

Project in Lieu of Thesis (M.A.M.C.)

Professor McAdams's Guidelines

College of Journalism and Communications, University of Florida

These guidelines are for students who have selected Professor McAdams as the committee chair for their project in lieu of thesis in the College of Journalism and Communications.

1. A project in lieu of thesis takes at least two semesters to complete.

A basic timetable goes something like this:

Fall Semester	Spring Semester
Sept. 7: Meet with me and talk about the project you want to do.	Jan. 7: Set up a meeting schedule with me for this semester, and show me the work you have completed so far.
Sept. 14: Submit a concept document to me via e-mail. Revise as needed.	March 1: Submit the completed project to me for review. Schedule a meeting with me to discuss the project. Revise as needed. <i>This deadline is vital.</i>
Sept. 21: Form your committee and complete the paperwork from the College's graduate division.	March 14 (<i>or immediately after Spring Break</i>): Submit the completed project binder (hard copy materials for the graduate division) and all project revisions to me for review. Revise as needed.
Oct. 1: Submit the completed project proposal to me for review. Revise as needed.	April 7: Hold the final project defense, with all three committee members present.
Nov. 1: Hold the proposal defense, with all three committee members present.	

2. Summer graduation is not an option.

I usually leave Gainesville for most of the summer. The University does not pay me for the summer months. I will not be available to meet with you during the summer.

3. Meeting all deadlines is your responsibility.

Each spring, I usually have several graduating master's students for whom I am committee chair. I *am not going to remind you to do your work* or to make sure you come in and show it to me. If you miss your deadlines, you must be prepared to stay an extra semester and pay all associated fees.

Perhaps you can imagine what it would be like to receive three or four master's projects to review, all at the same time, at a time when one has papers to grade, a big research paper deadline (April 1 every year), and committee work that must be completed by the end of the semester. If you think about this, you will understand why *you* must pay close attention to all of *your* deadlines! I will not be able to do it for you.

4. A thesis or project must not be worked on *without feedback*.

A common mistake made by students is to hand in a project or thesis after many hours of working in a vacuum, without the assistance and guidance of committee members.

All your professors have regularly scheduled office hours and will also be happy to schedule meetings with you at other times, as needed.

The more you show your work-in-progress to your committee members *throughout the process*, the better your chances of graduating on time. Do not rely on e-mail throughout this process. *Your professors are flooded with e-mail messages*. You need to show up in person and command our attention, face to face.

The longer you wait between meetings to get feedback, the more likely you will be to miss your deadlines.

5. You must possess the skills needed to complete your project.

The first year of your master's program is the time for you to acquire new skills, such as reporting, interviewing, XHTML and CSS, Flash, Photoshop, audio editing, writing, research methods, and mass communication theory.

If you lack the necessary skills to complete your project, I will not agree to be your committee chair.

For example, if you say, "I want to make an audio slideshow, but I have never edited audio before," I will say, "Why didn't you learn that last semester?" If you want to do a Web-based project and you don't know any XHTML and CSS, I will not agree to it.

About the Project Binder

Before I sign the Graduate School's final exam form, which is what permits you to graduate, I need to approve the final project binder that you will submit to the College's graduate division.

Binders for previous master's project are available in the Journalism Library in Weimer Hall. Please familiarize yourself with the contents of one or more binders submitted by my former students.

The binder is a sturdy, new three-ring binder (available at any office supply store) and must contain the following materials:

1. An external (a) cover front and (b) cover spine with *your name* and the *title of your project* printed (not by hand).
2. A CD or DVD containing a complete and functioning copy of the project, as it appears online. The disc should have a printed label that includes *your name* and the *title of your project*.
3. The disc must be enclosed in or attached to the interior of the binder in such a way that it will *not fall out*.
4. A title page equivalent to the title page of a master's thesis. Include *the full URL for your project* on the title page.
5. Your *revised* project proposal, *fully rewritten in the past tense*, and accurately representing what you have done (now that the project is complete). This must be double-spaced and printed in an acceptable professional manner.
6. Your complete reference list, formatted *according to APA style* (note: *not AP style!*). This must be double-spaced, with a hanging indent.
7. A summary of what you have learned, including what you wish you had done differently from the outset. This is equivalent to the Discussion section of a traditional master's thesis, in which the student writes what the results mean. The summary section of your binder document is perhaps the most useful and interesting part for future students. For your committee, it demonstrates how you have grown during the past two semesters. This must be double-spaced.

More Information

<http://www.jou.ufl.edu/faculty/mmcadams/grad/project.htm>