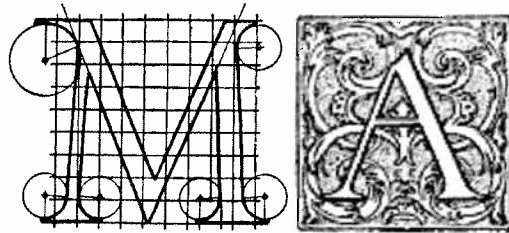


ENGLISH M.A.



FINAL PROJECT GUIDE



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1. FINAL PROJECT OPTIONS

CHOOSING A FINAL PROJECT OPTION

The Master of Arts (M.A.) final project offers a unique opportunity for advanced independent study. The final project allows the M.A. student to define an area of intellectual and creative interest, design a project that captures the excitement of that interest, take a semester to pursue that interest, and work with a faculty advisor to connect that interest to the latest thinking in the field of English. A rare chance to follow an intellectual passion, the M.A. should select a final project option that will bring both enjoyment and challenge.

To earn the M.A. degree, each M.A. student in English must complete a final project, demonstrating the ability to integrate and synthesize knowledge relating to a particular topic within one of the three concentrations – literature, composition studies, or creative writing. The final project is an opportunity to follow your interests in and deepen your knowledge in one of these concentrations. You may choose one of the following six options:

A. ANALYTICAL WRITING

1. *Three-credit Analytical Final Essay* (approximately 30 pages), focusing on either literature or composition
2. *Six-credit Analytical Thesis* (approximately 60 pages), focusing on either literature or composition, to be determined in consultation with the Graduate Program Director

B. CREATIVE WRITING

3. *Three-credit Creative Writing Final Project* (a manuscript of poetry, fiction, or creative nonfiction)
4. *Six-credit Creative Writing Thesis*, to be determined in consultation with the Director of Creative Writing

C. CURRICULUM PROJECT

5. *Three-credit Curriculum Project*

D. FINAL EXAM

6. *Three-credit Final Examination*

Think carefully about the scope of your final project and how much time you want to devote to it. Once the proposal for the three-credit analytical final project, six-credit analytical thesis, three-credit creative writing final project, six-credit creative writing thesis, or three-credit curriculum project, or three-credit final exam is accepted and official, the decision is not reversible without a formal appeal to the Graduate Program Director.

2. ADVISOR AND TOPIC

FINDING A FINAL PROJECT ADVISOR AND DEFINING A FINAL PROJECT TOPIC

For all six options, the student chooses a final project advisor. In consultation with the advisor, you will determine the focus of the final project, write a proposal, complete the project and submit it to the English M.A. Program for approval, as explained in each of the following sections.

The final project gives you the opportunity to work closely with a faculty advisor on an extended and independent project. How do you choose an appropriate final project advisor? While many students enter the English M.A. Program with clear ideas about the area, broadly considered, in which they will work (say American Literature or creative writing), most students develop a more focused interest as they take courses. Typically, this more focused interest becomes the basis for the final project.

As you complete the final project process, you will generate a reading list, perform research, analyze literary texts or other materials, and synthesize ideas from these materials into your original analytical, creative, or pedagogical writing. Generating a final project topic will involve many brainstorming sessions. Consider finding other people you can brainstorm with: fellow students, friends, faculty members, and the Graduate Program Director. A variety of subjects should be explored, with these potential topics ultimately leading to one focal topic. A topic must then be narrowed and deepened. You can get a good sense of the scope and depth of a typical final project topic by looking at previous year's projects, held in the English M.A. Office. As explained below, also consider taking the ENGL 690 Course and attending Infosessions.

As you proceed, your advisor can be an invaluable resource at every stage of idea development. Clearly, the more familiar your advisor is with your project's focus, the easier it will be for him or her to recommend sources, ask good questions, and help you to situate your project within the field. Keep in close contact with your advisor as you develop your final project topic.

Students' experiences choosing a final project advisor vary widely. For a student who knows she wants to work on a particular text, say Jane Austen's *Persuasion*, and knows she'd like to work with the faculty member who specializes in Austen, who then agrees to direct the project, the project has begun. But for many students the path to choosing an advisor and topic is less clear. Some students have very specific project ideas, but can't find a faculty member who feels s/he has sufficient expertise in the particular field of your interest. Others have good ideas and know of a faculty member who might be a possibility, but learn that the professor is already committed to directing other projects. Finally, working with an advisor requires a good fit not just in terms of subject matter, but in terms of work style as well. Locating a faculty member you would enjoy working with is crucial.

The key here is flexibility. The process of locating a final project advisor and deciding on a topic could evolve in many ways, such as the following:

- Start with the topic:* If you know precisely what you want to work on but haven't yet taken a course with the person who specializes in that field, you will want to seek the professor out during office hours or by appointment, introduce yourself, discuss the project, and decide together whether or not this person would be an appropriate advisor. Even if you have a clear project idea, you will need to allow it to evolve to be compatible with the advisor's suggestions. **It is a good idea to brainstorm ahead of time two or three topics that interest you; this doubles or triples your chance of finding a faculty member to direct the project you finally settle on.**

- Start with the advisor:* If you know that you have worked well with a particular professor and you are interested in an author or field with which s/he is familiar, you might choose the advisor first and then work with him or her to develop the specifics of your proposal. Make sure to investigate all of the potential topics the advisor suggests and choose the one that suits you best as you will have to maintain interest in the project over a couple of semesters.

- Allow the project to evolve:* When a student and professor have a good working relationship, there will be flexibility on both sides so that a project can evolve. A question that begins with an interest in violence in contemporary American literature might turn into a critical assessment of the short fiction of Joyce Carol Oates or a project on trauma and language in Toni Morrison's *Beloved*, depending on how student and professor negotiate. In short, honing your final project topic and choosing a final project advisor go hand in hand.

The final project is the culmination of your work in the English M.A. Program at UMass-Boston and it is in everyone's interest that you do an excellent job. As a student, you will need to take the initiative to think carefully about who will help you make the most of the opportunity to write an extended inquiry into your area of interest. Your preparation, initiative, and flexibility will help make the process of choosing a project advisor a positive first step in the development of a successful M.A. final project.

3. ONE-CREDIT WORKSHOP AND INFOSESSIONS

TAKING ENGL 690: A ONE-CREDIT COURSE ON PLANNING THE FINAL PROJECT

The M.A. Program offers opportunities for guidance in formulating the final project. Intensive, sustained guidance takes the form of a one-credit workshop course.

In the semester before they plan to complete the final project, students are encouraged to take the one-credit course “ENGL 690: English Research Workshop.” The central goal of the English Research Workshop is to prepare M.A. students for a successful final project. The seminar-style workshop will help students move through the steps needed to create a final project proposal and will help students start outlining and drafting the final project. Student will work on formulating a viable research topic, locating an advisor, selecting models of research and writing in professional journals, compiling an annotated bibliography, assessing research resources, and creating a research calendar.

This mini-course is led by the GPD and scheduled at a time that works for all participants. Students enroll themselves into ENGL 690 during course registration.

ATTENDING A FINAL PROJECT INFOSESSION

Each semester, the English M.A. Program schedules at least two final project “Infosessions” that offer guidance on defining and completing the final project. Recent Infosessions have included topics such as:

- Submitting a Final Project Proposal
- Moving from Proposal to Final Project
- Getting Started: Tackling Final Project Writing
- Final Stages: Completing and Submitting the Final Project.

Infosessions are scheduled and advertised by the English M.A. Office.

4. THE FINAL PROJECT PROPOSAL

COMPLETING THE FINAL PROJECT PROPOSAL

After you have decided on a topic and located an advisor, you must submit a Final Project Proposal Form and Materials to the Graduate Program Office. **Note that you must submit this final project proposal the semester before your final project is due.** Generally, the final project proposal is due in early April for a project being completed in the fall semester and in early November for a project being completed in the spring semester. The M.A. Office distributes and posts specific deadlines each semester.

A Final Project Proposal Form is included at the end of this guidebook. Forms, which include complete directions, are available at the M.A. Office and at: <http://www.umb.edu/academics/cla/dept/english/gradprograms.html>.

Depending on the option you have selected for a final project, the proposal takes one of the following forms:

A. ANALYTICAL WRITING

Three-credit Analytical Final Essay or six-credit Analytical Thesis

For the three-credit final project or the six-credit thesis in literature or composition, the proposal must include a **Final Project Proposal Form**, included at the end of this packet. A clearly focused prospectus (of 500 words) must explain the topic, working arguments, and planned methodology. An initial working bibliography of twelve sources must be appended to the proposal. The six-credit thesis requires permission of the Graduate Program Director.

B. CREATIVE WRITING

Three-credit Creative Writing Final Project and six-credit Creative Writing Thesis

For the three-credit creative writing final project or the six-credit creative writing thesis, the proposal must include a **Final Project Proposal Form**, included at the end of this packet. A clearly focused prospectus (of 500 words) must state the project's goals, scope, and what work the student has already completed. An initial reading list must be included. The six-credit thesis requires permission of the Graduate Program Director and the Director of Creative Writing.

C. CURRICULUM PROJECT

Three-credit Curriculum Project

For the three-credit curriculum project, the proposal must include a **Final Project Proposal Form**, included at the end of this packet. A clearly focused prospectus (of 500 words) must state the project's goals, scope, and what work the student has already done on it. A preliminary bibliography must cite both primary sources to be used in the classroom and secondary sources informing the teacher's understanding of those materials. A student interested in completing a curriculum project should have teaching experience or have completed extensive pedagogy coursework in our "Teaching of..." courses.

D. FINAL EXAM

Three-credit Final Examination

For the final examination, the **Final Project Proposal Form**, included at the end of this packet, should accompany a proposal (of 500 words) detailing the area and topic of study. The proposal must include a complete reading list that combines primary and secondary works in a focused area of study. Any student proposing a final exam should make an appointment with the Graduate Program Director to discuss final exam procedures.

Before the proposal is due, the student should engage in detailed discussions about the project with the final project advisor. Before you submit the final version of your proposal, a draft should be given to your advisor for feedback. Give yourself time to revise before the due date. Your faculty advisor must sign off on the Proposal Form before it is submitted. After your proposal is signed, turn it in to the M.A. Office. The Graduate Program Director must give final approval and may, like your project advisor, send it back to you for revision.

Based on the topic and field of study indicated in the proposal, for a three credit final project, a committee of two readers or examiners is selected by the Graduate Program Director; for a six credit thesis, a committee of three readers or examiners is selected. Each student will be notified of his or her readers within three weeks. While it is not appropriate to ask your readers to look at drafts of your project, it is entirely appropriate and may be very helpful at this stage to discuss your ideas with your readers and to ask them for further bibliographic resources.

The proposal is the crucial starting point for the final project. Work on the final project should begin as soon as the proposal has been approved.

5. REGISTRATION

REGISTERING FOR THE FINAL PROJECT

In the semester in which the project is to be completed, the student completing a three-credit final project must register for "ENGL 691: Final Project in Composition"; "ENGL 692: Final Project in Creative Writing"; or "ENGL 693: Final Project in Literature." All six-credit final projects are registered as "ENGL 699 Master of Arts Thesis." You must have permission from the Graduate Program Director to register for ENGL 699.

The proposal, explained above, is due well before the course registration period has ended; you will know that your work has been approved and that you can register for these credits.

Work on the final project should begin before the semester the project will be submitted; work should begin as soon as the proposal has been approved.

6. THE FINAL PROJECT

WRITING THE FINAL PROJECT

As you start to think about and then work on your final project, you will obviously be spending much of your time reading, researching, writing, and discussing your work with your final project advisor. You should consider taking the one-credit ENGL 690 workshop course, plan to attend at the appropriate Infosessions held by the Graduate Program Director, and make sure to examine successful completed final projects, which are kept in the M.A. Office and may be signed out.

A. ANALYTICAL WRITING

The three-credit final project and six-credit thesis may build on a paper written previously for a course or may focus on a new area of inquiry. Like the typical literature, composition, or pedagogy seminar paper, this essay uses primary and secondary materials to provide a foundation for its own exposition. At the same time, as a final project, it does so in greater depth and detail. The intellectual process involved is familiar enough: the student needs to find an area of inquiry (topic), research it, establish a perspective on and an argument about it (thesis), and develop a considered discussion of that topic and thesis. The main difference between this essay and seminar papers is an increase in length and more extensive research.

Three-credit Analytical Final Project

In defining your topic, it is helpful to remember that the scope of the question the essay raises should be one that can be reasonably addressed in an essay of approximately 30 pages. The research should be fully documented in MLA format and it should include an annotated bibliography of approximately 15-20 entries. A scholarly article published in an academic journal is a good model for the final essay.

As a project capping your MA-level work, the three-credit essay should demonstrate intellectual maturity, showing your ability to take independently those steps that locate and define a literary, linguistic, or pedagogical question and to address that question in a meaningful way. The essay should combine independence of thought with a careful use of secondary sources to achieve a sophisticated level of argumentation and analysis.

In general, then, the essay should achieve:

- Clear articulation of an original literary, linguistic, or pedagogical argument
- Carefully sequenced and focused development of that argument across the duration of the essay
- Attentive close reading and analysis of primary texts
- Clear understanding and thoughtful synthesis of appropriate secondary sources
- Proper academic tone and style

As part of completing the final project proposal, the student, in consultation with the final project advisor, will draft a schedule for completing the project. Both you and your advisor should keep copies of this schedule on file. The best working situations occur when you stay in close contact with your advisor beyond what the schedule specifies. You would also benefit from meeting at least once with each of your two appointed readers (who have your proposal and initial bibliography) in the initial stages of your research, though it is not appropriate to ask them to read drafts of your essay.

The final project advisor and assigned readers are important resources during the research and drafting process. They can provide useful information about secondary

materials, about different schools of literary criticism and theory, and about different approaches to composition studies and pedagogy. While such advice and expertise are always illuminating, you may ultimately need to be selective about how to use it. Close consultation with your project advisor and purposeful focus on your central argument will help keep the essay's goals and research on course.

Six-credit Analytical Thesis

The six-credit thesis should meet the general guidelines for the three-credit final essay but should represent a more extended project, resulting in a focused and well-argued paper of approximately 60 pages. Its ambitious scope posits a substantial, focused, in-depth inquiry that rests on significant research and extended analysis and exposition. In keeping with these goals, the thesis also requires a more extensive annotated bibliography.

In general, the essay should follow the three-credit essay guidelines and, in addition, demonstrate:

- More extended development of a central argument
- More extensive primary and/or secondary research
- Clear positioning of the essay's ideas within larger critical debates

The student must determine with the project advisor whether a particular project is suited to the thesis' more extended inquiry, and yet is still clearly defined and manageable. Any student considering the six-credit option must obtain the permission of the Graduate Program Director before registering. The thesis will be assigned three readers and must be presented to the Department community in an oral defense.

B. CREATIVE WRITING

Three-credit Creative Writing Final Project

The three-credit final creative writing collection will consist of a substantial collection of poems or short stories (or possibly a longer prose piece), introduced by a reflective, critical, or scholarly essay. In addition, students in the creative writing concentration will be required to propose and read a bibliography of works in their chosen genre that will help them with their own creative work. This list will be discussed in advance with the student's project advisor.

In **poetry**: 30-40 manuscript pages, introduced by a 7-10 page essay that

- Explains the genesis of the project
- Refers to literary influences on the project
- Discusses the manuscript's structure (arrangement of poems)

In fiction, creative nonfiction, and mixed genres: 40-70 manuscript pages, introduced by a 7-10 page essay that

- Explains the genesis of the project
- Refers to literary influences on the project
- Discusses the use of genre or mixed genres

Six-credit Creative Writing Thesis

The final project advisor, in consultation with the Director of Creative Writing and the Graduate Program Director, will decide whether the proposed project, in terms of scope and amount of work required, merits three or six credits. The project should be introduced by a reflective, critical, or scholarly essay of 15-20 pages. In addition, the student will be required to propose and read a bibliography of work in the chosen genre that will help his/her own creative work. This list will be discussed in advance with the project advisor.

In poetry: 35-45 manuscript pages, introduced by a 15-20 page critical essay that

- Explains the genesis of the project
- Discusses the manuscript's structure (arrangement of poems)
- Engages a critical issue relevant to the project

In fiction, creative nonfiction, and mixed genres: 50-80 manuscript pages, introduced by a 15-20 page critical essay that

- Explains the genesis of the project
- Discusses the use of genre or mixed genre
- Engages a critical issue relevant to the project

Some examples of critical issues discussed in six-credit thesis essays have been: a comparison between two fiction writers working in the realist tradition (fiction), a study of the role of revision in the work of Elizabeth Bishop (poetry) and a discussion of theory regarding autobiography (creative nonfiction).

C. CURRICULUM PROJECT

Three-credit Curriculum Project

An M.A. Curriculum Project may be done in any of the three tracks and should demonstrate a student's understanding of the field, serving as the culmination of the student's graduate studies in composition, literature, or creative writing. A student interested in completing a curriculum project should have teaching experience or have completed extensive pedagogy coursework in our "Teaching of..." courses. The curriculum project will typically be designed as a semester-long course or a substantial component of a course. It should contain the following components:

1. A 15-page introduction that provides a theoretical framework for the course by situating it within the appropriate (pedagogical) literature of the field and explains the themes of the curriculum. The Introduction should include an overview of course materials, the major issues and questions it is intended to raise, the grade level for which it is intended, the learning objectives for students in the course, and the methods of evaluating their learning.
2. A detailed plan for each unit (or sub-section) of the curriculum that:
 - Explains the rationale for the unit and how it is related to the larger framework of the project (the overall themes and goals of the course), provides the necessary historical and critical background for the ideas, issues, and documents presented in the unit, and explains the sequencing of readings and assignments
 - Lists the major ideas, questions, and issues raised by each unit
 - Provides study guides or discussion questions for each unit's documents
 - Provides written and/or oral assignments based on each unit's documents
3. Copies of all materials assigned in the course (except books and films), and explanations of visual and/or auditory documents created for the course;
4. An annotated bibliography of approximately 15-20 primary and secondary sources used in putting together the curriculum project, in which the annotations focus on the ideas most useful to the project.

D. FINAL EXAM

Three-credit Final Examination

The examination option focuses on a bibliography of approximately 20 texts (both primary and secondary), in a focused field which the student prepares in consultation with her or his final exam advisor. Preparation for the final exam functions somewhere between independent study and final project modes. The student should regularly, perhaps once a week, meet with his or her project advisor to discuss the reading. The advisor may assign some writing, such as short papers or a critical reading journal, to facilitate study. Once the student has completed the course of reading, the advisor, in consultation with the reading committee and the Graduate Program Director, prepares a three-hour written examination.

The examination consists of essay questions based on the student's list of primary texts and secondary works of literary criticism, history, and theory. Questions will test the student's knowledge of the designated exam area and will invite the student to discuss and draw from the readings, to make comparisons, and to formulate and defend an argument or thesis with reference to the primary and secondary material. The exam is three hours long. The student is given a selection of questions, generally five or six, out of which s/he may choose one, two, or possibly three to answer. Students choosing this

option will be permitted to do it as a take-home exam, to be word-processed and returned not later than 24 hours after receiving the examination questions. No exceptions to the 24-hour limit will be granted. Submitted responses to the exam questions should not exceed 12 typed, double-spaced pages in total. Because the exam is written in three hours, perfection in organization and phrasing is not expected. The details of any given final project exam are worked out with the project advisor. The two readers on the committee evaluate the student's written responses and may either accept the work as passing or ask that the student retake the exam or retake part of the exam.

The final examination is a good option if a) you are temperamentally suited or more inclined to exam-taking rather than essay-writing, or b) your topic is more wide-ranging or less thesis driven than an article length paper. For example: you want to study the creative rivalry between Shakespeare and Jonson; or you wish to study a particular period of Margaret Atwood's work and the connections between her poetry and prose during this period.

7. SUBMITTING THE FINAL PROJECT

SUBMITTING THE FINAL PROJECT: DEADLINES AND PROCEDURES

Check the deadline for submitting the final project in your semester. Deadlines are posted and distributed by the M.A. Office. The deadline changes a bit each year. The fall deadline is typically an early November date and the spring deadline is typically an early April date. Note that the final project is due by 5:00 p.m. at the M.A Office on the designated day. **No late projects will be accepted**, so do not wait until the last minute and then encounter a traffic jam on the way into school.

Please note these details about the format for the final project:

•**NUMBER OF COPIES:** The final project requires that **THREE copies of the final project (FOUR copies if a final thesis) be submitted** to the M.A. Office. The M.A. Office cannot make copies of your final project; you should plan to make your copies at a Kinkos-type copy shop.

•**FORMATTING OF DOCUMENT:** The final project should follow an academic format, typed in a Times 12-point font, with 1 ¼ inch margins, double-spaced, with page numbers.

•**FORMATTING OF TITLE PAGE:** Please see the sample title page in the Appendix. The **project advisor's signature** must appear on the title page of **each copy** of the final project, signifying his/her approval of the completed project. Please make sure to leave

enough time for your advisor to **sign all three (or four) copies** of the project before you submit it.

•**FORMATTING OF ABSTRACT:** Please see the guidelines and sample abstract in the Appendix. The abstract should be a maximum of 350 words. Also please **submit an electronic copy of your abstract** to the Administrative Assistant in the M.A. Office. All final project abstracts must be forwarded to Graduate Studies; we need a clearly formatted electronic copy of the abstract.

•**FORMATTING OF BIBLIOGRAPHY:** Please see the guidelines and sample annotated bibliography in the Appendix. The annotated bibliography should contain approximately 15-20 works.

•**DO NOT “BIND” THREE-CREDIT PROJECT; IT WILL BE SCANNED:** When you submit your multiple copies of the final project, each copy should be held together by a large binder clip (other formats can be used; for example, a curriculum project might be submitted in a binder). Do NOT “bind” the final project. If you are completing a six-credit thesis, you will bind it at a later date (see below).

Again, late submissions will not be accepted and, if submitted late, the completion of your degree will be deferred until the following semester.

After the final project has been submitted to the M.A. Office, the project will then be distributed to the members of the reading committee who may either approve the essay or suggest revisions.

After the final project has been read and approved by the readers, you may be asked to make revisions of the project (such as correcting typos). You must submit a **clear, corrected “final, final” draft** of the final project to the M.A. Office in a binder clip. It will be scanned and added to our final project archive.

8. READERS’ EVALUATIONS

RECEIVING EVALUATIONS OF THE FINAL PROJECT

Your final project advisor is your project’s most important “reader.” Your advisor must approve your completed project before it can be submitted for approval by the English M.A. Program. The project advisor can decide that the final project is not ready for submission and require the student to engage in further research and writing or re-writing. Upon approval by your final project advisor, the project is then submitted to the M.A. Office, as detailed above. The Graduate Program Director will then pass the

project on to your committee of faculty readers. A final project is evaluated by two readers; a thesis is evaluated by three readers.

The readers have been carefully matched to the final project, based on their expertise in the project's topic, genre, theoretical approach, or historical time period. The readers are given two weeks to read and respond to the final project. Each reader will judge the project as "pass" or "revise" and will provide a written evaluation of the project with suggestions for revision if appropriate. These evaluations will go to you, your project advisor, and a copy will be kept in your file in the English M.A. office.

If the two readers disagree on the evaluation of "pass" or "revise," the project will go to a third reader. The third reader is given a week to respond to the project and break the tie.

If you receive a "revise" evaluation, you will have two weeks to revise your project, guided by the readers' reports and discussion with your project advisor. The revision is resubmitted to your project advisor. If satisfied with the revision, the advisor will sign and pass it on to the readers to re-evaluate. Time is short at this point, so if the essay needs another revision, it may have to carry over into the next semester.

After a three-credit final project has received final approval, the student must incorporate any final revisions or corrections into one final clean copy; this typically includes the correction of typos. The student must then submit one final clean copy, in a large binder clip, to the M.A. Office. The final project will be scanned and included in the English Department's archive of final projects. The three-credit final project is NOT bound.

All M.A. theses must be printed and bound according to university guidelines. These guidelines are available from the English M.A. Office and can be found at the Graduate Studies website: <http://www.umb.edu/academics/graduate/>. The website includes a section on "Theses and Dissertation Documents"; this features a downloadable document that explains M.A. thesis printing and binding guidelines.

9. M.A. THESIS DEFENSE

PRESENTING THE SIX-CREDIT THESIS TO THE DEPARTMENT

All six-credit M.A. theses, both analytical and creative, must be presented to the department community in an oral defense at the end of the semester in which the thesis is completed and approved. Students will present their research to an audience consisting of the thesis advisor, the three faculty readers, at least two invited graduate student colleagues, and anyone else in the department who chooses to attend.

Each student presenting a thesis should be prepared to talk about his/her research for 15-20 minutes, followed by 15 minutes of informal discussion with the audience. Creative writing students will give a 15-minute reading from their work along with some context which may come from their accompanying introductory essay. If more than one student is completing a thesis the same semester, presentations may be scheduled together with the understanding that the audience for the entire time will consist of all invited guests for all students.

PRESENTING FINAL PROJECT WORK AT COLLOQUIA AND CONFERENCES

Though not strictly a part of the final project cycle, there are opportunities for graduate students to present their work to an audience. In recent years, students in the English M.A. Program have organized a one-day conference in late spring, providing a forum for humanities students from UMass-Boston to present their writing. The conference offers an excellent opportunity to present and receive feedback on some part of your final project or a seminar paper from your graduate student colleagues and professors who attend the conference. Students are also encouraged to seek out external conference or reading opportunities, as presenting your work to others is a foundation of creative and academic discourse. Some travel funding is available upon application to the Graduate Studies Association.

SAMPLE TITLE PAGE

**The Janus of Middle Earth:
A Teacher's Perspective on Tolkien and Ethics of Nostalgia**

Matthew Kelly

**Submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for a Masters Degree in
English at the University of Massachusetts, Boston**

March 26, 2009

Directed by: Professor Robert Crossley

Signature: _____

Date: _____

FINAL PROJECT ABSTRACT

The final project abstract should immediately follow your title page. The M.A. Program also needs a clean copy of your final project abstract for our files.

Abstracts should be:

- a maximum of 350 words
- single-spaced
- using a 12-point Times font.

The format guidelines are as follows:

1. The title of the work must be in all caps, bolded and italicized
2. List month (June, September or December only) and year of the degree, no comma in between
3. Student's full name
4. Academic degrees (including the one awarded for this work) and name of university
5. The abstract should include the full name of the student's advisor (use Professor, not Doctor, and do not include degree after the name)

ESSAY or CURRICULUM PROJECT ABSTRACT:

The essay abstract will summarize the content of the essay or project.

EXAM ABSTRACT:

The exam abstract will include a copy of the exam questions and a summary of issues covered in the exam.

MA THESIS ABSTRACT:

The format is slightly different; please see M.A. Program secretary for a copy of *Guidelines for the Preparation of Theses & Dissertations* published by the Office of Graduate Studies. These guidelines are also available at the Graduate Studies website:

<http://www.umb.edu/academics/graduate/> in the "Thesis and Dissertation Document" section.

SAMPLE ABSTRACT

POLISHING THE FORGOTTEN SILVER FORK: A CLOSER LOOK AT PELHAM AND PIN MONEY

June 2008

Marissa Orsillo

B.A., Stonehill College

M.A., University of Massachusetts Boston

Directed by Professor Cheryl Nixon

This project explores a literary genre long forgotten by modern scholars and readers—silver fork fiction. The silver fork novel was a bestselling phenomenon from 1820-1840 that reflects the ideology of England's endangered upper class. This genre captures the British peerage during a transitional period that gave rise to a newfound middle class—an "industrial" class that possessed "earned" rather than "old" wealth. In this project, my primary focus is Sir Edward Bulwer-Lytton's *Pelham* and Mrs. Catherine Gore's *Pin Money*, since these texts comprehensively reflect the silver fork world's anxieties, hypocrisies, and frivolities. I demonstrate how an anxious aristocracy clung to prescribed codes of behavior as a means of stabilizing their crumbling elitism; I also point out the inconsistency and hypocrisy surrounding these codes of decorum. Central to my argument is how the characteristically shallow plot structure of fashionable fiction mirrors the superficiality of the British *bon ton*. Because *Pin Money* and *Pelham* are deeply linked to their authors' class-consciousness, this project is framed with biographical information pertaining to Bulwer-Lytton and Gore.

SAMPLE ABSTRACT

BOTH SIDES OF MY SKIN: FOUR STORIES OF PREGNANCY AND MOTHERHOOD

December 2005

Elizabeth Trach

B.A., Wake Forest University

M.A., University of Massachusetts, Boston

Directed by Professor John Fulton

Both Sides of My Skin is a collection of four short stories written between the years 2000 and 2005 in the M.A. program at the University of Massachusetts, Boston. Each of these stories deals with a different aspect of pregnancy and/or motherhood. In “Results,” a young woman anxiously awaits the results of a pregnancy test, counting down the seconds as she reflects on the deterioration of her romantic relationship and how the results could change her plans.

“Recognition” is the story of a woman’s first pregnancy and how preparing to become a mother forces her to come to terms with both the relationship with her own mother and the relationship she hopes to form with her unborn child. “September Air” explores a day in the life of a stay-at-home mother who alternately enjoys and resents her toddler and infant as she struggles to subdue the violence in her life; the emotional violence she inflicts upon herself in giving up her personal and professional ambitions, and the physical violence she tries desperately not to inflict upon her children. Finally, “The Second Time” depicts a couple in conflicts over whether or not to terminate a potential Down Syndrome pregnancy. The stories are prefaced by an introductory essay that explores how each story is influenced by contemporary fiction, non-fiction, and the politics of gender as they affect both twenty-first century American culture and the critical reading of fiction.

ANNOTATED BIBLIOGRAPHY

MLA FORMAT

For an annotated bibliography, use standard MLA format for the citations, then add a brief abstract for each entry, including:

- 2 or 3 sentences that summarize the main idea(s) of the item, and
- 1 or 2 sentences that relate the item to your final project.

BASIC MLA STYLE FORMAT FOR AN ANNOTATED BIBLIOGRAPHY

Format your citations in the same manner as for a normal reference list, and then follow these instructions for adding an annotation.

1. **Hanging Indents** are required for citations in the bibliography, as shown below. That is, the first line of the citation starts at the left margin. Subsequent lines are indented.
2. Unlike the rest of an MLA formatted essay, the Bibliography for the Final Project can be single spaced. Single spacing reflects common practice in journals (and an effort to save on excess printing!). Add an extra line between the citations.
3. The annotation should start on a new line after the bibliographic citation. It should remain indented under the bibliographic citation, as shown below.
4. The right margin is the normal, unjustified right margin of your document.
5. In a long bibliography, organize your entries by sub-topics.

SAMPLE ANNOTATED BIBLIOGRAPHY ENTRIES

Fryer, Sarah Beebe. "Beneath the Mask: The Plight of Daisy Buchanan." *Critical Essays on F. Scott Fitzgerald's The Great Gatsby*. Ed. Scott Donaldson. Boston: G.K. Hall, 1984. 153-166.

This feminist essay argues that Daisy is trapped in the cultural constructions of "Rich Wife" and "Pretty Girl" and that she chooses the "unsatisfactory stability" of her marriage because of those constructions. The idea of cultural construction is useful for this essay and can be applied to Jordan. Fryer's only mention of Jordan is as a foil to Daisy: "Like Jordan, Daisy is affected" (156).

Kerr, Frances. "Feeling Half-Feminine: Modernism and the Politics of Emotion in The Great Gatsby." *American Literature* 68 (1996): 405-31.

This essay provides a brilliant analysis of the homoerotics in the novel, focusing on Nick's attraction to McKee and Gatsby. Kerr notes that Jordan has more control over her

emotions than the other women in the novel, including Daisy and Myrtle. Kerr argues that Nick's narrative about his leaving her "leads the reader to believe that it is Jordan's indifference, shallowness, and dishonesty that prompt his move" (418). Kerr provides a rich analysis of the psychological reasons for Nick's actions, pointing to his attraction to feminine men.

Mandel, Jerome. "The Grotesque Rose: Medieval Romance and *The Great Gatsby*." *Modern Fiction Studies* 34 (1988): 541-558.

Mandel argues that *Gatsby* follows many of the conventions of medieval romance, and analyzes East and West Egg as competing courts, Buchanan as a prince/lord with Daisy as unattainable queen/fair lady. Gatsby and Nick are both construed as knights; Jordan is only mentioned in passing as a sort of attendant figure on Queen Daisy. This analysis seems somewhat farfetched and proved of limited use for this essay.

ENGLISH M.A. PROGRAM
FINAL PROJECT PROPOSAL FORM

NAME: _____

EMAIL: _____ **PHONE:** _____

DATE: _____

FINAL PROJECT INFORMATION:

I plan to complete my Final Project in:

FALL 20____ (year) SPRING 20____ (year)

My Final Project will be: (check one)

- Analytical Essay
- Creative Writing Project
- Curriculum Unit
- Timed Exam

My Final Project credits will be: (check one)

3 credits 6 credits (permission of GPD required)

My Concentration is: (check one)

Literature Composition Creative Writing

FINAL PROJECT WORKING TITLE:

FINAL PROJECT REQUIRED SIGNATURES:

Final Project Advisor: _____

Graduate Program Director: _____

(see directions on next page)

FINAL PROJECT PROPOSAL MATERIALS -- PLEASE INCLUDE WITH THIS FORM:

1. Final Project Prospectus of at least 500 words.

- The prospectus should state your main topic, working arguments or goals, and concepts under development. Simply put, it should explain the ideas you plan to explore. It can predict how you might organize your ideas into sub-sections. It can culminate with open-ended questions.
- A literature prospectus should make clear the central authors, literary texts, and time period you are examining. All prospectuses should explain the key thinkers or writers who are influencing the final project's ideas.
- As you format your prospectus, please add a heading with your name, email address, and the date. It should be labeled with your working title.

2. Final Project Bibliography of at least 12 sources.

- Your sources should be listed according to the categories of primary sources and secondary sources.
- Your sources should feature up-to-date materials and include both books and articles.
- Your Final Project Advisor can help you determine leading figures in your field, making sure that your sources reflect current research trends.

3. Final Project Calendar of at least 4 dates.

- Please create a calendar that lists at least four dates that you have agreed on with your Final Project Advisor: 1) due date for draft of a first sub-section, 2) due date for draft of a second sub-section, 3) due date for draft of entire project, 4) M.A. Program due date for final draft of final project.

FINAL PROJECT REGISTRATION:

During the semester the final project will be completed, register for:

- ENGL 691: Composition
- ENGL 692: Creative Writing
- ENGL 693: Literature
- ENGL 699: M.A. Thesis (six credits)

PLEASE MAKE THREE COPIES OF THIS FORM AND ALL MATERIALS.

SUBMIT TO THE ENGLISH M.A. OFFICE.

DUE DATES AVAILABLE FROM ENGLISH M.A. OFFICE.



ENGLISH M.A. PROGRAM: 617-287-6702
ENGLISHMA.PROGRAM@UMB.EDU
WWW.UMB.EDU/ACADEMICS/CLA/DEPT/ENGLISH

ENGLISH M.A. PROGRAM

FINAL PROJECT FORMATTING CHECKLIST

I. THE BASICS!

_____ **1. KNOW YOUR DUE DATE**

Double-check the due date! Be prepared to bring all required copies of all materials to the English M.A. Office by deadline.

_____ **2. BRING THREE COPIES** (plus one for advisor)

Bring three copies of your three-credit final project to the English M.A. Office (four copies for a six-credit thesis). One copy will remain in the Office; the others will go to readers. Copies **CANNOT** be made in the English Department office xerox room.

_____ **3. DO NOT BIND, USE BINDER CLIP**

Do not “bind” your copies of the final project. Use a large binder clip for each of your three copies (a curriculum unit can be submitted in three-ring binders). After three-credit projects are approved, they will be scanned for the English M.A. archive. After four-credit theses are approved, they will be formally bound.

II. FORMATTING

_____ **4. DOCUMENT:** 12-point Times font, 1¼ -inch margins, double-spaced, page numbers, MLA style.

_____ **5. TITLE PAGE:** Follows specific wording and formatting. See model in the *Final Project Guide* appendix.

_____ **6. ADVISOR’S SIGNATURE:** Advisor must sign the title page of every copy that is submitted to the M.A. Office for review.

_____ **7. ABSTRACT:** 350 word overview of project. See guidelines and models in the *Final Project Guide* appendix. Also send **one electronic copy** to the Administrative Assistant in the English M.A. Office.

_____ **8. TABLE OF CONTENTS:** Projects are not required to have a table of contents, but typically do. The table of contents indicates your project’s sub-sections or titles of individual creative writing pieces.

_____ **9. ANNOTATED BIBLIOGRAPHY:** 15-20 current sources; MLA format. See guidelines and model in the *Final Project Guide* appendix.