



Theses and Dissertations

The Road to Your Future

Audience

- Equal peers (*your faculty committee*)
- Seldom read by anyone else (sorry!)
- Typically rewritten for publications (*plan ahead* for this)

Graduate College Help

- Main <http://grad.admin.arizona.edu/>
- Writing resources <http://www.gwr.arizona.edu/>
- Format [http://grad.arizona.edu/Catalog/
Publications/](http://grad.arizona.edu/Catalog/Publications/)
 - manuals for electronic and paper submission

Writing Skills Improvement Program (WISP, <http://wsip.web.arizona.edu/>)

GRADUATE WRITING WORKSHOPS

Led by Dr. Victoria Stefani

Modern Languages 410 , Wednesdays 4:00 - 5:00 p.m.

- Aug. 30 Step-by-Step Through Your Master's Thesis or Dissertation
- Sept. 6 Writing Your Way to a Focused Research Question
- Sept. 13 Crafting an Effective Proposal
- Sept. 20 The Interplay of Research and Writing
- Sept. 27 Becoming a Trail Guide: Building the Literature Review
- Oct. 4 Presenting Your Methods and Results
- Oct. 11 Revision and Audience Awareness
- Oct. 18 Introductions, Conclusions, and Abstracts
- Oct. 25 Style I: Grammar and Punctuation
- Nov. 1 Style II: Clarity and Grace
- Nov. 8 Creating Successful Oral Presentations: From Proposals to Conference Papers
- Nov. 15 Tried-and-True Strategies for Written and Oral Exams
- Nov. 29 Designing the Curriculum Vitae and Cover Letter

- WORKSHOPS ARE FREE AND OPEN TO EVERYONE; JUST SHOW UP!**
For further information, contact Dr. Donna Rabuck at 621-5849 or drabuck@u.arizona.edu

Graduate Writing Institute

<http://grad.arizona.edu/multi/gwi.htm>

- A free three-week intensive writing program for all graduate students
 - Next: June 4-22, 2007
 - Questions: Contact Sandi Bartell (626-0095) or Donna Rabuck (621-5849)
- Application Deadline: April 2, 2007

Standard Pre-Structure

- Title page
- Statement by Author (student and advisor's signatures)
- Acknowledgments (thank anyone who helped you with your work, provided data, etc. **AND** acknowledge the agency that supplied funding, including **the agency's grant number**)
- Dedication (personal)
- Table of Contents
- List of Tables
- List of Figures
- Abstract (one paragraph summary, include brief results)

Content

□ Theses and dissertations generally have a consistent chapter organization:

□ Introduction

statement of the problem or task you addressed

include an overview of the context of your work (the "big picture")

briefly describe the organization and content of the thesis

□ Background

description of previous relevant work on this problem, including your own comprehensive, but brief

explain what's new or different about your work

□ Approach

detail your approach to the problem or task

layout the whole scope with more details to follow in later chapters

provide a rationale for why you did what you did

□ Description of Research

describe your experiments or the system you've developed

include all important details as graphs, figures, tables

use graphs instead of tables wherever possible

□ Description of Results

describe and analyze your results in detail

what is good? what is bad? why did some things work and others didn't?

□ Summary and Conclusions

summarize your work

place it in context with other work (the "big picture")

what have you done that's new and/or different?

what conclusions can be drawn?

suggest future improvements or research areas

□ References

Accurate and correctly-formatted list of references used in text

use consistent format (IEEE style suggested)

List of general references, not used in text, is called a Bibliography

General Advice

- Group tables and figures at the end of text

Tables and figures *embedded in the text* facilitate reading, BUT are much more difficult to do successfully in a word processor

- Typical formatted length (including figures)

thesis: 80-110 pages

dissertation: 120-150 pages

- Use color sparingly (very expensive to publish later in papers)
- Spend the money for a hardcover binding, at least for your advisor!

Number sections and other items

- X. chapters
- X.X. major headings
- X.X.X. major subheadings
- italics minor subheadings
- chapter#.X equations, figures, tables

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Timing

- Allow enough time for
 - 2 iterations with your advisor
 - 1 iteration with your committee
- Start with Graduate College deadline for defense (http://grad.arizona.edu/Current_Students/Deadlines/)
- Work backwards to determine when you need to have the first draft

Example

- Graduate College deadline for PhD defense to graduate in Spring 2007: **Apr 20, 2007**
- Final thesis draft to committee: **Mar 30**
- First complete thesis draft to advisor: **Feb 16**
- Thus, the **first complete thesis draft should go to your advisor two months before your defense!**

That's not all . . .

- Your committee will often suggest minor, and sometimes not-so-minor, changes to your thesis or dissertation at your defense
- You should **allow 1-2 weeks after defense** to make changes to thesis or dissertation
- Typically, final dissertation (or thesis for microfilming) due at Graduate College 2 weeks after defense deadline