

UNLV Marriage and Family Therapy Program MFT 749: THESIS REQUIREMENTS

Objectives

1. To gain experience in preparation, completion, and writing of original empirical research
2. To develop and enhance academic and professional writing skills
3. To expand knowledge about systemic therapy
4. Identify/establish an area of expertise/focus for the student
5. Provide students with the opportunity to experience the process of developing a manuscript for a professional journal

Process of Completing the Thesis

- Establish a working relationship with your advisor.
- Appoint a thesis committee. You will need three members from the MFT Program and one member external to the MFT Program.
- Complete and submit “Appointment of Advisory Committee” approval form for the thesis committee. This paperwork can be found on UNLV’s Graduate College website at: http://graduatecollege.unlv.edu/PDF_Docs/AdvisoryCommittee.pdf
- Submit a brief proposal of your paper topic to all committee members. This proposal is one to three double-spaced typed pages, and should be approved in writing by all committee members. Areas to include in this prospectus are detailed below.
- Obtain your committee members signatures on the “Prospectus Approval” form. This form can be found on UNLV’s Graduate College website at: http://graduatecollege.unlv.edu/PDF_Docs/ProspectusApproval.pdf
- Register for 3 or 6 credit hours of Thesis (MFT 749) under your advisor’s section.
- Expand the prospectus outline to the first three chapters of your thesis in preparation for your Prospectus Oral Defense (Introduction, Literature Review, and Methodology). Follow the format provided by the Graduate College by downloading and reviewing the “Guide to Preparing and Submitting the Graduate Thesis or Dissertation” document. This can be retrieved from:
http://graduatecollege.unlv.edu/PDF_Docs/t&dmanual.pdf
- Working closely with your advisor, conduct the research and write the thesis.
- As you become close to completing your thesis, schedule a Thesis Oral Defense with your committee. You are responsible for coordinating this meeting. Be sure to block out at least one hour of time for the defense. Be advised that each student in the program has to complete an oral defense; therefore, please give your committee ample notice to ensure you will obtain a defense time prior to graduation deadlines. Per the MFT graduate handbook, we advise that you schedule the oral defense at least 3-4 weeks prior to the last day of instruction in the semester in which you plan to graduate.
- Distribute a copy of your thesis to all committee members no later than TWO WEEKS prior to the defense date.
- At the defense, bring a copy of the “Oral Defense Results” form, which can be found on UNLV’s Graduate College website at: http://graduatecollege.unlv.edu/PDF_Docs/OralDefense.pdf

- Meet with Harriet Barlow (harriet.barlow@unlv.edu) for final formatting changes to the thesis.

General Requirements for the Prospectus:

- Purpose of the Study
 - What exactly do you want to study? Why?
 - What is the theoretical and /or practical significance of your study?
- Literature Review
 - What other studies have been done that relate to your study? What are the basic findings of those studies?
 - What theories address your research topic? What do they say about it?
- Methodology
 - If relevant, specific hypotheses to be tested should be clearly stated.
 - What are the independent, dependent, and control variables in your study?
 - How will data be collected (e.g., survey, experiment, field research)
 - How will you measure the variables in your study?
 - What type of sample will be used? What are your units of analysis?
 - How will human subjects be protected?
- Data Analysis
 - What kind of statistical analysis do you expect to conduct (e.g., regression, ANOVA, chi-square, etc.).
- Time Table
 - A time table for completing each section of the thesis must be included.
- Materials
 - If relevant, provide copies of proposed materials (e.g., questionnaires to be administered).

General Requirements for the Completed Thesis

- Title page, abstract, paper, references should follow the stylistic guidelines of the *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association* (5th edition)
- Length of paper: While there is not a specific page requirement for the thesis, a well-referenced, well-written paper which addresses the content areas outlined below will likely be at least 30 double-spaced pages of text (excluding title page, abstract, references, appendices).
- Title page: Title, author, etc.
- Abstract: Includes brief statement of problem or purpose of the paper, a summation of what you found or describe in your paper, a statement on the implications for therapists or families. Not to exceed 150 words.
- Organization: clear relationship between introduction, body of paper, and conclusion. It follows the format outlined by the Graduate College and includes an Introduction, Literature Review, Methodology, Data Analysis, and Conclusions section (see format guide provided by the Graduate College).
- Content: comprehensive coverage of relevant theoretical, clinical, ethical, research and/or historical issues; addresses research question(s)/purpose(s) and/or contributes original/creative contribution to the body of knowledge; logical arguments, supporting

research; accuracy of theoretical/clinical/research/historical assertions; originality; relevance to the topic of marriage and family therapy; clinical implications

- Writing skills: accurate typing and spelling; predominant use of active voice; correct use of tenses; agreement of subjects and verbs; no misplaced or dangling modifiers; parallel construction; non-sexist and non-ethnically-biased language; correct use of punctuation; complete sentences; appropriate introduction of quotes; correct use of references; concise, and well-constructed, and flowing sentences; concise, well-constructed, and coherent paragraphs

Components of the Thesis

1. Introduction
 - a. Purpose of the paper/study
 - b. Research question(s)
 - c. Significance of the topic/study
2. Literature Review
 - a. Description of findings from literature review
 - b. Logical flow of material to support research questions and hypotheses
 - c. Introduction of hypothesis/research questions
3. Methodology
 - a. Specific hypotheses to be tested should be clearly stated.
 - b. Define independent, dependent, and control variables
 - c. Describe how data will be collected (e.g., survey, experiment, field research)
 - d. Describe how variables will be measured
 - e. Describe sample under investigation
4. Data Analysis
 - a. Methods used to analyze data
 - b. Present findings in statistical terms; include whether hypotheses were supported
5. Conclusions
 - a. Present findings in text
 - b. Limitations of study
 - c. Clinical Implications
 - d. Recommendations for future research
6. References
7. Appendices
 - a. Copy of survey, if survey methodology was used
 - b. Copy of recruitment materials
 - c. Copy of student CV

Evaluation

- A. Students can receive a grade of “S” or “F” in this course. Evaluation of this paper will be based on a decision by your thesis committee, and will include assessment of the following:

S: Thesis is clearly written and well organized. The thesis clearly addresses the hypotheses identified as described above and demonstrates a knowledge of the field of family therapy. The methodology fits the question under investigation and the

conclusions drawn are appropriate. The thesis is written in APA 5th edition style and follows the guide outlined by the Graduate College format guide.

F: Thesis does not demonstrate one's knowledge of the field of family therapy adequately; thesis suffers from unclear writing, poor organization, or a combination of these problems. Methodology used was inappropriate to the question under investigation and/or the conclusions drawn are in appropriate. Thesis does not follow the guide outlined by the Graduate College.

Other Information

- A. Copyright. The University requires all members of the University Community to familiarize themselves and to follow copyright and fair use requirements. **YOU ARE INDIVIDUALLY AND SOLELY RESPONSIBLE FOR VIOLATIONS OF COPYRIGHT AND FAIR USE LAWS. THE UNIVERSITY WILL NEITHER PROTECT NOR DEFEND YOU NOR ASSUME ANY RESPONSIBILITY FOR EMPLOYEE OR STUDENT VIOLATIONS OF FAIR USE LAWS.** Violations of copyright laws could subject you to federal and state civil penalties and criminal liability as well as disciplinary action under university policies. To familiarize yourself with copyright and fair use policies, the University encourages you to visit its copyright website at: <http://www.unlv.edu/committees/copyright/>. **Failure to comply with these criteria may result in a lowered grade, being “red flagged”, or dismissal from the course.**
- B. Academic Integrity. It is expected that work done for this class will be in strict compliance with the principles of academic integrity. UNLV demands a level of scholarly behavior and academic honesty on the part of students. Violations by students exhibiting honesty while carrying out academic assignments or taking an exam will not be tolerated, and will result in earning zero points for that particular assignment/activity. **Failure to comply with these criteria may result in a lowered grade, being “red flagged”, or dismissal from the course.**

FOR MORE INFORMATION, PLEASE SEE THE “SURVIVING THE MASTER’S THESIS” HANDBOOK. IT CAN BE OBTAINED FROM YOUR ADVISOR
