



*Directions for Preparing the Written Thesis for Master of Divinity or Master of Arts
(including the written portion of a Senior Project)*

revised 3-23-2019

Schedule of Due Dates (view academic calendar for exact dates):

- Mid-November** Students complete and submit the *Thesis Proposal* form [on this webpage](#), with the first and second reader's signatures, to the Registrar's Office.
- Students also complete the [Thesis Proposal template](#) and upload to their ePortfolio.
- Mid-January** Students send outline and preliminary bibliography to both readers and academics@utsnyc.edu, and upload to ePortfolio.
- Early April** Submit thesis to both readers (per agreement with them). Email PDF of thesis to academics@utsnyc.edu and upload to ePortfolio. No extension of deadline permissible for expected graduates.
- NOTE:** Follow guidelines below if your reader(s) require a physical copy of your thesis.

While the MA thesis must be a written work, the MDiv thesis option may be different from the traditional academic essay. It may be a senior project or presentation of another kind, or it may be choosing two additional elective courses. The written project must show academic rigor, good research, plus the development and understanding of the material covered, and relevant technical competency.

The written thesis should represent your original work and, except for direct quotations, it must be in your own words. Plan, research, and write your thesis in regular consultation with your faculty readers, particularly the first reader.

The exact length of the thesis is not specified. For an academic essay, fifty pages, i.e., approximately 12,000 words, is normally a satisfactory length. The length should of course be determined by achieving an adequate treatment of the subject. If the topic cannot be covered adequately in about fifty pages, sharpen the issue or the question that is to be treated in your work. Discuss this with your first reader.

For an MDiv candidate who opts to do a **senior project** rather than an academic essay, the presentation or project must be supported by a documentation of your purpose, sources, and methodology (*to be submitted to the registrar by mid-January*). In some instances, an evaluation of the project might be requested from the faculty advisor after the project has been completed. You may also write an essay, of approximately the same length as the traditional academic essay, espousing and developing a theological position and documenting its sources. The senior project of a MDiv candidate may focus on one or integrate two or more fields of study. *In all cases, the project will include a written academic paper of approximately 12-20 pages.*



UNION

In the text, indicate short quotations (no more than two sentences) by quotation marks; indicate long quotations (three or more sentences) by indentation and single-spacing. You must give the source of **every quotation, item of evidence or citation of opinion** you use, according to standard reference forms. Obtaining permission to use specific material, when that is necessary, is of course your responsibility. Documentation and attribution of all sources used in a thesis are standard academic requirements.

Obviously, you are to observe the highest standard in using correct spelling, punctuation and grammar. Follow consistent format and typography found in a generally recognized style manual. Footnotes and references, for example, should appear at the bottom of the appropriate pages, or at the end of each chapter, or just before the bibliography at the end of the thesis. Whatever style/format you choose, follow it consistently.

Recommended manuals include Turabian's *A Manual for Writers of Term Papers, Theses and Dissertations* and the *Chicago Manual of Style*. There are many editions of these and other suitable manuals. Anyone engaged in writing will find Strunk and White's popular *The Elements of Style* a useful book, but it is not a style book. Many of these manuals are available in the Burke Library and local bookstores.

Each thesis must have a table of contents that gives an outline of the treatment and also a list of charts, graphs, or illustrations if appropriate. The bibliography at the end of the thesis must list all the books and articles used during preparation of the thesis. The bibliography may be arranged alphabetically, chronologically, or topically. In each entry give the author's name, exact title of the book, and the place and date of publication. In the case of articles in periodicals, or single chapters in books, etc., give the volume number, inclusive pages of the portion to which you referred, and the date of the periodical.

The title page should contain the title of the thesis, the author's name, the date, and the degree for which it is being submitted, for example:

**Submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for
the degree of Master of [your degree] at Union Theological Seminary
[date]**

Double-sided printing is acceptable, if your readers require a physical copy. Do **not** use spring-back binders, clamp notebooks, ring notebook binder, or any other binder that does not hold the manuscript securely.

