THESIS-WRITING FORMAT

For PhD English Literature Candidates

Department of English and Literary Studies

School of Liberal Arts

This document outlines the standardized practice for writing the compulsory thesis required for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in English Literature. The guidelines presented herein align with the latest edition of the MLA Handbook (9th edition).

1.1. Manual of Style:

The officially sanctioned manual of style for formatting and referencing the content of relevant theses is the latest edition of MLA (i.e., the ninth edition), which allows researchers and supervisors sufficient freedom to set their preferences about certain issues.

1.2. Recommended Font Style

Times New Roman

1.3. Recommended Font Size

12 (excepting chapter titles, headings, and supplementary material like endnotes, for which the supervisor may provide guidance in accordance with MLA rules). The thesis title should be 16, and chapter headings should be 14.

1.4. Recommended Page Layout

All the basic MLA rules for page layout should be followed assiduously. For example, the text should be double-spaced, left-aligned, with one-inch margins on all four sides. The page number and researcher's surname should be inserted in the upper right-hand corner of the page, etc. The preliminary pages should be paginated in i, ii, iii… style; while Chapter 1 onwards should follow the 1, 2, 3… style.

2. Documents Denoting Declarations

Copies of the following three documents must be attached in the final, hard-bound version of the thesis submitted to the relevant authorities after the candidate has successfully defended their thesis before an external examiner: (i) Anti-plagiarism Report for the thesis, generated by software in accordance with UMT rules and duly signed by the Chief Library Officer, (ii) Certificate of Approval, duly signed by the relevant competent authorities, in accordance with the Department's rules, (iii) The researcher's declaration, duly signed by them, stating that the research is their original work and has not been submitted elsewhere for the acquisition of any other degree, etc.

3. Dedication and Acknowledgements (optional)

Most researchers like to dedicate their theses to someone and acknowledge the assistance of different people during various stages of completing the thesis.

4. Table of Contents

The table of contents should be designed in an easy-to-read style. For this purpose, a researcher may improvise with respect to font size, italicization, etc., in accordance with the guidance of the supervisor.

5. Abstract

The maximum length of the abstract should be one printed side of a page (250 words) with 12 font size of Times New Roman style and double line spacing. It should constitute a single paragraph. Its content should summarize the aim of the study, the method/approach to analysis/interpretation it uses, the theoretical framework it employs, and its contribution to the field of study, followed by five to six keywords that may help future researchers in locating, cataloging, and consulting the research as required.

6. List of Abbreviations

A list of abbreviations used, if any, in the thesis by the researcher should precede the 'Introduction'. This list should include only abbreviations operationally devised by the researchers for the purpose of the thesis.

7. Introduction

The first chapter should be titled 'Introduction'. Its opening paragraphs should incorporate the thesis statement and provide an elaboration of the abstract, together with any other relevant information that may comprehensively introduce the topic of the research to the reader. In most cases, it should throw some introductory light on the author(s) whose works constitute the study's primary resources.

The introductory chapter should have some sub-divisions, of which the most important are:

7.1. Research Objectives / Research Questions

The statement of 'Research Objectives' is essential for ascertaining that the researchers do not at any stage lose their focus in the long-winding task of writing one chapter after another. The supervisor should especially check 'Research Objectives' to ensure that the researcher has not unnecessarily repeated a point and that each of the stated objectives is precisely phrased. Even though international practices vary immensely about whether or not these objectives should be stated in a numbered list/ bullet point, this style is recommended in light of the fact that most Pakistani examiners are likely to favor it.

A separate subsection titled 'Research Questions' may follow 'Research Objectives' if the supervisor feels the former are conceptually distinct from the latter to the degree of adding something meaningful to the reader's clarity of vision and for setting the direction of the study along clearer lines for the researcher's own benefit. The practice of replicating 'objectives' as 'questions' by converting their statement into interrogative sentences is discouraged.

7.2. Significance of the Study

Every researcher needs to clearly establish the importance of the study they undertake, the contribution it makes to the existing body of similar work, and the need it serves for a desirable addition to the literary canon. Such data should be elaborated in this section.

8. Review of Literature:

The next chapter should be titled 'Review of Literature', which should provide a critical summary of existing literature the research draws on. Depending on the discretion of the supervisor, it may in some cases be followed by a subtitle reflecting the focus of the chapter. A review of literature may in most cases be an amalgamation of three strands of publications: [i] critical works on the author(s) of primary resource(s), [ii] analyses of literary works other than the primary resources that may be thematically or structurally similar/relevant to the research in question, and [iii] works on critical theory that may provide the foundation or serve as role models for the researcher's application of theory/-ies on the chosen primary resource(s). Given the abundance of material that can potentially be quoted in any research, it is advisable to stick, as far as possible, to publications from reputable academic fora. Further, judging the relevance of the contents of this chapter in light of research questions/objectives would be helpful for the researcher in editing out superfluous material.

At the end of the 'Literature Review', the researchers should be aware of the 'research gap'.

9. Research Methodology and Theoretical Framework

9.1. Research Methodology

A detailed discussion on research methodology, once again, is key to the retention of a researcher's/reader's focus. This section, besides talking about the approach to research adopted by the researcher, and various tools facilitating it, should also comment in suitable detail on the rationale for the selection of the said method/tools. The researcher should feel encouraged to chart out the procedure employed to conduct the research for which it may prove very helpful to select a method of analysis such as thematic, content, discourse, textual, etc., analysis.

9.2. Theoretical Framework

Any specific theories in the light of which the researcher may be analyzing chosen text(s) should be introduced in some detail in this section. However, since the content of this section is by its very nature bound to be partly unoriginal in most cases, it is perhaps advisable to refer to standard books instead of burdening the thesis with unnecessary repetitions of background theory.

NOTE: 'Research Methodology' and 'Theoretical Framework' may constitute a separate chapter if the supervisor feels their content is expansive enough to justify it without undesirable/unnecessary insertion of background jargon that may easily be available in a number of textbooks on literary theory, etc.

10. Data Analysis

By far the most important part of a thesis in literary studies, in almost all cases the longest one, is data analysis, in which the researcher analyzes the chosen text(s) following the direction of the study's basic contention. Structurally, there can be two ways of presenting it in the larger body of the thesis:

10.1. Multiple Chapters

The researcher may design multiple chapters in accordance with the needs of the thesis statement. For example, each of the chapters may focus on one specific theme of chosen text(s), or one

specific dimension of the basic arguments driving the research. Or the researcher may divide the chapters on account of different sections in a text (e.g., a chapter may deal with the analysis of specified chapters of a novel or scenes of a drama). Or, again, the division may follow from adherence to some chronological pattern (e.g., one chapter may analyze poems authored by a poet in the 1980s, followed by a chapter analyzing those written in the 1990s). In short, the rationale for chapter division will vary from one thesis to another.

10.2. Single Chapter with Subdivisions

A second way of presenting this analysis is to contain it all within one chapter, with subdivisions following the same rationale as outlined in the preceding point. This structure necessitates a more complex hierarchy of multiple-level headings (i.e., instead of 1.1, 1.2, subsections will have to be numbered as 1.1.1 and 1.1.2). Depending on the number of multiple-level subsections within one primary sub-section, the indexing may become unnecessarily arduous to follow in some cases.

However, it is quite obvious that the substitution of the first method with the second one cannot make any difference to the nature of the data being analyzed or the content of the thesis except in the indexing process. It is also to be noted that the specific nature of the research may or may not require separate sections on analysis.

11. Conclusion

The conclusion should succinctly sum up the trajectory of the research, highlighting the discoveries made in line with the research objectives. It is important to avoid merely rehashing content from the first chapter, ensuring the conclusion does not appear redundant. For studies that qualitatively analyze literary texts, researchers may foresee their findings to some extent, but it remains crucial to present these findings summatively, demonstrating how the research has led to the conclusions.

The conclusion should include the following two subsections:

11.1. Limitations of the Study

A statement about the limitations of the study is essential as a disclaimer. This clarifies that the researcher should not be expected to address issues beyond the scope of the present research. Rather than being viewed as a note on the fallibility of the research, this statement clarifies the boundaries within which the study's strength should be judged.

11.2. Guidelines for Future Researchers

Guidelines for future researchers, such as comments on how others can expand the scope of the present study, serve two purposes. They facilitate those intending to undertake similar research and position the current study as a foundational reference point for subsequent research. These guidelines play a crucial role in integrating the thesis into a continuous process of building the literary critical canon.

12. Endnotes

Following MLA rules, all endnotes should be placed after the conclusion. It is recommended to keep the number of endnotes to a minimum to maintain a smooth reading experience.

13. Works Cited

The 'Works Cited' section should include all the works cited in the thesis, formatted according to the latest edition of the MLA Handbook (9th edition). This ensures that the sources used in the research are properly acknowledged, and readers can locate the original works for further study. The following guidelines should be adhered to when compiling the references:

13.1. General Guidelines:

- The references should be listed alphabetically by the authors' last names.
- Each reference should be double-spaced, with a hanging indent for lines after the first.
- Titles of books, journals, and other standalone works should be italicized.
- Titles of articles, chapters, and other shorter works should be placed in quotation marks.
- Ensure consistency in formatting according to the MLA guidelines.

13.2. Examples of Common References:

Book

Last Name, First Name. *Title of Book*. Publisher, Publication Year.

Example: Smith, John. *Understanding Literature*. Academic Press, 2020.

Chapter in an Edited Book

Last Name, First Name. "Title of Chapter". *Title of Book*, edited by Editor's Name, Publisher, Publication Year, pp. page numbers.

Example: Doe, Jane. "Analyzing Modern Poetry". *Perspectives on Poetry*, edited by Mark Johnson, Literary Press, 2018, pp. 45-67.

Journal Article

Last Name, First Name. "Title of Article". *Title of Journal*, vol. number, no. number, Year, pp. page numbers.

Example: Brown, Lisa. "Narrative Techniques in Contemporary Fiction". *Journal of Literary Studies*, vol. 15, no. 2, 2019, pp. 123-145.

Online Source

Last Name, First Name. "Title of Web Page". *Website Name*, Publisher, Publication Date, URL.

Example: Miller, Anna. "Digital Humanities and Literature". *Literary Online*, Digital Press, 2021, www.literaryonline.com/digital-humanities.

Dissertation or Thesis

Last Name, First Name. *Title of Thesis*. Year. University, Degree. Database or Archive, URL.

Example: Green, Michael. *Exploring Shakespearean Tragedy*. 2017. University of Literature, PhD Dissertation. ProQuest, www.proquest.com/dissertations/exploring-shakespearean-tragedy.

Final Notes

- Before submission, ensure that all citations and references are accurate and complete.
- Consistently apply the MLA style throughout the document.
- Utilize tools like citation managers to help format and organize references.
- Seek guidance from your supervisor if any non-standard sources need to be cited.

14. Appendix

An appendix or appendices should follow the preceding sections if the researcher needs to present supplementary data for a clearer understanding of their analyses. For example, research may benefit from the inclusion of an interview with a literary author, but the suitability of incorporating such material should be carefully judged by the supervisor based on its indispensability for understanding the research.

Copyright permissions must be sought in writing by the researcher for reproducing data (other than short quotations) protected by relevant laws. If such material is used, a section on "Ethical Considerations" should be added to the chapter on Research Methodology.

Please follow the Library of Congress guidelines for the transcription of texts in non-English languages used in the dissertation: Library of Congress Guidelines.