

St John's College Graduate Institute

MASTER'S ESSAY GUIDELINES

Students who have completed at least two segments of the Graduate Institute and who have demonstrated considerable facility in writing and class conversation may apply to the Associate Dean for Graduate Programs and the Graduate Institute Committee for permission to write an optional Master's essay. Each student is responsible for finding a tutor to serve as advisor during the writing of the essay. **Students who wish to submit a proposal to write an essay in their third or fourth term should consult with the Associate Dean early in their second term.**

A Master's essay may replace one Liberal Arts preceptorial, or it may be written in addition to the full program, in which case the student will be charged for an additional class. Eastern Classics students may write a Master's essay only in addition to the full program. Students writing essays in addition to the program must complete them and pass the oral examination within two years of their graduation (exceptions may be made for alumni who have petitioned the Associate Dean). Students writing essays in place of their fourth preceptorial should be mindful of submission dates (noted below) or their graduation may be affected.

Step 1: Submit the Master's Essay Application

A St. John's tutor, enlisted by the student, advises essay writers. This tutor's signature is required on the Master's Essay Application form. Complete applications include:

- 1) The Master's Essay Application Form
- 2) a three to five-page description of the project
- 3) copies of two preceptorial essays
- 4) please submit **three copies** of your complete applications **along with the original.** (4 total; paperclip application form to the original)

You must submit your Master's Essay proposal by midterm the semester prior to the one in which you expect to complete it. The Graduate Institute Committee will consult with the student's preceptorial tutors to determine whether the student is ready to undertake such a project. The student is notified when his or her proposal to write a Master's essay has been approved or disapproved.

Step 2: Submit the completed Master's Essay

The content and goal of the Master's essay should be the thoughtful examination of a text or a few texts. The essay is not intended to be a piece of specialized research, but rather a sustained performance in the liberal arts. Students must meet or correspond regularly with their advisor to discuss the essay's composition and progress, and their advisor must sign off on the final draft of the essay before it is submitted to the Associate Dean. Those whose essay work exceeds one year must receive permission from the Associate Dean and their advisor to continue. (There is a continuation fee.) Essays must be submitted to the Associate Dean with the "Essay Submission Form," signed by the advisor, and must meet the specifics listed under the "Mechanics" section of these guidelines.

Students writing essays in place of their fourth preceptorial must be sure to submit them by the following deadlines to allow time for their oral examination.

<u>Term</u>	<u>Deadline</u>
Fall	October 15
Spring	mid February (same due date as undergraduate senior essays)
Summer	July 1

Step 3: The Master's Essay evaluation and oral examination

The Master's essay is evaluated by a specially selected essay committee of three tutors, including a committee chairperson, appointed by the Associate Dean.

An essay judged unsatisfactory, and therefore unacceptable, may be rewritten by a deadline determined by the essay committee and the essay advisor. If the rewritten essay is unacceptable and the student has submitted the essay in place of a preceptorial, then the student must complete a preceptorial to graduate. If the student has submitted the essay in addition to the program, then the essay will simply not be recorded on the student's transcript.

An oral examination is scheduled at the time the committee approves the essay. Oral examinations are conducted in public by the essay committee. Examinations are graded pass with honors, pass, or fail. After the student passes the oral examination, a line will be added to her/his transcript stating the title of the essay and the date of the examination. If the student passes the examination with honors, this is noted on the transcript. No reference to the Master's essay appears on transcripts of students who do not choose to write one or on transcripts of students

whose essays are found unacceptable.

CAVEAT 1: Students should be aware that opting to write a Master's essay might delay their graduation. If a student has opted to write an essay in place of the fourth preceptorial and the essay is found unacceptable even after it is rewritten, then the student must take a preceptorial to meet degree requirements. This will add the cost of one class to the student's total tuition for the program and may cause considerable inconvenience if the student had planned to relocate from Santa Fe immediately after her/his original graduation date.

CAVEAT 2: Those students who first choose to write an essay (and work with an advisor) but then change their minds later and decide to take a preceptorial in its stead will have to pay tuition for that class.

There is no guarantee that the essay will be found acceptable; it may be rejected or returned to the student for rewriting. Students and advisors should take this into consideration when deciding essay submission dates.

Mechanics

1. Essays are submitted in five copies, bound in brief covers (available in the bookstore). Essays must **not** be spiral or plastic bound.
2. Essays are typed on white, 8½ by 11-inch paper, on one side only. Margins should be 1 inch on the top, bottom, and right sides, 1¼ inches on the left. Text should be double-spaced.
3. A separate title page should contain the essay title, author's name, and date of submission. Title pages of essays submitted in place of preceptorials should include the phrase, "Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Master of Arts Degree."
4. All quotations and paraphrases from other works should be properly acknowledged.
5. Footnotes or endnotes should be indicated with superscript numerals (whenever possible, citations should be embedded in the essay text).
6. Quotations less than three lines long should be set off in quotation marks. Longer quotations should be indented half an inch at both margins and single-spaced, with no quotation marks at the beginning and end.
7. A bibliography of texts quoted or referred to within the essay should be appended to the essay. Bibliographical entries are usually made by author, title, place of publication, date of publication.
8. Essays must be thirty to sixty pages long. Pages must be numbered from start to end, without numbering sections separately.

For answers to questions concerning punctuation, grammar, style, notes, and bibliography, essay writers may refer to any standard style manual. The Graduate Institute office recommends *The Chicago Manual of Style* and Kate Turabian's *A Manual for Writers of Term Papers, Theses, and Dissertations*. Students may also wish to refer to *Fowler's Modern English Usage* and Strunk and White's *The Elements of Style*. All four of these manuals are available in the college bookstore or from the college library. Students may request help with composition from graduate students employed by the college as writing assistants. Assistants can be contacted through the Graduate Institute office.

Remember, you must submit your Master's Essay proposal by midterm of the semester prior to the one in which you expect to complete the final essay.

