

MASTER OF ARTS IN EUROPEAN STUDIES

MASTER THESIS MANUAL

This manual intends to inform about practical and organizing procedures, assessment criteria as well as rules and regulations for submitting the thesis.

This Master Thesis Manual is designed for all Master of Arts in European Studies at Lund University. A Master thesis is an independent, individual work in the academic field of European Studies. The thesis counts for 30 ECTS and forms an integral, essential part of the Master of European Studies programme (MAPES). The main purpose of the Master's thesis is to train and demonstrate students' skills in independent research work, scientific presentation and written expression.

Students should attain insights through methodical collection and systematic interpretation of information within the framework of clearly defined problem statements, through which basic scientific knowledge is advanced. They should act autonomously, professionally and ethically responsible in the execution of the research process and communicate the results of the research in an academically or professionally acceptable way.

A Master of Arts thesis in European Studies should be written in English and be of good linguistic and stylistic form. Good written expression is precise and proceeds logically. Terms and concepts are used as they are commonly known. Uncommon or new concepts and terms should be defined. Grammar and spelling should comply with the rules of the English language in the context of scientific writing. Differences in terminology and concepts should be explained and appropriately justified. The written and printed appearance of the thesis is a reflection of the student's professional proficiency.

A good scientific text is characterized by the author's/researcher's own creative contribution. Thus, the text should not merely consist of a collection of thoughts presented earlier by others. The student should in general take a critical stance towards references and previous studies and clearly present the innovative aspects of the Master thesis. The student should at all costs avoid plagiarism (making others' texts and ideas one's own), because that would lead to an irrevocable Fail grade in the course.

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I. THESIS PROCESS

Writing a Master thesis is a challenging and rewarding process. Ideally, the whole process follows a development through eight steps during the semester:

- 1 Choosing a subject area that interests you.** The starting point of any research project is always the definition of a topic in which an individual student is interested and is willing to put research effort. The master thesis' subject, project design, theoretical approach, research question and research methodology must all relate to a subject in the field of European Studies, as it has been presented through the program's curriculum.
- 2 Appointment of supervisors.** During the time you write your master thesis, you will have the help of an appointed supervisor. Resources are limited. Supervisors will be able to meet 2-3 times for individual guidance on each thesis. Depending on each supervisor and theses' subjects, there may also be collective guidance in smaller groups. Usually, the individual guidance will consist of discussions on the substance of the thesis, design and follow-up discussions after the seminar on the proposal of the thesis. Individual counselling is usually concentrated during the initial work with the thesis and at the end. Formal previews or an assessment of essays is not practiced. Examinations are conducted only in connection with the final seminar.
- 3 Making a Thesis proposal and research plan.** At the start of your thesis you will be required to write a thesis plan (or proposal), the purpose of which is to formulate and specify the aim, scope and general theme of your thesis, and to assist the teacher of the "thesis course" in identifying a suitable supervisor.
Unless otherwise specified by the teacher, the plan should include the following parts and it should be at least two and not more than five pages (800-2000 words), plus reading list/literature:
 - 1, *The problem*: Delimitation of the subject with a scholarly motivated and well defined problem with concrete issues/questions. This is the most important thing! Without a clear, well-defined problem, there cannot be a good thesis.
 - 2, *Theory/Model of analysis*: How to fundamentally understand and structure the research problem? A refined approach and theoretical context.
 - 3, *Method & material*: How to research the matter investigated? Give an elaborate description of how the definition of the problem will be operationalized and which primary sources you intend to use.
 - 4, *Literature*: A (preliminary) literature and reference list that presents material essential for paragraphs 1-3 above, and material that will be useful for the implementation of the thesis project.

- 4 Collection of material.** During this step, the sources needed to answer the research question(s) are collected. Be precise, careful and conscientious.
- 5 Analysis.** Upon finishing the collection of materials and sources, one must always process and analyze the results. This involves interpreting the collected information, formulate tentative conclusions and results. Is more needed to support conclusions? Can the research question be answered with the collected information?
- 6 Writing your thesis.** In principle one should start writing the Master thesis before all data and sources are analyzed. A rough draft of the introductory chapter and a discussion on materials and methods used throughout the study should be written beforehand. During this step it is possible to elaborate on results and consider implications in order to start formulating conclusions. It can not be stressed enough that, writing a thesis is a process – it requires many drafts, corrections, revisions and rewriting.
- 7 Getting your thesis printed and disseminated.** Once your supervisor has given their approval, you may submit your thesis. This process is electronic and takes place on the educational platform of the course, accessed through logging in via students' STiL identity. When submitting the thesis you will also be asked to send a copy to the anti-plagiarism system.
- 8 Submission and examination.** *Note that the finished thesis must be submitted approximately three to four weeks before the end of the semester in order to be examined in time.* Each Master thesis is examined at a seminar where the author acts as a respondent defending their work. An appointed opponent will be given the task of critically and constructively commenting the work. Everyone in the seminar group is required to contribute to the discussion, so everyone is required to read the Master theses being examined.
- The final grade is set by the appointed examiner (which is not the supervisor), who will consult the supervisor. Evaluation includes the quality of the Master thesis, one's performance as opponent and respondent as well as the quality of the writing process.
- The final version of the master thesis must be submitted by the student to the database *Lund University Papers*. Instructions on how to do this are available here: http://www.lub.lu.se/fileadmin/user_upload/pdf/Publicera/LUP_manual_student_eng_100706.pdf
- The regular exam period (when the submission and the public defence are scheduled) is during the last two weeks of May, roughly speaking and with some variation from year to year. The re-examination period is established depending on the number of students that need to be re-examined, but usually takes place in the last two weeks of January next year.

II: Supervisor

The supervisor is responsible for guiding the students' activities in the context of the Master thesis, and is, in conjunction with the student, responsible to formulate a guidance track, including timely submissions of documents and feedback. The

supervisor is not responsible for the quality of the thesis. The quality of the master thesis lies exclusively with the student.

In principle, the supervisor should be a member of the Faculty at European Studies/ East and Central European Studies or the Centre for Languages and Literature (SOL). Subject to consent from and in consultation with the Master's thesis course responsible of MAPES, a supervisor outside SOL may be appointed, if this is considered useful for subject-related reasons. Even in this case, the thesis topic should be within the field of European Studies.

If a student wishes to change his/her topic on valid grounds, a formal request should be submitted to the supervisor. Changing or modifying the topic is subject to consent from the supervisor. If a student wishes to transfer to another supervisor (for thematic or personal reasons), a reasoned request should be submitted to the responsible for the Master thesis course. Such a transfer is subject to written consent by both the previous and the new supervisor.

III. Content of the Thesis

The thesis usually consists of the parts listed below. Please note that every master thesis is in some way unique and the following is intended as a general guideline.

- 1 **Title page** The title should describe the thesis topic, preferably concisely, but should also be informative and attractive. Also on the title page there should be the name of the student, the name of the program, the name of the advisor and the month and year of submission.
- 2 **Abstract** The abstract should summarize the essential contents of the actual thesis. On the basis of the abstract, a reader generally decides whether or not to read the entire thesis. The abstract should describe and summarize the following items: research objectives (what was studied and why), the approach (methods and materials, research literature, etc.), main research results and main conclusions. The abstract should be no longer than 350 words.
- 3 **Introduction** The purpose of the introduction is to arouse interest of the reader. It is also used to "funnel" your main research question from a more general perspective down to your specific aim. The introduction should explicitly and logically introduce the research problem and phrase the research questions. The introductory chapter of a thesis usually consists of a background, summary of previous research, a definition of the research topic and defined research problem(s) or questions. It should also include a description of the structure of the thesis.
- 4 **Methods and sources** Here the student describes their choice of methods, and argues for their being appropriate to answer the research question. Also here the ontological and epistemological bases of the thesis are to be spelled out. The author must specify the primary and secondary sources that she/he uses in the thesis. The limitations of the chosen method and sources should be also

addressed.

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Findings/Results In this chapter, the essential findings and research results are presented in a logical manner. The collected data/information should be presented clearly and elucidated using written presentation and/or tables, figures, etc. The research results should be based on the analyses and measurements made according to the methodology presented in the earlier chapters, and answer the questions posed in the section research objectives. It is also wise to report negative results should such arise. In this chapter, the author refrains from comparing his/her own results with previous research findings. It is beneficial if answers to the research questions posed can be easily found in the results.

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Analysis/Discussion The theoretical discussion presented in the Introduction is utilized and elaborated on further in this chapter, making clear the link between the chosen theory and the empirical data. The author should compare his/her own study results with previous research findings previously presented in the thesis. It is essential to report and highlight new findings and to what extent the results are consistent or conflicting with earlier findings. The aim is to create a synthesis of one's own findings and previous ones. Furthermore, the research objectives, chosen approach, and methods should be critically evaluated. The aim is to show which aspects of the study succeeded well or sufficiently enough, and where there is still room for improvement. The representativeness of data and the possibility for generalizing results should, if appropriate, also be examined. Thus, the Discussion is a link to both the research objectives paragraph and Material and Methods chapter.

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Conclusions The purpose of this chapter is to formulate the most important research results into clear, concise conclusions and summarize the answer to the research question. Furthermore, the author should consider how the obtained research results can be utilized within and outside academia, that is to say intra-academic implications and extra-academic applications. The author should also discuss how methods or results may be applied or developed for further studies.

Additionally, one can offer insight on what related questions were left outside the framework of the study. This chapter is evidently linked to the beginning of the thesis, in which the research topic and problem were described.

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Bibliography/Literature References used throughout the thesis are listed after Conclusions (but before Appendices). They are placed in alphabetical order according to the author's (or authors') last name. Publications by the same author are placed in chronological order, beginning with the oldest. Publications made by the author alone precede those in which his/her name is listed as the first co-author. Publications with more than two co-authors follow those with only one or two authors. If a publication has no obvious author or editor, the publication is listed in alphabetical order of its own title.

IV. Format, Citations and References

The master thesis should be formatted for A4-sized sheets of paper. The pages should be numbered consecutively starting with the number one (1) on the first page of the Introduction. Appendices should not be numbered in the same way, rather the number of each appendix is placed on the top right corner of the page and they are numbered consecutively (i.e. if there are three appendices: Appendix 1, Appendix 2, Appendix 3). Left margins are 3 cm, right, top, and bottom margins 2.5 cm. The font should be Times New Roman, size 12. Text should be spaced at one and a half lines (1,5). Paragraphs should be separated by a blank line. The first sentence of a paragraph should not be indented. Enough space should be left before and after titles, tables, figures etc. so that they can be discerned from the text (see further info below).

Length – The total length of the master thesis should be 45 pages +/- 10%, that is to say 40 to 50 pages, which is equivalent to approximately 100 000 to 125 000 characters (incl. blanks) or 16 000 to 20 000 words. The footnotes, bibliography and appendixes are not part of the word count.

Italics – italicise foreign words or phrases unless they are sufficiently familiar, e.g. *modus operandi*, *en route* etc. Titles of books, periodicals and other works are to be italicised. Names of institutions or political parties are not italicised.

Quotations – follow the punctuation, capitalisation and spelling of the original. Use double quotation marks, with single quotation marks only for quotations within quotations. Quotations of 50 words or more should be broken off from the text and indented from the left-hand margin as a separate block of text, without quotation marks. Extensive quotations from non-English sources should be translated into English in the text and (if appropriate) the original given in a footnote.

Numbers – spell out numbers up to ninety-nine, except where they are attached to percentages, units or sums of money, and use Arabic numerals thereafter. In the text fractions should be spelled out and ‘per cent’ used rather than the percentage sign.

Dates – use “10 December 1948” in the text, “10 Dec. 1948” in footnotes. Use 1930s (not 1930’s), the twentieth century (not the 20th century).

References/Citations In the thesis, it should become evident which thoughts and ideas are the student's own production and which ones are based on previous research findings. If text is not referenced/cited, it is assumed to be the intellectual product of the student. Use footnotes at the end of each page, according to the Chicago Manual of Style. Here you can find the link to concrete styles:

http://www.chicagomanualofstyle.org/tools_citationguide.html.

Remember to always attribute your sources. Otherwise you run the risk of plagiarism!

Bibliographical citations The Master thesis must use the Chicago style referencing in the bibliography. See some examples of bibliography below:

Books

Pollan, Michael. *The Omnivore's Dilemma: A Natural History of Four Meals*. New York: Penguin, 2006.

Ward, Geoffrey C., and Ken Burns. *The War: An Intimate History, 1941–1945*. New York: Knopf, 2007.

Book chapters

Kelly, John D. "Seeing Red: Mao Fetishism, Pax Americana, and the Moral Economy of War." In *Anthropology and Global Counterinsurgency*, edited by John D. Kelly, Beatrice Jauregui, Sean T. Mitchell, and Jeremy Walton, 67–83. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2010.

Articles in journals and newspapers

Weinstein, Joshua I. "The Market in Plato's *Republic*." *Classical Philology* 104 (2009): 439–58.

Kossinets, Gueorgi, and Duncan J. Watts. "Origins of Homophily in an Evolving Social Network." *American Journal of Sociology* 115 (2009): 405–50. Accessed February 28, 2010. doi:10.1086/599247.

Interviews (unpublished)

Roemer, Merle A. Interview by author. Tape recording. Millington, MD., July 26, 1973.

Websites and blogs

Google. "Google Privacy Policy." Last modified March 11, 2009.

<http://www.google.com/intl/en/privacypolicy.html>.

Becker-Posner Blog, The. <http://uchicagolaw.typepad.com/beckerposner/>.

V. The Seminar

The public defence seminars are a series of seminars at the very end of the semester, whose main function is to examine the submitted Master theses. Students are required to participate in all seminars, not only the ones where they are defending and opposing. Depending on the number of theses submitted, parallel seminars may be held in smaller groups. Participation in the seminars is one of the factors evaluated and works towards the final grade on the course. It is essential that students read other students' work and that everyone participating in the seminar is given the possibility to comment.

The author's obligations are to defend his/hers work and answer questions from the opponent, the seminar and the appointed examiner.

The opponent's obligations are to function as a motor in the discussions during the time which the thesis is being examined. It is vital to examine the thesis constructively! In conjunction with the seminar, the opponent is required to hand in a written summary of what he/she intends to discuss. The summary should be no longer than 400 words.

The attached **evaluation form** serves as a guide for the evaluation process, but it is not mandatory for opponents to fill it in, as long as the summary text prepared for the seminar covers all the items in the form.

VI. After the Seminar

After the seminar minor errors, such as spelling etc, are to be corrected within a few days before handing in a final copy.

The final, corrected, version of the master thesis must be submitted by the student to the database *Lund University Papers*. Instructions on how to do this are available here:

http://www.lub.lu.se/fileadmin/user_upload/pdf/Publicera/LUP_manual_student_eng_100706.pdf

VII. Assessment Criteria

See attached evaluation form. Below are some general considerations to keep in mind when assessing your own work and the work of the assigned author during the opposition seminar.

Content

Problem definition and main research: Is the main research question clear and original? Are there any subquestions? Are those questions clearly defined?

Background / Theory: Was a sufficient number of relevant scientific theories used and were they used correctly? Does the thesis contain a critical review of the literature?

Research methodology: Was the methodology valid, reliable and suitable? Was the methodology substantiated and applied correctly?

Data/source quality and analysis: Are the data and/or sources correctly collected and analysed?

Critical analysis of results: Does the researcher critically reflect on the research approach used?

Conclusions: Are conclusions correctly linked to the data and analysis presented?

Innovativeness: Is the study innovative in theory, methodology or field of application and is this illustrated in the literature review?

Presentation of the thesis: Is the sequence of chapters and sections correct? / Is the final document attractive in wording and appearance?

Quality of the process

Degree of independent work: Was there good planning?

Degree of initiative shown: Did the student come up with most ideas and solutions himself/herself?

Cooperation and communication with supervisors/instructors: Did the student do what was agreed? Were the meetings with the supervisor prepared well and well in advance?

VIII. Academic integrity

Academic integrity includes values such as avoidance of plagiarism, maintenance of academic standards, honesty and rigour in research and academic publishing. As the purpose of writing a thesis is to test knowledge and ability to construct a reasoned argument on a particular topic, it is naturally important that each thesis is entirely the work of the person who submits it.

One form of plagiarism is very obvious and easy to detect: this is where one person submits another's essay as his or her own work.

A more common but less obvious form is where an essay contains unattributed passages from books, articles, or lecture handouts. Although sometimes this may occur because the author is dishonestly seeking an easy short-cut to essay writing, very often it happens because the student concerned either thinks this is what is required, or is unclear about how to use quotations. Each supervisor will help and guide individual authors on how and what to reference.

Any exact passage used in a written assignment from another writer must be enclosed within quotation marks and attributed to its author otherwise it will be considered as plagiarism.

Any student discovered to be using material - whether copied or paraphrased - without indicating its source in footnotes on the body of the text will be regarded as suspect of plagiarism, and object for further investigation by the department.

Where a student acknowledges the use of a work somewhere in an essay, but nonetheless is careless and utilises substantial elements of an author's views without footnoting, this will also be regarded as unacceptable and the assignment will fail.

Sometimes haste or negligence leads to gaps in documentation and errors in precise acknowledgement. Whilst it is a matter of judgement whether or not to footnote, repeated errors of this nature will necessarily result in poor marks.

All master theses will be submitted to a plagiarism search motor (for example Urkund).

All demonstrated cases of plagiarism will lead to a Fail (Underkänd) grade for the master thesis.