

DEPARTMENT OF MEDIEVAL STUDIES, CEU

Important information for 1YMA, second-year 2YMA and absolutorium students about thesis submission and defenses in AY 2021/2022

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1. General information

Every thesis must identify an adequate research topic, which includes a manageable field of research and a number of original questions to investigate. Theses should have an original argument, show a good knowledge of the literature in the field, contribute to the study of the field through original research and by relating the subject studied to the broader academic literature, demonstrate analytic ability through the careful and critical use of relevant concepts and approaches. Theses must also be written with grammatical accuracy and stylistic clarity; and they must conform to the departmental academic style guidelines. The thesis receives a grade that is factored into your GPA. **For 1YMA students, the thesis is worth 4 credits; for 2YMA students, 8 credits.**

The MA thesis is relatively short: approx. 50 to 60 pages (up to 18,000 words) not including the bibliography and possible appendices. Controlling the length of the thesis is a critical skill and the required length has been carefully calibrated to reflect the level of detail and focus required from a MA thesis: while a longer thesis is not necessarily a better thesis, an overly concise one may not be sufficient to demonstrate the breadth and depth of your knowledge and research in the field. **If you foresee that your thesis will be longer or shorter than the required length, consult with your supervisor(s) and make sure that they agree to it.**

For a general overview of the thesis requirements and the grading scheme, please, refer to the relevant sections of the [1YMA Booklet](#) and the [2YMA Booklet](#).

2. Important dates

By noon (12PM, midday), Wednesday, May 18, you will have to complete three tasks, all of which are necessary for your thesis to be considered successfully submitted:

- **Submit your** properly-formatted **thesis** with the correct template, approved by your supervisor(s), in a PDF format to [this E-learning page](#) under the section, "MA Theses."
- **Submit your thesis abstract** as a Word document to [this E-learning page](#) under the section, "Thesis Abstracts." (Your thesis abstracts will be published in the 2023 issue of the *Annual of Medieval Studies at CEU*, the department's journal.)
- **Submit your** properly-formatted **thesis** with the correct template, approved by your supervisor(s), in a PDF format to [the ETD platform](#) (Electronic Theses and Dissertations Collection). (The final version of the thesis you submit to E-learning and to ETD must be identical.) ETD requires you to fill out your profile as well so calculate at least 30 minutes for the uploading process to be on safe side.

3. Templates, formatting guidelines, and writing resources

Only a properly-formatted thesis with the template appropriate for your program will be accepted (templates are attached on [E-learning](#)). You can also find them on the [ETD resources page](#) on SharePoint, together with useful tutorials and resources about thesis formatting

CEU's ETD coordinator, Erika Mathe (mathee@ceu.edu) will also offer (optional) weekly thesis-formatting classes starting from late April onward (you will receive an email directly from her about these classes). If you will encounter any problems with [the ETD platform](#) (failure to log in or issues with uploading the thesis), please, contact Erika directly with screenshots of the issue.

The *Little Gray Book*, based on the *Chicago Manual of Style*, is a practical guide for thesis and dissertation writing at the Department of Medieval Studies. (Also attached on [E-learning](#).) It has been put together by Zsuzsanna Reed specifically as an academic writing aid for MA and PhD students and we encourage you all to consult it.

If you need more help beyond your supervisors' guidance—or you would appreciate a non-specialist's feedback about your writing—the instructors of the Center for Academic Writing are available for [one-on-one consultations](#) about the structure of your thesis, questions of argumentation and cohesion. (Please, note that CAW instructors do not proofread or copy-edit theses; their help pertains to structural/argumentative elements of the text.)

4. Late submission of thesis without approved extension request

The MA Thesis submission deadline is strict. If any problem related to submission arises during the thesis-writing period, please, consult with your supervisor(s), your program director and coordinator on time. Short-term extensions will be granted only in exceptional cases (see details below) and have to be approved not just by your supervisor(s) but also your program director.

If you do not have an approved extension request by May 18 and you submit your thesis late, your thesis grade will be downgraded by one third of a grade for each 24 hours starting from the deadline. For example, between May 18, noon and May 19, noon: "A-" instead of an "A." Between May 19, noon and May 20, noon: "B+" instead of an "A." And so on.

5. Short-term extension requests

If you have valid reasons (e.g., health, family, etc.), you may request an extension for a few days, maximum a week (that is, until May 25). The deadline to request an extension is May 9. The [extension request form](#) should be sent to your program coordinator, who will forward it to your supervisor(s) and program director for consideration.

(Extensions cannot be requested beyond May 25 if you still wish to defend in June because the external reader must be given enough time to read and evaluate your thesis.)

6. No submission / Absolutorium

If you foresee that you will not be able to submit your thesis for whatever reason and even a week of extension would not be enough to finish it, you have to notify your supervisor(s), program director and program coordinator as soon as possible but at the latest, by May 9. In this case, you will be removed from the draft defense schedule.

Your chance to earn your MA degree from CEU, however, is not lost. If otherwise you have earned the required minimum number of classroom credits and have satisfied all program requirements except for the thesis, then you are eligible for the "absolutorium, thesis due" status, which allows you to still submit and defend a thesis within two calendar years.

7. External readers

External readers are integral for the department's MA thesis defenses. During April, your supervisor(s) will invite one (in some cases two) external reader(s), a specialist in your field, who will evaluate your thesis and send questions for your defense. External readers are not obligated to be present at the defense but they are always invited.

The deadline for external readers to send their evaluation and questions for the defense is June 6. The evaluation will be emailed to you within a day of its arrival by the program coordinator. The questions for the defense you will not receive in advance (only the members of the defense committee); you will hear/read those for the first time during your defense.

8. Thesis defenses

This year's MA thesis defenses will take place on June 13, 14, 15 in person. Per MEDS custom, the defenses are chaired by distinguished scholars from outside CEU; the rest of the defense committee is made up of your two supervisors or, if you have one supervisor, your supervisor and another faculty member from the department/CEU.

Each defense takes one hour, which includes already the defense committee's deliberation time. The defenses are public and you are all encouraged to attend the defenses of your peers. For more information on the defense procedure and what to expect, please, refer to the section, "MA Thesis Defenses" on [E-learning](#), where you can also find the list of chairs paired with students.

At the latest, you will receive the final defense schedule two weeks prior to the defenses.

9. Correction of thesis after the defense

There are two types of correction cases, which are very different.

a) Mandatory revisions requested by your defense committee

If your committee requests that substantial corrections be made to your thesis, you will get a new deadline for these corrections to be implemented, after which your thesis will be sent to your committee. If the committee approves the new version, you will receive your grade and you can graduate.

In this case, you are required add to your thesis front matter a disclaimer page (template provided by the department) stating that the thesis has been corrected and amended as stipulated by the defense committee.

b) Optional corrections

If your committee does not request substantial revisions, that means your thesis is acceptable as it was originally submitted. However, you will all have the option, in the following few days of the defense, to upload to [ETD](#) an even more polished version of your thesis if you would like. This means that you can still correct typos, clean up footnotes, etc. What you cannot do is to make any changes to the content, i.e., re-write sentences and sections.

This is to give you the possibility to fix some typographical errors so the permanent version on ETD is as clean as possible.

Once the Student Records Office puts you in “Graduated” status, you will not have access to ETD anymore. It is for this reason that the department can only give you a few days after the defense to upload a more polished version of your thesis to ETD. Accordingly, we highly recommend that you carefully re-read your thesis after the submission and before the defense so that you have the more polished version ready by the time of your defense.