

## CREATIVE PROJECT/THESIS AND THESIS PROPOSAL

Creative projects and theses require a proposal or prospectus. The following steps are suggested to help you along your way.

1. First, obtain a permanent advisor who, in conjunction with two additional committee members, will discuss your creative project or thesis.
2. Next, your initial idea concerning the feasibility of your particular project or thesis must then be written up in the form of a proposal or prospectus.

While there are no hard rules that cover every type of prospectus, there are a few minimal guidelines to consider.

***For a thesis***, the student should address:

- (a) Title of your Thesis
- (b) Type of project/study to be undertaken (historical/critical/descriptive/experimental/others)
- (c) General purpose or thesis statement, then narrowed down to specifics
- (d) Justification for undertaking this specific line of investigation or project [i.e., should be something new, addresses some aspect not covered in previous research, replication of a previous study with adequate justification, etc.]
- (e) Initial review of the pertinent literature that organizes what is known about the object of study and leads to your research questions
- (f) Specific research questions/hypotheses you will seek to answer
- (g) Proposed research method for conducting your investigation, including subjects to be sampled, data collection methods you intend to employ, and how this research or project is to proceed (time element)
- (h) Data analysis: which variables will be included, which excluded.

***For a creative project***, the student should address:

- (a) Title of your Project
- (b) General intent of the project; i.e., what should the project accomplish?
- (c) Justification for considering this project as a worthwhile and legitimate graduate endeavor in Communication
- (d) Any supporting literature justifying the intention of your project
- (e) Method for accomplishing your project, including any necessary background or equipment needed for your project, where this project is to be conducted, and proposed timeline to completion.

3. Once you have written your prospectus or proposal, your permanent advisor convenes a formal committee meeting at which time you must explain your proposal. Copies of the same should have been distributed by you to all of the members of your committee. You should give committee members a week to read your proposal/prospectus before the meeting. At the meeting you will be given suggestions, specific directions, or other advice that the committee feels will aid you in bringing your project/thesis to a successful conclusion.

4. Once your committee has approved your project/thesis proposal, you may **THEN AND ONLY THEN** commence your project/thesis. You should keep your permanent advisor aware of your progress and submit portions/chapters of your work on a regular basis to him or her.
5. Writing means re-writing. Audio and video work requires precise planning and long hours at the editor. It is best to keep in mind that a first draft or edit is only that. Content and format have to meet the specific requirements of the Graduate Office, the Department or Division, and your committee. Be prepared to do a lot of writing and rewriting once you undertake your thesis/project. (It is not uncommon for projects to go through 10 or more rewrites prior to the oral defense.)
6. Your oral defense is the final formal step in completing your exit option. You will defend your thesis/project at a public meeting. You will be expected to give a summary of your thesis/project and present examples of creative work. Your thesis/project committee will question you about your work and then allow members of the public to comment on your work or ask you questions. This is an opportunity for you to take pride in your work and enjoy sharing it with others.

### **SAMPLE THESIS PROPOSAL FORMAT**

1. USE THE APA STYLE MANUAL!
2. PARTS OF YOUR PROPOSAL:

D. Reference List

Include everything you have cited so far. Don't forget that interviews and television programs also are sources and need to be included if you have referred to them. Under APA style, you do not include anything that you have not cited in text.

### 3. PARTS OF YOUR THESIS

student of the action taken (pass/fail) and the grade given for the thesis.

9. If the exit option is a thesis, all thesis committee members will sign the Thesis Approval Sheet of the thesis proper assuming, of course, that no further revisions are necessary.
10. If the degree candidate has chosen the thesis option, the candidate must place at least three copies of the thesis, along with three copies of a thesis abstract, with the Library Archives office at the University Library for processing and binding. The library will send the final copies of the abstract to the Graduate Office as proof of completion. If the degree candidate has chosen the creative project option, then the candidate must provide a clean copy of the project with all finalized supporting materials for the department library.
11. It is common courtesy to provide the chair of your exit option committee with a bound copy of your thesis/creative project. (This is in addition to the three (3) copies requested by the Graduate School.) It is not required, however.
12. In order to receive final department clearance, all revisions requested by the committee must be made and resubmitted to the exit option chair for verification of compliance. Only then will a student receive departmental clearance for graduation.