonesty is not evident, all documents will be destroyed and no further action will be taken. If the dean of studies determines that evidence indicates academic dishonesty, a letter of academic misconduct will be sent to the student and a copy filed in the student's academic file.

Further sanctions may be imposed depending on the seriousness of the matter:

- The student will be placed on a one semester academic probation.
- The student will be suspended for one semester.
- The student will be dismissed from the institution.

These sanctions will be imposed according to the following guidelines:

- Clarity of evidence
- Nature of the course (e.g., research, etc.)
- Weight of the assignment (refer to the syllabus)
- Standing of the student within the institution (first year, continuing education, etc.)
- Type of academic dishonesty (which includes, but is not limited to, the degree of plagiarism, stealing of exam, cheating on tests/exams, or re-submission of assignments for which credit has been given previously, alteration of documents or records, forgery, stealing or defacing institutional or library materials)
- The number of times the individual student has been involved in cases of academic misconduct

The student has a right to request an appeal through an academic review board. An academic review board is assembled by the dean of studies to address the appeal. The academic review board is comprised of three professors selected by the dean. The board meets with the student making the appeal as well as the professor. After the meeting, the academic review board submits its decision to the dean of studies.