

MFA Thesis Prospectus Guidelines

In 500 words or fewer, describe your thesis project. Include the following elements:

Describe the structure of the creative work you intend to produce. For example, is your fiction a traditional novel with the continuity of chapters, a single narrator, and a linear chronology? Is your nonfiction a collection of interrelated stories or essays that have thematic connections? As a poet, do you intend to write in formal poetry or free verse? What does the shape of your creative work have to do with the content?

Elaborate on the creative material and your aesthetic. For example, what do you intend to create thematically in your fiction, poetry, or nonfiction? Even if you have only begun this work, it is reasonable to expect that you have thought about what this creative work will *mean*. Of course, meaning evolves during the writing of a thesis, but describe the elements in your poetry, fiction, or nonfiction that you expect will give your work thematic weight.

Discuss the writers and writing that have influenced your work. Include a reading list of any works referenced in the prospectus, as well authors and works you plan to study during the course of your thesis work.

MFA Thesis Requirements

Work with your director and the MFA director to determine a reasonable page count for the thesis. Consider your thesis a book-length project. In the past we have considered 180 pp. to be an appropriate length for prose projects and 50 pp. for poetry collections, but you and your thesis director can determine what is a fitting length for your particular thesis.

University-wide guidelines for the actual production of the manuscript (mechanics, paper, number of copies, preliminary pages that the Office of Graduate Studies requires, due dates) can be found here: <https://nmu.edu/graduatestudies/thesis>.

In addition to the manuscript, you are required to write an introductory essay of at least 10 pages, which will be included with the thesis materials and submitted to the Office of Graduate Studies. You may choose to discuss the process of writing your thesis, the relationship between your reading and your writing, or how your completed thesis fits into the literary landscape. Again, work with your director to determine the best way to orient readers to your thesis in the introductory essay.

You are required to take 8-12 credits of thesis hours. These hours are normally distributed over your final two to three semesters (4 credits each semester), but discuss with your advisor how to best integrate thesis credits into your plan of study.