MASTER’S THESIS AND PROJECT INFORMATION

American and New England Studies

University of Southern Maine

Revised September 2014
THESIS AND PROJECT OVERVIEW

This information has been prepared to answer basic questions about the thesis/project requirement of the Master of Arts in American and New England Studies. It outlines the nature and scope of the thesis and project, describes the process of preparing and submitting a proposal, and indicates how students are expected to work with advisors and readers.

Overview: American and New England Studies Program Tracks

American and New England Studies students may pursue a 30-credit program that includes a thesis or project (the 30 credits includes 6 credits of thesis or project) or they may follow a 36-credit program that does not include a thesis or a project. Students who elect the 36-credit program must complete two research papers (known as “exit papers”) in elective courses with two different faculty members.

Writing a thesis can be enormously satisfying. Several of our students have had their manuscripts published. But there are also advantages and rewards to writing a shorter exit paper. Many exit papers have provided the basis for published articles by alumni and we are exploring ways to make this work more accessible to the public. Please don’t hesitate to discuss these options with your advisor, the program director, or other faculty members. We want you to succeed in any way that works for you.

Preliminary Stages: Thesis & Project

You should begin thinking seriously about the project and thesis after you have completed five courses in the program. Discussions with the American and New England Studies faculty and your advisor should be part of the process of deciding between a thesis and a project, exploring potential subjects, and narrowing the focus down to a manageable topic. Completed theses and projects are available for review in the American and New England Studies office (98 Bedford Street, Portland) and the USM library. Select theses are also available online at the Digital Commons @USM (http://digitalcommons.usm.maine.edu)

As you think about writing a thesis or a project, consider the following:

- What will be the subject and focus of the thesis or project?
- What sources will you use and will they be available and adequate?
- What problems do you foresee?

Talk to your advisor, faculty members, and/or the program director as you begin to identify an appropriate topic. Use your advisor as a springboard. Find a thesis advisor by asking a faculty member whose area of interest overlaps with your own (for a list of faculty fields of interest see Appendix A).
GUIDELINES FOR PREPARATION AND SUBMISSION OF A MASTER’S THESIS

Description

A thesis is the traditional exit requirement for a Master of Arts program and is particularly recommended for students who plan to go on to advanced graduate work. A thesis involves in-depth research into a limited and well-defined topic and the reporting of the results of that research in an extended, formal paper. American and New England Studies students who elect to write a thesis should choose a topic that relates to their academic interests and to their course work in the program. Moreover, the topic should be defined and/or approached in an interdisciplinary way. There is no pre-determined length for the American and New England Studies thesis, but 75 to 100 pages may be used as an approximation.

Proposal

After close consultation with American and New England Studies faculty members, you prepare a preliminary thesis proposal. This preliminary proposal should contain the following:

1. Rationale: a description of the scope, nature, and objectives of the thesis and how the proposed work relates to current research

2. Methodology: an explanation of the methods and approaches that will be used in the research

3. Sources: a description of the primary source materials for the thesis

4. Bibliography: a short list of works that have been consulted in preparing the preliminary proposal and/or that will be read during the first semester of work

5. Advisor/Reader: in consultation with the Director of American and New England Studies, you will select a thesis advisor and a reader.

Please Note: Faculty outside of ANES may be readers but not advisors and must be approved by the Curriculum Committee, which is chaired by the director of the ANES program.

The proposal should be prepared, submitted and approved during the semester before the thesis work is to begin (most times this is done while you are enrolled in ANE 675). The advisor and the reader must sign the preliminary proposal. The faculty Curriculum Committee of the American and New England Studies program will review the preliminary proposal. Examples of thesis proposals can be found at the ANES office.
ANE 695: Thesis

Once the proposal is approved, you may register for ANE 695: Thesis (3-6 credits). In most cases, students register for ANE 695 over two semesters, taking 3 credits each semester. However, it is also possible to register for 6 credits at once and write your thesis in one semester.

Please Note: In addition to completing ANE 675: Workshop in Research & Writing and having an approved proposal, you must have at least a 3.50 GPA to register for ANE 695.

Advisor and Reader Supervision

Close consultation with and regular view of written work by the advisor and reader are essential elements of successful thesis work. Both the advisor and the reader should:

- Discuss the thesis with the student before the proposal is submitted
- Review the initial draft(s) of the preliminary proposal
- Approve the thesis proposal before it is submitted to the Curriculum Committee
- Be consulted as research is being conducted
- Read and react to written work as it is submitted

In general, the advisor and the reader both comment on draft chapters as they are submitted. Decisions about final revisions are then made in consultation with the advisor.

Grading

The thesis will be evaluated on a pass/fail basis.
THESIS FORMAT GUIDELINES

The following guidelines are intended to assist you in the preparation of theses, to establish a University-wide consistency of form, and to ensure high standards of quality. You are responsible for submitting theses that adhere to general University requirements. You should prepare your manuscript, including all documentation, in accordance with the ANES Citation Guide (see Appendix B or the ANES website: http://usm.maine.edu/anes/citation-forms).

Paper Quality

The original copy of the thesis must be on 8-1/2 x 11 bond paper of at least 20-pound weight containing 25% or more rag content.

Typing

All copies of the thesis must be produced with text that is dark enough and clear enough to be easily read. The manuscript must be the product of a letter quality printer or its equivalent. If xerographic copies are made, they must be of acceptable quality. Note: xerographic copies of photographs are not acceptable.

The thesis must be double-spaced throughout, with the exception of quotations, footnotes, illustration captions, bibliographies, and appendices, which may be single-spaced.

References

References must be done by footnote, with each chapter beginning at “1.”

Corrections

The final copy must be clean and neat without visible corrections.

Margins

The margins of the thesis must be at least 1.5 inches from the left edge of the paper and at least 1 inch from the other 3 edges, leaving a maximum typing area of 5.75 x 9.
Required/ Optional Items and Arrangement of Thesis

The final copy of the thesis must include certain items; other items are optional. Items should be arranged in the order:

1. Master’s Thesis Title Page (required, see sample in Appendix C)
2. Master’s Thesis Final Approval Form (required, see sample in Appendix D)
3. Acknowledgements (optional)
4. Preface (optional)
5. Abstract (required)
6. Table of contents (required)
7. List of Tables (required if applicable)
8. List of Figures (required if applicable)
9. Text of Thesis (required)
10. Appendix(ces) (optional)
11. References (required)

Pagination

A thesis contains two sets of page numbers. The preliminary pages (items 1-8 of the list above) should be numbered consecutively in lower-case Roman numerals. The title page should be considered “i” but should not be numbered. Beginning with the text (items 9-11 of the list above), all pages must be numbered consecutively in Arabic numerals, beginning with “1.”

Illustrations and Inserted Material

Graphs, diagrams, photographs and other material included in a thesis must be on paper that meets the specifications described above in Paper Quality. While photocopies of graphs, diagrams and similar illustrations are permitted, xerographic copies of photographs are not acceptable.
Copies and Binding

Three copies of the thesis, ready for binding, must be submitted to the American and New England Studies Administrative Specialist. Along with the thesis copies, you must submit:

- A completed USM Theses/Dissertations Bindery and Content Release Form for Digital Commons @USM (see Appendix G)
- A check made payable to the University of Southern Maine for payment for the binding service. More details can be found on the release form.

Copies are sent to the bindery on the 15th of each month, provided there is a minimum of seven copies. Bound copies are normally returned to the library in four weeks. The library will deliver copies to the department and mail out personal copies. The library copy will be cataloged and placed in the collection.
GUIDELINES FOR PREPARATION AND SUBMISSION OF A FINAL PROJECT

Description

The American and New England Studies project offers you an alternative to completing a thesis. A project—like the thesis—should evolve out of your interests and course work in the American and New England Studies program.

The project parallels the thesis in a number of ways: both are to be the result of thorough research and independent thought; both offer students opportunities for public explanation of their work; and both carry 6 hours of credit.

The principle difference between the project and the thesis is the final product. While all projects must have a written component, they do not culminate in a lengthy, formal research paper. Rather, the project leads to different results, which may be in one of the following areas:

- Oral history
- Editing of bibliographic work
- Archaeology
- Preservation
- Creative writing
- Curating an exhibit
- Ethnographic fieldwork
- Historic ecology
- Visual arts
- Video or multi-media work
- Public or a people’s history
- A catalogue raisonée

The preceding list is suggestive rather than exhaustive; you are encouraged to develop your own project in consultation with American and New England Studies faculty. The project may be conceived as an independent work or may lead to a contribution to the programming or activities of a particular institution or agency. In short, depending on individual interests and needs, the 6 credit hours may be devoted to an independent project or to an institutionally based internship project. The American and New England Studies program will provide coordination with institutions and supervision of internships that may be proposed.

Preliminary Proposal

After consulting with American and New England Studies faculty members, you will prepare a preliminary proposal for a project. This preliminary proposal should contain the following:

1. Rationale: a description of the scope, nature, and objectives of the project, and a statement of how the project relates to current research

2. Methodology: an explanation of the methodology of the project
3. Bibliography: a short list of works that have been consulted in preparing the preliminary proposal and/or that will be read during the first semester of work and a description of the source material for the project.

4. Advisor/Reader: in consultation with the Director of American and New England Studies you will select a project advisor and reader.

The advisor and the reader must sign the preliminary proposal. The Curriculum Committee of the American and New England Studies program will review the proposal. The proposal should be prepared, submitted, and approved during the semester before the project work is to begin (most times this is done while you are enrolled in ANE 675).

ANE 690: Project

Once the proposal is approved, you may register for ANE 690: Project (3-6 credits). In most cases, students register for ANE 690 over two semesters, taking 3 credits each semester. However, it is also possible to register for 6 credits at once and complete your project in one semester.

Please Note: In addition to completing ANE 675: Workshop in Research & Writing and having an approved proposal, you must have at least a 3.50 GPA to register for ANE 690.

Grading

The project will be evaluated on a pass/fail basis.

Guidelines for Preparation and Submission

The written components of a project should follow the same guidelines for writing a thesis, but only one copy of the project needs to be submitted.

A sample Master’s Project Title Page and sample Master’s Project Final Approval Form can be found in Appendices E and F, respectively.
**ADDITIONAL AMERICAN AND NEW ENGLAND STUDIES POLICIES**

1. You should prepare the manuscript for the thesis or project in accordance with the ANES Citation Guide (see Appendix B or the ANES website: http://usm.maine.edu/anes/citation-forms).

2. The University policies also generally apply to the preparation of the project reports.

3. You should submit a digital copy of the thesis or project in addition to the copies for binding.

4. If you have only the project or thesis to finish, you may still participate in graduation. Diplomas will be mailed when work is complete.

**CERTIFICATION FOR GRADUATION**

You need to initiate the graduate certification process as you near the completion of your work. To do this, you can apply for graduation in MaineStreet or send a completed application for degree form to the Registrar’s Office (more information can be found on the Registrar’s website: http://usm.maine.edu/reg/apply-graduate). This will start the process by which the Registrar, the American and New England Studies program, and the Graduate Office will certify graduation eligibility. Contact the Registrar’s Office or the ANES Administrative Specialist if you need assistance.
APPENDIX A
FACULTY FIELDS OF INTEREST

Ardis Cameron

Social and cultural history, women’s history, working class culture and politics, gender and sexuality, oral history, and ethnography

Donna Cassidy

American art history, architectural history, material culture, and visual culture (including advertising, photography, film)

Matthew Edney

Maps, 18th century New England landscape, social history, and geography

Kent Ryden

Literary studies, regional literature, folklore, cultural landscape/ geography, environmental history/studies, and print culture
APPENDIX B
ANES CITATION GUIDE

The following provides examples of footnote citations (c.) and bibliographic entries (b.) using the Chicago Manual of Style. This is the style most preferred by disciplines in the humanities and is required for ANES writing, unless otherwise indicated by your professor. If you have any questions or concerns, consult with your instructor or thesis/project advisor. For a more extensive list visit the Chicago Manual of Style Online at: http://www.chicagomanualofstyle.org/tools_citationguide.html.

Book with one author:


Book with two authors:


Chapter from an edited collection:


Article in a journal:


APPENDIX C

SAMPLE MASTER’S THESIS TITLE PAGE

[Title]

A THESIS
SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS
FOR THE DEGREE OF MASTER OF ARTS
UNIVERSITY OF SOUTHERN MAINE

AMERICAN AND NEW ENGLAND STUDIES

BY
[Name]

[Year]
We hereby recommend that the thesis of [Name]
entitled, “[Title]”
be accepted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Degree of Master of Arts.

_________________________________________
[Name], Advisor

_________________________________________
[Name], Reader

Accepted

_________________________________________
[Name], Dean, College of Arts. Humanities, and Social Sciences
APPENDIX E

SAMPLE MASTER’S PROJECT TITLE PAGE

>Title

A PROJECT
SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS
FOR THE DEGREE OF MASTER OF ARTS
UNIVERSITY OF SOUTHERN MAINE

AMERICAN AND NEW ENGLAND STUDIES

BY
[Name]

[Year]
FINAL APPROVAL FORM

THE UNIVERSITY OF SOUTHERN MAINE

AMERICAN AND NEW ENGLAND STUDIES

[Date]

We hereby accept the project of [Name]

entitled, “[Title]”

as partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Degree of Master of Arts.

______________________________
[Name], Advisor

______________________________
[Name], Reader
APPENDIX G
USM Theses/Dissertations Bindery and Content Release Form for USM Digital Commons

Please complete this form and return it to American and New England Studies along with your completed thesis.

Document Title:_________________________________________ as appears on thesis / dissertation

Name:_________________________________________ Email:_________________________________________

as appears on thesis / dissertation

Permanent Address:_________________________________________ Phone #:_________________________

Department: __________________________________________  Graduation Date:_________________________

Degree: Master_______ Doctoral_______ Date of defense:_________________________

Names of committee members:________________________________________________________________________

Digital Commons @USM is our web-based, open access-compliant institutional repository for scholarship and creative works produced by USM faculty, staff, students and their collaborators. This open access policy in no way diminishes the copyright responsibility of those viewing or downloading the documents. The authors of these documents retain the copyright to the intellectual property these works represent in their current form.

Archive / Access Status
Upon recommendation of ANES I agree that the above-mentioned document be placed in the Digital Commons with the following status:

___ 1. Release the entire work immediately for access worldwide (please provide a digital copy of your thesis).
___ 2. Release the entire work for University of Southern Maine access only.
___ 3. Restrict the entire work for a maximum of: ___ 1 Year ___ 2 Years _________(3Years).
___ 4. Restrict my work to bibliographic (author, title, year) information only.

I will be responsible for contacting the University of Southern Maine if the period I have chosen has to be extended.

PLEASE PROVIDE THE LIBRARY WITH A DIGITAL COPY OF YOUR WORK, IF POSSIBLE.
Send the digital copy to the American and New England Studies Department and it will be forwarded to the library with your thesis.

Intellectual Property
I hereby grant to the University of Southern Maine and its agents the non-exclusive license to archive and make accessible, under the conditions specified above, my thesis or dissertation in whole or in part in all forms of media, now or hereafter known. I retain all ownership rights to the copyright of the thesis or dissertation. I also retain the right to use in future works (such as articles or books) all or part of this thesis or dissertation.

Copyrights & Ownership
I hereby certify that, if appropriate, I have obtained and attached hereto a written permission from the owner(s) of each third party copyrighted matter to be included in my thesis or dissertation allowing distribution as specified above.

Review & Acceptance
I certify that the version submitted is the same as that approved by my advisory committee. The undersigned agree to abide by the statements above, and agree that this Approval Form updates any and all previous Approval Forms submitted heretofore.

____________________________________________________                                                            _____
Student Signature  (REQUIRED)  Date

Bindery Information
Enclosed is a check in the amount of $_________ to cover the cost of binding _______ thesis copies. NOTE: Checks need to be made out to the University of Southern Maine.

1st copy for the University Library (no charge)
2nd copy for the academic department ($25)  (Exceptions: Stonecoast and Honors)
_____cop(ies) for the student ($25/copy)

All copies must be binding ready. Neither the Library nor the Bindery is responsible for the completeness, spelling or pagination of copies to be bound.