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English MA Three-Credit Final Exercise
SIMPLIFIED SEQUENCE OF DATES

Fall → Spring Final Exercise

Fall
• **September 1***: Register for ENGL 690: English Research Workshop. *This one-credit course prepares you for Final Exercise: Anyone can take this class, and it is ESPECIALLY useful if your Final Exercise does not come out of coursework, if you have no advisor, if your topic is unformed, or if you are planning a 6-credit Thesis.*

• **October 30**: Final Exercise Proposal Due to MA Office

• **Before Thanksgiving**: Final Exercise Readers’ Meetings. *Meet one-on-one with readers to discuss your work-in-progress and bibliography.*

• **First week of December**: Annotated Bibliography Due to MA Office

Spring
• **March 1**: Final Exercise Progress Deadline: *MA Office requests Final Exercise Progress Report from Final Exercise Advisor; students needing more time discuss deferral to next semester.*

• **Week after Spring Break**: Final Exercise Due to Advisor for Final Proofing

• **April 4**: Final Exercise Due to MA Office: *Final Exercise submissions must follow procedures outlined in this Guide.*

• **Third week of April**: Final Exercise Readers’ Decisions

For Six-Credit Final Exercise, Contact MA Office for University Deadlines

*Note: Exact dates are distributed each semester by MA Office*
English MA Three-Credit Final Exercise
SIMPLIFIED SEQUENCE OF DATES

Spring → Fall Final Exercise

Spring

• **January 20:** Register for ENGL 690: English Research Workshop. *This one-credit course prepares you for Final Exercise:* Anyone can take this class, and it is ESPECIALLY useful if your Final Exercise does not come out of coursework, if you have no advisor, if your topic is unformed, or if you are planning a 6-credit Thesis.

• **March 30:** Final Exercise Proposal Due to MA Office

• **mid-April:** Final Exercise Readers’ Meetings. *Meet one-on-one with readers to discuss your work-in-progress and bibliography.*

• **May 1:** Annotated Bibliography Due to MA Office

Fall

• **October 1:** Final Exercise Progress Deadline: *MA Office requests Final Exercise Progress Report from Final Exercise Advisor; students needing more time discuss deferral to next semester.*

• **November 1:** Final Exercise Due to Advisor for Final Proofing

• **November 15:** Final Exercise Due to MA Office: *Final Exercise submissions must follow procedures outlined in this Guide.*

• **First week of December:** Final Exercise Readers’ Decisions

Contact MA Office for Six-Credit Final Exercise’s University Deadlines

*Note: Exact dates are distributed each semester by MA Office*
1. FINAL EXERCISE OPTIONS

Choosing a Final Exercise Option

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

To earn the MA degree, each MA student in English must complete a final exercise, 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. You may choose one of the following options.

**English MA Final Exercise: Select from Six Different Options**

A. Analytical Writing
   1. Three-credit Analytical Final Project (approximately 30 pages): an analytical essay focusing on either literature or composition
   2. Six-credit Analytical Thesis (approximately 60 pages): an extended analytical essay 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: a manuscript of poetry, fiction, or creative nonfiction to be determined in consultation with the Director of Creative Writing

C. Curriculum Project
   5. Three-credit Curriculum Project: a project consisting of a syllabus, assignments, exercises, and an explanatory essay using criticism

D. Final Exam
   6. Three-credit Final Examination: a timed written exam on a topic and reading list determined with an advisor; you are given 6 hours and can write no more than 12 pages in response to questions you have developed with your faculty advisor. This option is available to students concentrating in literature, pedagogy or composition.

Think carefully about the scope of your final exercise and how much time you want to devote to it. Once the proposal for a specific type of final exercise is accepted and official, the decision is not reversible without a formal appeal to the Graduate Program Director.
2. FINAL EXERCISE ADVISOR and TOPIC:
   Defining a Final Exercise Topic and Finding a Final Exercise Advisor

For all six options, the student chooses a final exercise advisor. In consultation with the advisor, you will determine the focus of the final exercise, write a proposal, complete the exercise, and submit it to the English MA Program for approval, as explained in each of the following sections. The final exercise is a unique opportunity to work one-on-one with a faculty advisor on an extended exercise that is meaningful to you. How do you choose an appropriate final exercise topic and advisor?

Defining a Final Exercise Topic: Look to Coursework
While many students enter the English MA 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 here. As a result, coursework typically becomes the basis for the final exercise, and course papers are a recommended “first draft” of a final exercise.

As you start to plan your final exercise topic, reflect on the papers you’ve written, the exercises and presentations you’ve completed, and the authors, critics, and theorists you’ve studied in your courses. What represents your best work? What represents the work you are most passionate about? What represents the work that still triggers new questions and new ideas?

Generating a final exercise topic will involve brainstorming sessions. Consider finding other people you can brainstorm with: fellow students, friends, faculty members, and the Graduate Program Director. You can get a good sense of the scope and depth of a typical final exercise topic by looking at previous year’s exercises, held in the English MA Office. As explained below, also consider taking the “Engl 690: English Research Workshop” course and attending Info-sessions.

Finding a Final Exercise Advisor: Look to Course Professors
Your final exercise advisor will most likely be a professor with whom you’ve taken a course. If you’ve written a successful course paper—one that you are thinking of revising and expanding for the final exercise—talk to the course professor as soon as possible. Indicate your interest in continuing to work with him or her, and discuss expanding on the course materials in your final exercise research.

For many students, coursework leads directly to a final exercise advisor. For a student who knows she wants to work on a particular text, say Jane Austen’s *Persuasion*, and has taken a course with the faculty member who specializes in Austen, who then agrees to direct the exercise, the exercise has begun.

For other students the path to choosing an advisor and topic is less clear. Some students have very specific exercise ideas, but can’t find a faculty member who feels s/he has sufficient expertise in the particular field of your interest. In some cases, a professor is already committed to directing other exercises or will be on leave during the final exercise.
semester. In these cases, a student is asked to take the one-credit course, ENGL690: English Research Workshop, described in this Guide.

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 process of locating a final exercise advisor and deciding on a topic could evolve in many ways, such as the following:

- **Start with the topic:** Again, your topic will most likely evolve out of coursework, and you should revisit your coursework for potential research interests. 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 exercise, and decide together whether or not this person would be an appropriate advisor.

- **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 your interests best.

- **Allow the exercise to evolve:** When a student and professor have a good working relationship, there will be flexibility on both sides so that an exercise 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 an exercise on trauma and language in Toni Morrison’s *Beloved*, depending on how student and professor negotiate. In short, honing your final exercise topic and choosing a final exercise advisor go hand in hand.

The final exercise is the culmination of your work in the English MA Program at UMass-Boston and it is in everyone’s interest that you do an excellent job. As you work on your final exercise, 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.

As a graduate 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 final exercise advisor a positive first step in the development of a successful MA final exercise.
### 3. ONE-CREDIT WORKSHOP COURSE AND INFOSESSIONS

Taking ENGL690, a One-Credit Course on Planning the Final Exercise

The MA Program offers multiple opportunities for guidance in formulating the final exercise. Intensive, sustained guidance takes the form of a one-credit workshop course. In the semester before you plan to complete the final exercise, you are encouraged to take the one-credit course ENGL690: English Research Workshop. We suggest that you register for ENGL690 if your final exercise does not come out of coursework, if you do not have an advisor, if your topic is non-traditional, if your topic ideas are unclear, or if you are planning a 6-credit thesis.

The **central goal of the ENGL690: English Research Workshop** is to prepare MA students for a successful final exercise. The seminar-style workshop will help students move through the steps needed to create a final exercise proposal and will help students start outlining and drafting the final exercise. Students 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 is usually scheduled at a time that works for all participants. Students enroll themselves into ENGL690 during course registration.

#### Attending Final Exercise Infosessions

Each semester, the English MA Program schedules a series of final exercise Infosessions that offer guidance on defining and completing the final exercise. Recent Infosessions have included topics such as:

- Submitting a Final Exercise Proposal
- Moving from Proposal to Final Exercise
- Creating an Annotated Bibliography
- Final Stages: Completing and Submitting the Final Exercise.

These information-packed sessions offer focused advice on succeeding in the final exercise process. Please attend! Infosessions are scheduled and advertised by the English MA Office.
4. FINAL EXERCISE PROPOSAL
Completing the Final Exercise Proposal

After you have decided on a topic and located an advisor, you must submit a Final Exercise Proposal Form and Materials to the Graduate Program Office. **Note that you must submit this final exercise proposal the semester before your final exercise is due.** Generally, the final exercise proposal is due at mid-semester (March for an exercise being completed in the fall semester and October for an exercise being completed in the spring semester). The MA Office distributes and posts specific deadlines each semester.

A Final Exercise Proposal Form is included at the end of this Guide. Forms, which include complete directions, are available at the MA Office and at:

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

A. Analytical Writing
   1. Three-credit Analytical Final Project
   2. 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 Exercise Proposal Form, included at the end of this packet. A clearly focused prospectus (of 500 words for the three-credit option and 1000 words for the six-credit option) must explain the topic, working arguments, and planned methodology. An initial working bibliography of twelve-fifteen sources, both primary and secondary, must be included as part of the proposal. The proposal must be approved by the exercise advisor and Graduate Program Director.

B. Creative Writing
   3. Three-credit Creative Writing Final Project
   4. 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 Exercise Proposal Form, included at the end of this packet. A clearly focused prospectus (of 500 words for the three-credit option and 1000 words for the six-credit option) must state the exercise’s goals, scope, and what work the student has already completed. An initial reading list must be included. The proposal must be approved by the exercise advisor, Graduate Program Director, and Director of the M.F.A Program.

C. Curriculum Project
   5. Three-credit Curriculum Project
   For the three-credit curriculum project, the proposal must include a Final Exercise Proposal Form, included at the end of this packet. A clearly focused prospectus (of 500 words) must state the exercise’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 exercise should have teaching experience or have completed extensive pedagogy coursework in our “Teaching of...” courses. The proposal must be approved by the exercise advisor and Graduate Program Director.

D. Final Exam

6. Three-credit Final Examination

For the final examination, the Final Exercise 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. This option is available to students concentrating in literature, pedagogy or composition.

Before the proposal is due, the student should engage in detailed discussions about the exercise with the final exercise 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 proposal 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 MA Office. The Graduate Program Director must give final approval and may, like your exercise advisor, send it back to you for revision.

Meeting with Final Exercise Readers and Completing the Annotated Bibliography

The proposal is the crucial starting point for the final exercise. Work on the final exercise should begin as soon as the proposal has been approved. The month after submitting the final exercise proposal requires you to complete two tasks to move the final exercise forward:

- 1. Meet with your Final Exercise Readers
- 2. Complete an Annotated Bibliography of 12-15 sources

Based on the topic and field of study indicated in the proposal, a committee of two readers or examiners is selected by the Graduate Program Director. Each student will be notified of his or her readers. It is required that you meet with your readers shortly after submitting your proposal. You should ask your readers for feedback on your topic and for any advice they have about secondary sources, theoretical sources, and research materials. They can provide useful information about debates in your field of research, about different schools of literary criticism and theory, about different approaches to composition studies and pedagogy, and about sources discussing issues of creative writing craft. You are required to meet with your readers early in the final exercise process so that they can indicate what research they think would help with the formulation of your topic. Use them as a resource for further thinking about your topic, your research, and your
writing process. However, as you complete the exercise, it is not appropriate to ask your readers to look at drafts of your work.

Completed under the direction of your advisor, the annotated bibliography of twelve-fifteen sources is due at the MA Office approximately a month after the proposal is due. In the month after submitting your proposal, your task is to move your research forward. You need to locate and read sources in your area of study, which will help you to hone your exercise further. This foundational research—which surveys, digests, and evaluates key studies in your field of inquiry—cannot be put off until the semester in which you must be writing the final exercise. Even before you submit your proposal, you should be comfortable locating articles titles in the MLA bibliography, locating articles in full-text databases, locating primary sources in databases, and requesting sources via interlibrary loan. As part of the final exercise process, you want to collect your own personal “library” of materials from these many sources; the annotated bibliography represents that library of materials that you will continue to work with and think about as you write your final exercise.

Your annotated bibliography should be a fuller reading and annotating of the sources you list in the preliminary bibliography submitted with your proposal. You will also be locating and adding new materials to the preliminary bibliography. Note that the creation of an annotated bibliography is an exercise in scanning your field of research; each annotation is succinct and captures only essential information. Do not “overwrite” your annotations. Your readers will help you to suggest sources that you can use in your annotated bibliography, but your final exercise advisor is your ultimate guide to the materials that should appear on the annotated bibliography.

Guidelines and samples of annotated bibliography entries appear in the appendices to this Guide. Note that your annotated bibliography will be submitted as part of the final draft of the final exercise.

The MA Office will circulate reminders about the submission deadlines and procedures for the annotated bibliography. You must send one electronic copy of the annotated bibliography to the MA Office by the given due date.
5. FINAL EXERCISE REGISTRATION
Registering through the English MA Office

In the semester in which the exercise is to be completed, the student completing a three-credit final exercise will be registered for:

- ENGL691: Final Project in Composition
- ENGL692: Final Project in Creative Writing
- ENGL693: Final Project in Literature

All six-credit final exercises are registered as:

- ENGL699 Master of Arts Thesis

You must have permission from the Graduate Program Director to register for all final exercise courses. All of these courses are “by program permission only,” and the MA Office will register you directly into these courses.

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 the MA Office is registering you for these credits. The MA Office will contact you if it is having difficulty registering you for the final exercise course due to a hold on your account; it is your responsibility to take care of any such holds or barriers to registration and then let the MA Office know that you can be registered.

Work on the final exercise should begin as soon as the proposal has been approved, before the semester in which you register for these credits.
6. FINAL EXERCISE STRUCTURE AND PROCESS

Writing the Final Exercise

As you start to think about and then work on your final exercise, you will obviously be spending much of your time reading, researching, writing, and discussing your work with your final exercise advisor. Your advisor will be an invaluable resource at every stage of idea development. Clearly, the more familiar your advisor is with your exercise’s focus, the easier it will be for him or her to recommend sources, ask good questions, and help you to situate your exercise within the field. Keep in close contact with your advisor as you develop your final exercise topic, creating a calendar of frequent and regular meetings.

You should consider taking the one-credit ENGL690 workshop course, plan to attend at the appropriate Infosessions held by the Graduate Program Director, and make sure to examine successful completed final exercises, which are kept in the MA Office and may be signed out.

A. Analytical Writing

It is recommended that the three-credit final project and six-credit thesis build on a paper written previously for a course. The exercise may focus on a new area of inquiry if appropriate background coursework has been completed and an appropriate advisor has been located. 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 exercise, it does so in greater depth and detail. The intellectual process involved is familiar: the student needs to find an area of inquiry (topic), research the latest debates on and theories about 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.

1. Three-credit Analytical Final Essay

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 model for the analytic final essay is the scholarly journal article. The research should be fully documented in MLA format and it should include an annotated bibliography of approximately 15-20 entries. Because the scholarly article published in an academic journal provides a model for final essay, you should read articles in the field to get a sense of their scope, topic, organization, and research methodology.

As an exercise 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 throughout 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 exercise proposal, the student, in consultation with the final exercise advisor, will draft a schedule for completing the exercise. 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. Close consultation with your exercise advisor and purposeful focus on your research and writing tasks will help keep the essay on course.

After submitting your proposal, you will also be required to meet at least once with each of your appointed readers (who have your proposal and initial bibliography) in the initial stages of your research. The assigned readers are important resources during the research 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 will work with your advisor to decide how best to use it. Using your readers’ and advisor’s suggestions, you will compile an annotated bibliography, due approximately a month after the proposal is due. These requirements are described earlier in this Guide. These tasks lay the foundation for the research and writing required by the final exercise.

2. Six-credit Analytical Thesis

The six-credit thesis should meet the general guidelines for the three-credit final project but should represent a more extended exercise, 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 exercise advisor whether a particular exercise is suited to the thesis’ more extended inquiry, and yet is still clearly defined and manageable. Any student considering the six-credit option must meet with the Graduate Program Director and obtain permission for proposing the exercise, as it involves a more complex submission process. For example, the thesis will be assigned three readers and must be explained to the Department community in an oral presentation.
As part of completing the final exercise proposal, **the student, in consultation with the final exercise advisor, will draft a schedule for completing the exercise.** 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. Close consultation with your exercise advisor and purposeful focus on your research and writing tasks will help keep the essay on course.

After submitting your proposal, **you will also be required to meet at least once with each of your appointed readers** (who have your proposal and initial bibliography) in the initial stages of your research. The assigned readers are important resources during the research 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 will work with your advisor to decide how best to use it. Using your readers’ and advisor’s suggestions, you will **compile an annotated bibliography, due approximately a month after the proposal is due.** These requirements are described earlier in this Guide. These tasks lay the foundation for the research and writing required by the final exercise.

**B. Creative Writing**

3. **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. Preliminary **versions of this creative work should be drafted in the English MA Workshop courses.** The exact length and proportions of each creative writing final project is determined by the final exercise advisor and Director of Creative Writing. 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 exercise 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

As part of completing the final exercise proposal, **the student, in consultation with the final exercise advisor, will draft a schedule for completing the exercise.** 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. Close
consultation with your exercise advisor and purposeful focus on your writing deadlines will help keep the exercise on course.

After submitting your proposal, you will also be required to meet at least once with each of your appointed readers (who have your proposal and initial bibliography) in the initial stages of your writing. The assigned readers are important resources, as they can provide useful information about the writing process. While such advice and expertise are always illuminating, you will work with your advisor to decide how best to use it. Using your readers’ and advisor’s suggestions, you will compete an annotated bibliography of both primary sources (such as works by admired authors) and secondary sources (such as sources on craft), due approximately a month after the proposal is due. These requirements are described earlier in this Guide. These tasks lay the foundation for the research and writing required by the final exercise.

4. Six-credit Creative Writing Thesis
The final exercise advisor, in consultation with the Director of Creative Writing and the Graduate Program Director, will decide whether the proposed exercise, in terms of scope and amount of work required, merits three or six credits. Preliminary versions of this creative work should be drafted in the English MA workshop courses. The exercise 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 an extensive bibliography of work in the chosen genre that will help his/her own creative work. This list will be discussed in advance with the final exercise advisor.

In poetry: 35-45 manuscript pages, introduced by a 15-20 page critical essay that
- Explains the genesis of the exercise
- Discusses the manuscript’s structure (arrangement of poems)
- Engages a critical issue relevant to the exercise

In fiction, creative nonfiction, and mixed genres: 50-90 manuscript pages, introduced by a 15-20 page critical essay that
- Explains the genesis of the exercise
- Provides an extended discussion of literary influences on the exercise
- Discusses the use of genre or mixed genre
- Engages a critical issue relevant to the exercise

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).

As part of completing the final exercise proposal, the student, in consultation with the final exercise advisor, will draft a schedule for completing the exercise. 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. Close consultation with your exercise advisor and purposeful focus on your writing deadlines will help keep the exercise on course.
After submitting your proposal, you will also be required to meet at least once with each of your appointed readers (who have your proposal and initial bibliography) in the initial stages of your writing. The assigned readers are important resources, as they can provide useful information about the writing process. While such advice and expertise are always illuminating, you will work with your advisor to decide how best to use it. Using your readers’ and advisor’s suggestions, you will compile an annotated bibliography of both primary sources (such as works by admired authors) and secondary sources (such as sources on craft), due approximately a month after the proposal is due. These requirements are described earlier in this Guide. These tasks lay the foundation for the research and writing required by the finale exercise.

C. Curriculum Project

5. Three-credit Curriculum Project

An MA Curriculum Project may be done in any of the three concentrations 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 exercise (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. A dossier of no more than 20 pages of selected materials assigned in the course. Submit copies of shorter works, an abbreviated version (i.e. the first few pages) of longer works, along with explanations of visual and/or auditory documents created for the course. These materials may be submitted in digital form.

4. An annotated bibliography of the approximately 12-15 sources used in the curriculum project.
As part of completing the final exercise proposal, **the student, in consultation with the final exercise advisor, will draft a schedule for completing the exercise.** 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. Close consultation with your exercise advisor and purposeful focus on your research and writing tasks will help keep the essay on course.

After submitting your proposal, **you will also be required to meet at least once with each of your appointed readers** (who have your proposal and initial bibliography) in the initial stages of your research. The assigned readers are important resources during the research 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 will work with your advisor to decide how best to use it. Using your readers’ and advisor’s suggestions, you will **compete an annotated bibliography combining primary and secondary sources, due approximately a month after the proposal is due.** These requirements are described earlier in this *Guide.* These tasks lay the foundation for the research and writing required by the final exercise.

**D. Final Exam**

6. **Three-credit Final Examination**

The examination option allows the student concentrating in literature, pedagogy or composition to read widely in a field of English study, developing depth as well as breadth in that field. In consultation with her or his final exam advisor, the student prepares a bibliography of approximately 30-40 texts (both primary and secondary, as approved by advisor), in a focused field. The bibliography is created under the guidance of the advisor and the number of works to be read will reflect the topic and genre being studied. The annotated bibliography will be composed of 12-15 secondary sources, with additional primary and secondary sources added throughout the semester.

Preparation for the final exam combines qualities of an independent study and a final project. The student meets regularly, perhaps every two weeks, 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 and student work together to create examination questions, which are then approved by his or her two readers and the Graduate Program Director.

The examination consists of essay questions based on the student’s list of primary texts and secondary works appropriate to his or her field and concentration. 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 student is given a selection of questions, generally three to five, out of which s/he may choose two 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 six hours after receiving the examination questions.
This includes the time needed for: the electronic receipt and submission of the exam, writing for 4 hours (2 hours on each question--see below), taking a break, and reading through essays for minor correcting before submission. No exceptions to the 6-hour limit will be granted. Submitted responses to the exam questions should be at least 10 pages, but should not exceed 12 typed, double-spaced pages in total. The exam is open book, so that students can prepare for the exam and use that preparation while they write (but should be focusing on the writing and not looking up materials). Because the exam is timed, 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.

Because the examination option allows you to read a broader range of texts than would be appropriate for an analytical essay, the final examination is a good option if a) you are temperamentally suited or more inclined to exam-taking rather than essay-writing, b) your topic is more wide-ranging or less thesis driven than an article length paper, or c) you feel that reading widely in a field would be an appropriate and meaningful culmination of your MA study.

As with all other final exercises, after submitting your proposal, **you will also be required to meet at least once with each of your appointed readers** (who have your proposal and initial bibliography) in the initial stages of your exam reading. The assigned readers are important resources who can help you shape your reading for the exam. While such advice and expertise are always illuminating, you will work with your advisor to decide how best to use it. Using your readers’ and advisor’s suggestions, you will **complete an annotated bibliography of 12-15 secondary sources, due approximately a month after the proposal is due**. These requirements and deadlines are described elsewhere in this Guide.
7. FINAL EXERCISE SUBMISSION
Following Final Exercise Deadlines and Procedures

Check the deadline for submitting the final exercise in your semester. Deadlines are posted and distributed by the MA Office. The deadline changes a bit each year. The fall deadline is typically a mid-November date and the spring deadline is typically an early April date. Note that the final exercise is due by 5:00 p.m. at the MA Office on the designated day. No late exercises 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 exercise:

• **Number of copies**
The final exercise requires that **TWO hard copies of the final exercise and ONE PDF be submitted to the MA Office.** You must submit an additional PDF copy directly to your final exercise advisor. The MA Office cannot make copies of your final exercise; you should plan to make your copies at a copy shop.

• **Formatting of document**
The final exercise should follow an academic format, typed in a Times 12-point font, with 1 ¼ inch margins, double-spaced, with page numbers. Please include a “Works Cited” page that gives, using MLA format, all of the citations for the works you have used (including any in the annotated bibliography).

• **Formatting of title page**
Please see the sample title page in the Appendix. The **exercise advisor’s signature** must appear on the title page of **each hard copy** of the final exercise, signifying his/her approval of the completed exercise. Please make sure to leave enough time for your advisor to **sign all hard copies** of the exercise 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. All final exercise 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.

• **Submitting in binder clip**
Do NOT “bind” the three-credit project. When you submit your multiple copies of the final exercise, 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). If you are completing a six-credit thesis, you will bind it at a later date.
Again, **late submissions will not be accepted and, if submitted late, the completion of your degree will be deferred until the following semester.** If you are submitting in the Spring semester, this may likely mean that your exercise will be deferred until the Fall, since most readers are not available over the summer.

After the final exercise has been submitted to the MA Office, the exercise will then be distributed to the members of the reading committee who may either approve the essay or suggest revisions. The next section of this Guide addresses the Readers’ process.

After the final exercise has been read and approved by the readers, you may be asked to make revisions of the exercise (such as correcting typos). Your must submit a **clear, corrected “final, final” draft** of the final exercise to the MA office as a PDF file.
8. READERS’ EVALUATIONS  
Receiving Evaluations of the Final Exercise

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

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

If you receive a “revise” evaluation, you will have two weeks to revise your exercise, guided by the readers’ reports and discussion with your exercise advisor. The revision is resubmitted to the MA office, who will pass it on to the reader 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 exercise 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 as PDF to the MA office, where it will be added to the English Department’s archive of final exercises. The three-credit final exercise is NOT bound.

All six-credit MA theses must be electronically submitted according to university guidelines. These guidelines are available from the English MA 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 MA thesis submission. The Graduate Program Director will meet thesis candidates to discuss these procedures.
9. THESIS and FINAL EXERCISE PRESENTATIONS
   Presenting the Six-Credit Thesis to the Department

All six-credit MA theses, both analytical and creative, must be explained to the department community in an oral presentation before the end of the semester in which the thesis is completed. Students will present their research to an audience consisting of the thesis advisor, the 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 15-20 minutes of informal discussion with the audience. Creative writing students will give a 15-20 minute reading from their work along with some context which may come from their accompanying introductory essay, followed by 15-20 minutes of informal discussion with the audience. If more than one student is completing a thesis the same semester, presentations may be scheduled together creating a special “thesis celebration,” with the understanding that the audience for the entire time will consist of all invited guests for all students.

The thesis presentation will be discussed and planned in detail with the Graduate Program Director. Although formal, it is a celebratory affair, recognizing the successful intellectual work of our best students.

Presenting Final Exercise Work in Other Settings

Though not strictly a part of the final exercise cycle, there are opportunities for graduate students to present their work to an audience at UMass Boston or an external audience. Students in the English MA Program organize a one-day Annual English MA Conference in late spring, providing a forum for humanities students from UMass Boston to present their research and writing. The conference offers an excellent opportunity to present and receive feedback on some part of your final exercise 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.
Appendix
THREE CREDIT FINAL EXERCISE: 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: ______________________
Appendix
THREE CREDIT FINAL EXERCISE: ABSTRACT GUIDELINES

The final exercise abstract should immediately follow your title page. The MA Program also needs an electronic copy of your final exercise abstract to be forwarded to Graduate Studies.

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 EXERCISE ABSTRACT:
The essay abstract will summarize the content of the essay or exercise.

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 MA 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.
THREE CREDIT FINAL PROJECT: SAMPLE ABSTRACT

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

June 2009
Marissa Orsillo
B.A., Stonehill College
MA, 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.

THREE-CREDIT FINAL PROJECT: SAMPLE ABSTRACT

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

December 2008
Elizabeth Trach
B.A., Wake Forest University
MA, 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 MA 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.
Appendix
THREE CREDIT FINAL PROJECT: ANNOTATED BIBLIOGRAPHY GUIDELINES

Use Basic MLA Style for Annotated Bibliography
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
• 1 or 2 sentences that relate the item to your final exercise.

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 Exercise 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

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 Jordon. Fryer’s only mention of Jordan is as a foil to Daisy: "Like Jordan, Daisy is affected" (156).

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 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.
Appendix
ENGLISH MA GRADUATE PROGRAM
THREE-CREDIT FINAL EXERCISE

READER’S REPORT

MA Final Project Writer:

Advisor:

Reporting Reader:

Reader’s Decision: □ Pass □ Revise

Reader’s Comments: [250 words suggested]

As you assess the final project, please consider and comment on these qualities:

- **Presentation of Argument:** Articulation of a compelling thesis and supporting claims

- **Development of Ideas:** Attainment of depth of thought and originality of insight

- **Organization of Ideas:** Use of a clear and effective structure to develop ideas

- **Use of Close Reading:** Demonstration of careful analysis of primary sources

- **Use of Secondary Sources:** Demonstration of understanding and integration of meaningful secondary sources

- **Clarity of Writing:** Attention to writing style and mechanics
English MA Program
FINAL EXERCISE PROPOSAL FORM

Name: ________________________ UMS#: ________________________

Email: ________________________ Phone: ________________________

Date of Submission: ___________________________________________

Final Exercise Information:

I plan to complete my Final Exercise in:

FALL 20___ (year)        SPRING 20___ (year)

My Final Exercise will be: (check one)

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

My Final Exercise credits will be: (check one)

_____ 3 credits        _____ 6 credits (must meet to discuss with GPD)

My Concentration is: (check one)

_____ Literature        _____ Composition        _____ Creative Writing

Final Exercise Working Title:

Final Exercise Required Signature:

Final Exercise Advisor Name:

Final Exercise Advisor Signature: __________________________________________

(see directions on next page)
Final Exercise Proposal Materials—Please include with this Form:

1. Final Exercise Prospectus of at least 500 words for three-credit Thesis (1000 words for six-credit Thesis).
   • 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 exercise’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 Exercise 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 books and articles.
   • Your Final Exercise Advisor can help you determine leading figures in your field, making sure that your sources reflect current research trends.

3. Final Exercise Calendar of at least 4 dates.
   • Please create a calendar that lists at least four dates that you have agreed on with your Final Exercise 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 exercise, 4) MA Program due date for final draft of final exercise.

Final Exercise Next Steps—Please be prepared to:

1. Meet with your Final Exercise Readers.
   • Meet with your Readers to discuss your exercise and bibliography.

2. Expand your Bibliography to an Annotated Bibliography.
   • Create an Annotated Bibliography of 12-15 sources and submit to the English MA Office. Due dates are announced by the English MA Office.

Please make three copies of this form and all materials. Submit to the English MA Office. Due dates available from English MA Office.
FINAL EXERCISE FORMATTTING CHECKLIST

*Please remember if you are completing a 6 credit thesis, formal formatting guidelines are available on the Graduate Studies website and the MA Wiki

The Basics

- **Know Your Due Date**  Double check the due date! Be prepared to bring all required copies of all materials to the English MA Office by the deadline.

- **Bring Two Copies & Email PDF Copy**  Bring two hardcopies of your three-credit final exercise to the English MA Office (three copies for a six-credit thesis). The PDF copy, which you can email to Samantha.regan@umb.edu, will remain in the MA Office; the hardcopies will go to your readers, and then be available for you to pick up after your exercise decision has been made. Copies **CANNOT** be made in the English Department office Xerox room.

- **Do NOT Bind Your Final Exercise**  Do not bind your copies of the final exercise. Use a large binder clip for each of your 2 copies (a curriculum unit can be submitted in three-ring binders). After six-credit theses are approved, they will be formally bound by the university.

Formatting and Exercise Organization

- **Document**  12-point Times New Roman font, 1 ¼ -inch margins, double spaced, with page numbers in MLA style.

- **Title Page**  Follows specific wording and formatting – please refer to appendices in Final Exercise Guide.

- **Advisor’s Signature**  Advisor must sign the title page of both hardcopies that are submitted to the MA Office **BEFORE** the due date. You **do not** need a signed signature page for the PDF copy you email to the MA office.

- **Abstract**  350 word overview of the exercise. See guidelines and models in appendices of Final Exercise Guide.

- **Table of Contents**  Exercises are not required to have a table of contents, but typically do. The table of contents indicates your exercise’s sub-sections or titles of individual creative writing pieces.

- **Annotated Bibliography**  12-15 current sources in MLA format. Refer to appendices in Final Exercise Guide for guidelines and models. This is the same annotated bibliography you handed in the previous semester, after your proposal. You only need to change or add it if your topic has substantially changed and your entries are no longer relevant.