

LMC 4102 Senior Thesis Protocol

Overview

The LMC undergraduate thesis is designed for students who plan to attend graduate or professional school or who plan to pursue careers with significant research components. The thesis project must reflect genuine student interest in some area of inquiry related to the LMC curriculum. Ideally, the project will grow out of research questions that students have encountered in their LMC classes. More specifically, the thesis should identify an issue that merits exploration from a vantage developed within the LMC curriculum, and it should attempt, through substantial independent research, to shed light on that issue, provide analysis of key texts involved, or assess reactions to the issue at hand.

All students who plan to pursue the senior thesis must

- Have earned a 3.2 major GPA before beginning the thesis and a 3.0 overall GPA, and be in good standing.
- Not have any outstanding incompletes.
- Commit to meeting with their thesis advisors on a weekly or biweekly basis.
- Provide their advisors and the Associate Director of Undergraduate Studies (ADUS) with a 1 page thesis proposal by week 2 of the thesis semester. The thesis proposal should include the name of the supervising faculty member, an overview of the thesis project, and a list of possible sources to be explored or special issues to be negotiated.
- Provide their advisors with a fully drafted version of the final project for final feedback by week 12 of the thesis semester. This draft must be 30-35 pages of appropriately researched and written text (or the artistic/digital equivalent) and should include a complete bibliography.
- Provide their advisors with a final draft of the thesis project for graded assessment by either the week preceding final exams or during final exam week, as agreed upon by the student and the advisor.

All faculty members who agree to supervise LMC theses must

- Agree to meet with thesis students on a weekly or biweekly basis.
- Provide students and the ADUS with a class syllabus no later than week 2 of the semester for which the faculty member has agreed to supervise LMC 4102. The syllabus should describe when the professor will be available to meet with students and an outline of proposed deadlines for deliverables such as annotated bibliographies, research notes, drafts, etc.
- Provide feedback on all deliverables within two weeks of receiving them.
- Provide last-round feedback on the fully drafted thesis by week 13 of the thesis semester.
- Provide graded assessment of the thesis by the time grades are due for the semester in question.

Structure

- Phase 1 registration (for the thesis semester): the student secures a thesis advisor by approaching a faculty member whose interests clearly lie within the area to be explored. *If that faculty member is willing*, he or she will serve as the thesis advisor, primary reader, and instructor of record for that section of LCC 4102 (in addition to his or her normal course load).
- Phase 2 registration: student should double-check that all registration details are completed.
- Week 1: students and thesis advisors meet to brainstorm project proposal and class deliverables.
- Week 2: all thesis students send copies of their thesis proposals to their advisors and the ADUS; all faculty members supervising thesis projects send copies of their class syllabi to their students and the ADUS.
- Weeks 3-11: thesis work proceeds.
- Week 12: students provide thesis advisors with one fully drafted copy of the thesis project, including a bibliography.
- Week 13: advisors provide students with suggestions for the final thesis.
- Week preceding final exams/exam week: all completed theses due to advisors for graded assessment; all thesis assessment paperwork due to DUS.

Miscellaneous

Through weekly or biweekly meetings—arranged according to the instructor’s availability—the thesis advisor will:

- help the student focus the thesis problem;

- suggest key texts for possible analysis;
- suggest initial steps in researching the subject; and
- provide systematic feedback on the direction of the research and/or analysis.

The advisor should expect to provide two full readings of the thesis, one several weeks before the term's end to provide a last round of suggestions for revision, and the other during Dead Week or Finals Week to make a final assessment. The thesis advisor might recommend an additional reader early in the process, particularly if the subject would benefit from the expertise of another faculty member. However, the final reading of the thesis and grade for the paper and course are solely the responsibility of the instructor of record.

In sum, the senior thesis should be work that is consistent with the concerns of the LMC major and should demonstrate:

- a variety of skills gained through the course of undergraduate study, including an ability to do substantial independent research;
- a facility at close textual and cultural analysis;
- an ability to marshal appropriate types of evidence in support of a reasonably sophisticated argument about cultural practices; and
- a clear writing style.

On completion, the typical undergraduate thesis should be in the range of 30-35 typed, double-spaced pages, inclusive of citational apparatus (Notes, Bibliography). It should have a title page indicating title, author's name, thesis advisor's name, and submission date, and it should be submitted in duplicate (one copy for reading/commentary and one for departmental archiving in the library, e-mailed as an attachment to the Associate Director of Undergraduate Studies, jc.reilly@lmc.gatech.edu). Theses having substantial digital or material components should include a cd-rom or flash drive of the project for archival purposes and have a standard written component (as outlined above) that, when combined with the digital or material element, reflects labor equal to the typical 30-35 page length.