

**THESIS PREPARATION GUIDE**  
**ARKANSAS TECH UNIVERSITY**



**Graduate College**  
**Arkansas Tech University**  
**Tomlinson 113**  
**Russellville, AR 72801**

## INTRODUCTION

A formal research paper, the thesis should reveal that the candidate can produce original research that meets the professional standards of the discipline concerned. Preparation for writing a thesis should include careful and wide reading of professional journals and texts of the disciplines involved, including the most recent scholarly work in the academic field. Students must exhibit the capabilities of gathering, organizing, evaluating, and reporting data which are pertinent to the topic of investigation, as well as exhibiting their ability to use technology appropriate to the discipline.

The following guide includes information applicable to all master's theses produced at Arkansas Tech University. Students must also follow procedures and guidelines set forth by their individual departments.

### **Graduate College Deadlines:**

The following schedule applies to all master's degree candidates.

- Students must apply for admission to candidacy upon completion of twelve credit hours. Completion of the candidacy requires proposing a complete program of study. These forms are available at the Graduate College office. Failure to apply for candidacy will result in a hold being placed upon the students' records. A petition to remove a hold must be addressed to the Dean of Graduate College.
- In addition to satisfying all degree requirements, a candidate for a degree must file an "Application for Graduation" at the Registrar's Office in the first week of the semester/term in which the degree work is expected to be completed. This form requires the specific title of the student's thesis. If a student applies for graduation but fails to satisfy their graduation requirements, the student must reapply and pay an additional diploma fee.
- **A thesis draft must be submitted for approval before** the final thesis is prepared. The thesis committee must receive the thesis at least six weeks before the degree is to be conferred. The final copies of the thesis and the abstract, in acceptable form, with signatures of all committee members, must be filed with the Dean of Graduate College no later than the close of the work day which precedes the date of graduation by three weeks.
- The required oral defense of the thesis must be passed at least three weeks before the degree is conferred.

### **Master's Thesis Committee**

The graduate student who plans to write a thesis is responsible for determining the content area of the projected study in consultation with the thesis advisor and program director. The thesis advisor must be a member of the graduate faculty with expertise in the selected topic area. Together they will decide upon the other members of the thesis committee, which will include two other qualified members of the graduate faculty. At that point, the program director will have final approval of the thesis advisor and committee.

## **Responsibilities of the Thesis Committee**

The committee will approve the thesis proposal, and then ensure that the particulars of the proposal are carried out. Other responsibilities include: reading the thesis for content, style, and standard English usage; ensuring that the mechanics of typing and printing are followed according to departmental and university guidelines; affirming that proper research techniques are followed, that an in-depth review of the literature has been done, and that the conclusions reached are both legitimate and supported by the data; and ensuring that plagiarism does not occur. The committee should make certain that the thesis is of quality and that it reflects the high standards of scholarly writing. The thesis committee chair will be responsible for the initial reading and initial corrections of the student's paper. The chair will release portions and/or the whole paper to members of the committee as deemed beneficial to the study. The committee and chair will meet with the student as needed during the time that the student is engaged in the thesis process.

## **Thesis Proposal**

A thesis proposal must be prepared by the student and approved by the thesis committee before work on the thesis has begun. A form for preparation of the thesis proposal is available in the Graduate College office. After the thesis proposal has been approved and signed by the thesis committee and the program director, it is then submitted to the Dean of Graduate College for final approval.

## **The Thesis Defense**

An oral defense of the thesis is required. It will be conducted by the thesis committee, which will then notify the Dean of Graduate College, in writing, that the student has passed the oral defense. The Oral Examination Approval Form is available in the Graduate College office. The oral defense of the thesis must be passed at least three weeks before the degree is conferred. After the oral defense, the student may make no change in the thesis not authorized by the thesis committee.

## **Thesis Approval**

The thesis committee, the program director, and the Dean of Graduate College must approve a thesis before it is reproduced in its final form.

## **Credits and Grades**

A grade of **R** is given on all thesis enrollments until the thesis is accepted, and then appropriate credit is granted.

## **THESIS ELEMENTS AND STYLE**

### **Style Guides**

Each department will determine and specify the required style guide for theses within its own discipline. Students should avoid referring to previous theses as guides since newer editions of style manuals frequently include substantive changes. Regardless of the style used by the student's departments, the requirements described below apply to all theses at Arkansas Tech University.

### **Paper**

All copies of the thesis in its final form must be submitted on 100% rag content bond acid-free paper, 20 pound weight, 8 ½ by 11 inches. Duplicate copies must use the same paper. The paper may be reproduced by photocopy or other means of duplication, provided that the reproduction is of acceptable quality. Erasable paper and carbon copies are not accepted.

### **Number of Copies**

At least three copies of the thesis are required. The first is for the library, the second for the major department, and the third for the Graduate College. Students may submit extras if they wish to have personal copies bound. Students are responsible for the cost of thesis binding and mailing. Authentic signatures (not photocopies) by each member of the thesis committee are required on each approval sheet submitted with the thesis.

### **Typeface**

The typeface must be clear, non-distracting, and consistent throughout. Style manuals may specify the use of italics and allow exemptions for graphs, illustrations, and appendices. Use a 10 to 12 point font size and black ink. The printer should produce an even blackness throughout all copies.

### **Line Spacing**

The entire text must be double-spaced, unless exceptions are specified in the specific style manual. Half spacing is not acceptable. Do not split words from one page to the next.

### **Margins and Justification**

All left margins must be 1 ½ inches to provide space for binding. All other margins (top, bottom, and right) should be one inch. Do not hyphenate words between lines. The right hand margin may or may not be justified.

## **Illustrations**

Formatting and positioning of tables, graphs, drawings, figures, and photographs should follow the requisite style guidelines. Usually they are placed as near as possible to the first textual reference. Computer-generated tables and graphs must be clear, distinct, and must fit within the required margins. Mounting of photographs, drawings, pockets, and other illustrated materials on the thesis pages must be done with heat-fixed adhesive paper or permanent-binding spray adhesive. Adhesive tape, glue, and photo corners are not acceptable. Photographs may be reprinted or photocopied only if the quality of the photograph does not diminish in shading, color or clarity. Each submitted copy of the thesis must contain identical mounted materials.

Lettering and drawing for charts, figures, tables, and exhibits must be done neatly in black, permanent ink. Computer-generated text from plotters or laser printers is preferred for lettering and drawing; hand lettering or drawing must be of professional quality. Each should be placed in the appropriate place in the text or on a separate page immediately following the page on which it is first cited.

## **Original Documents**

Original letters or documents should be photocopied on the requisite paper and submitted as part of the thesis. Students should retain the originals. Margin requirements may make size reduction necessary.

## **Printing**

Pages must be printed on one side, using a laser printer, other letter-quality printer, or typewriter. Dot matrix printers do not produce acceptable copy. Quality may also deteriorate with poor photocopying, uneven toner, or a poor typewriter ribbon.

## **Pagination**

Every page of the thesis is numbered except for the title page and the approval page. Preliminary pages are numbered with lower-case Roman numerals centered at the bottom of the page. Pages in the body of the text are numbered with Arabic numerals, beginning with the first page of the text, which will be page 1. Opening pages of chapters, appendices, tables, and addenda are numbered in the lower center of the page with subsequent page numbers in the chapter in the top right hand corner. Continue Arabic pagination in appendices, progressing numerically from the final page of the text.

## **PRELIMINARY PAGES:**

### **Title Page**

The format of the title page shall follow the model in Appendix A. The title should indicate the contents of the thesis. It should be in all capital letters and centered two inches below the top of the page. The rest of the page is centered as shown in the sample page and is spaced to maintain optical balance. The date of the thesis on the title page must be that of the month and year in which the degree is awarded.

### **Thesis Approval Sheet**

Each copy of the thesis submitted to the Dean of the Graduate College must be accompanied by an approval sheet, which must be formatted according to the model in Appendix B. The title is to be centered two inches below the top of the edge of the paper. If the title is two or more lines long, each line must be shorter than the preceding line. Three spaces below the title, beginning at the left margin, type a signature line (a solid line), and on the space under it type the name of the committee member. Subsequent lines should be three spaces below the previous name.

### **Statement of Permission to Use**

Each copy of the thesis must include a signed Statement of Permission to Use, which allows the library to provide copies for scholarship purposes. See Appendix C for proper wording and format. A copyright page should follow (see Appendix D).

### **Abstract**

The thesis abstract of not more than 350 words must be included in each copy of the thesis. One extra copy of the abstract should be submitted to the Graduate Office. Specific programs will specify the content of the abstract.

### **Table of Contents**

All components of the thesis must be listed in the Table of Contents, along with page numbers for each item. Preliminary pages, chapters, and subsections should be listed. See Appendix E for a sample.

### **List of Tables/ List of Figures**

All tables should be listed by title, with page numbers. On a separate page, all figures should also be listed by title and page number.

### **List of Symbols and/or Abbreviations**

Abbreviation and symbols that are not universally accepted within a discipline or as a part of the style guidelines should be defined, although they should also be explained upon initial use within the text.

### **Arrangement of the Materials in the Thesis**

Materials in the thesis should be arranged in the following order:

Blank Sheet

Title Page

Approval Sheet

Statement of Permission to Use

Copyright

Acknowledgements (optional)

Abstract

Table of Contents

List of Tables/ List of Figures/ List of Illustrations (if any)

List of Symbols and/or Abbreviations (if any)

Main Text

Bibliography/ List of References/ Literature Cited

Appendices (if any)

Blank Sheet

APPENDIX A

SAMPLE TITLE PAGE

RACE, GENDER, AND IDEOLOGY IN THE NOVELS  
OF ALICE WALKER AND TONI MORRISON

By  
JANE E. DOE

Submitted to the Faculty of the Graduate College of  
Arkansas Tech University  
in partial fulfillment of the requirements  
for the degree of  
MASTER OF ARTS IN ENGLISH  
May 2011

APPENDIX B

SAMPLE THESIS APPROVAL PAGE

RACE, GENDER, AND IDEOLOGY IN THE NOVELS  
OF ALICE WALKER AND TONI MORRISON

The evaluation committee hereby approves this thesis by Jane E. Doe in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts.

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K.C. Jones, Thesis Advisor Date

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Michael Bunter, Committee Member Date

---

Peter Wimsey, Committee Member Date

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Carl Brucker, Head Date

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Mary B. Gunter, Dean of Graduate College Date

APPENDIX C  
SAMPLE PERMISSION

PERMISSION

Title \_\_\_\_\_

Program \_\_\_\_\_

Degree \_\_\_\_\_

In presenting this thesis in partial fulfillment for a graduate degree from Arkansas Tech University, I agree that the library of this university shall make it freely available for inspection. I further agree that permission for extensive copying for scholarly purposes may be granted to my thesis director, or, in that professor's absence, by the Head of the Department or the Dean of the Graduate College. To the extent that the usage of the thesis is under control of Arkansas Tech University, it is understood that due recognition shall be given to me and to Arkansas Tech University in any scholarly use which may be made of any material in my thesis.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

APPENDIX D  
SAMPLE COPYRIGHT

© 2006 Jane E. Doe

APPENDIX E  
SAMPLE TABLE OF CONTENTS

**TABLE OF CONTENTS**

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