

**SOUTHERN ILLINOIS UNIVERSITY EDWARDSVILLE
DEPARTMENT OF SPEECH COMMUNICATION
PREPARATION GUIDE FOR THE MASTER'S TREATISE:
THESES, PROJECTS, AND COLLABORATIVE RESEARCH**

Three important notes:

- *First, the guidelines that follow apply to all three research exit options available to master's candidates in the Speech Communication department unless otherwise indicated. When interchangeable, all exit options will be referred to as a "Treatise." Otherwise, the specific term (thesis, project, or collaborative research) will be used.*
- *Second, this document is intended to serve as a guideline in the preparation of a master's treatise. However, the requirements of both the SIUE Graduate School and your own faculty advisor always take precedent over anything printed in this document. For the most current Graduate School guidelines, please go to:*

http://www.siu.edu/GRADUATE/candidate/frms_guide.html#guide

- *Third, ALL research conducted at Southern Illinois University Edwardsville is subject to approval by the Institutional Review Board. For the most up-to-date IRB guidelines and review procedures, please go to:*

<http://www.siu.edu/ORP/IRB/index.html>

EXIT OPTIONS DEFINED:

Thesis - The thesis is a comprehensive report of substantive and significant research that has been conducted, analyzed, and written entirely by the candidate under the guidance of a member of the Department faculty. Typically, the thesis is lengthy, similar in style to a paper submitted to a scholarly conference or for publication, and is structured in the manner suggested by the American Psychological Association, the Modern Language Association, or a similar scholarly or professional organization.

The thesis is an opportunity for candidates to demonstrate they can use theory, empirical findings, and research methods to design and carry out a study where the final product could support a scholarly convention presentation and/or journal article. Typically, the candidate utilizes a theoretical model, conducts an in-depth literature search, and develops research hypotheses or research questions. These are examined empirically by the candidate, through primary quantitative or qualitative research methods, and the results and their implications are fully considered. *Please note that the thesis is the only treatise option that must be submitted to the Graduate School as well as the Speech Communication Department.*

Project - Like the thesis, the project is also a lengthy report of substance and significance that has been executed entirely by the candidate under the guidance of a member of the Department faculty and would be similar into a paper submitted to a scholarly conference or for publication.

The project is an opportunity for candidates to demonstrate that they can use theory, empirical findings, and research methods to identify and resolve *practical* communication problems. Typically, the candidate identifies relevant theory, useful literature, and appropriate methodology as necessary to demarcate an authentic communication problem within an actual context (such as a specific professional setting), then develops, implements, and assesses the efficacy of a solution to that problem. *Please note that, while projects are not submitted to the Graduate School, the Speech Communication Department requires that candidates adhere to all the same timelines and quality standards as apply to the thesis.*

Whereas a thesis is a traditional scholarly research study, a project is more practical in nature, involving technical problem solving or the adaptation of known solutions to novel problems. Often, projects will be based on the comparative analysis of a compilation of works done by other researchers. Although such material provides the project with substance, it is still crucial that projects provide evidence of originality and critical thinking, and clearly reflect the scholarly capability of the candidate. While in many cases master's projects and Theses deal with similar subjects, Theses are more focused on theory and methodology, and are traditional in format, while projects are principally focused on implementation and may, with approval, employ non-traditional formats such as web sites, CDs, performances etc.

Collaborative Research Study - The collaborative research study is a comprehensive report of substantive and significant research that has been conducted, analyzed, and written up collaboratively by the candidate and a member of the Department faculty. The co-authored collaborative research study should result in an article submitted to a scholarly journal (or its equivalent) for publication. *Please note that, while collaborative research studies are not submitted to the Graduate School, the Speech Communication Department requires that candidates adhere to all the same timelines and quality standards as apply to the thesis. In addition, the targeted journal's guidelines must also be followed.*

The collaborative research study is an opportunity for candidates to demonstrate that they can use theory, empirical findings, and research methods to design and carry out a study where the final product is a co-authored journal article. Typically, the candidate works with a faculty member to formulate a study that utilizes a theoretical model, includes an in-depth literature search, and develops and tests research hypotheses or research questions. Once an overall outline of the study is collaboratively developed, the candidate then works independently to review the relevant literature and propose both appropriate hypotheses/research questions and an appropriate methodology. Once these have been collaboratively agreed upon, the candidate then works independently again to

generate data and posit results. Then, the candidate and faculty member work collaboratively once again to craft a finished submission from those results.

APPROXIMATE TIMELINE FOR FULL-TIME STUDENTS

Two semesters prior to your final semester

Register for 3 hours of SPC 597, SPC 598, or SPC 599 for following term *if appropriate for Program of Study*.

During the semester prior to your final semester

Develop treatise proposal in conjunction with treatise Committee Chair
Schedule a meeting and present proposal to treatise Committee
Register title with the Graduate School if enrolled in SPC 599 Thesis
Submit Proposal to the Human Subjects Review Committee if necessary
Register for 3 additional hours of SPC 597, SPC 598, or SPC 599 for following term if currently registered. Otherwise, register for 6 hours.

During your final semester

Execute your treatise
Submit draft of treatise to your Chair for approval
Submit approved draft of treatise to your other assessment committee members
Defend your treatise
Format and submit your treatise as appropriate
Follow the guidelines for review and duplication of the treatise as appropriate
Be aware of and meet all deadlines

THE TREATISE PROCESS

The master's treatise is not an entitlement, but rather a negotiated partnership between faculty and candidate. The following section provides information about the master's treatise process: the steps leading up to the treatise, the development of a treatise proposal, the review of treatise proposals, writing the treatise, the oral defense of the treatise, final review and duplication of the treatise, and continuing work beyond completion of the treatise. This outline is not comprehensive; any specific undertaking may follow a different route.

Typically, the master's treatise is a two-semester process in which original research is conducted by the master's candidate, under the supervision of a faculty Chair. The treatise is begun when the candidate develops a treatise proposal with the Chair. The treatise proposal must be accepted and signed by all three faculty members who agree to serve as a treatise Assessment Committee, and if a thesis, the title must be registered with the Graduate School.

Steps to Complete Before Writing a Treatise

There are a number of important initial steps leading up to writing the treatise. Once these steps are completed, candidates may enroll in 6 hours of SPC 597, 598 or 599 (typically over the last 1-2 semesters in their masters program). These six hours of credit represent the independent work candidates engage in while completing their treatise.

Step One: Verify Status

You should have a signed PROGRAM OF STUDY on file with the Graduate Program Director. Begin this process by meeting with your Graduate Advisor to develop your Program and finalize the courses you plan to take. This advising meeting will also serve to clarify any questions you might have about the necessary information in the Official PROGRAM OF STUDY form. Some candidates may have had additional conditions of classification specified at the time of their conditional admission to the Speech Communication Graduate Program. It is important that these conditions all be met as well before beginning the treatise.

Step Two: Develop Abstract of Your Treatise Topic

Develop a 2-3 page abstract of your preliminary treatise ideas by doing the following:

- Cultivate an idea or area of research that interests you. It should be a topic that lends itself to scholarly research and/or practical application. In all probability, you will be "married" to this topic for 8 months or more of your life.
- Obtain a copy of the most recent Master's Thesis and Project Manual for SIUE, available from the Graduate School.
- Read relevant previous theses for format and style, especially those theses Chaired by the professor you plan to ask to be your Chair. These are on file with the Department Secretary in the Department of Speech Communication.
- Begin to develop your idea conceptually. For a thesis or collaborative research study, link your research question to a theory, or develop a typology or topoi of concepts involved. For a project, build a case for the value of the specific application you propose. In every case, be able to articulate a strong rationale for the treatise you propose. Simultaneously, seek input from faculty, especially from the professor you envision as your treatise Committee Chair.
- Write a two to three-page abstract of the topic. This abstract is either a narrative abstract or an outline in sentence form of your proposed treatise.

Step Three: Form Treatise Assessment Committee

The most important people in the academic life of a graduate candidate are the members of her or his treatise assessment committee. The Committee Chair directs the candidate's research and has a vested interest in seeing that the candidate does well and finishes

promptly. Committee members must all be satisfied that the candidate has done a thorough and responsible job of research.

Your assessment committee can provide encouragement, suggestions, and opportunities, but it is not up to them to see that candidates get a degree. You must continually retain the responsibility for your ultimate success. Each candidate-committee relationship is unique. Some very successful ones are quite formal and distant; others are close and personal. You may need to do a little soul searching before you name an assessment committee to determine what you want it to do for and with you. Do not necessarily choose as your long-term mentor the professor with whom you have easiest rapport, who gives ready praise, or who promises the least hassle. Choose one who will push you to excel.

Also, think carefully about what expertise each other member of your assessment committee can contribute to your successful completion of the best possible master's treatise. In addition to their research knowledge, methodological skills, and expert scholarship, the ideal assessment committee members also bring the ability to emotionally support you, challenge and extend you, help guide you through the system, and provide stringent editorial input. Aim for this mix of skills whenever possible. Unless you are pursuing a collaborative research study, do not confine yourself to those faculty members whose current research interests closely mirror your own. Your choices are wider than you might think. Talk with other graduate candidates, with faculty members both inside and outside your own program, and to your Graduate Adviser. Most Departments have folklore about how particular faculty members interact with graduate candidates and with each other. Do not choose an assessment committee completely based on folklore; but do not ignore it, either.

Set up an appointment with the person you would like to be the Chair of your assessment committee. Please note that, while this person will most likely be your Graduate Advisor, you are under no obligation to retain your Advisor as your treatise Chair. Prior to the appointment provide the faculty member a copy of your abstract. At the meeting, ask the person if he or she would be willing to Chair your assessment committee. This meeting gives the faculty member an opportunity to tell you if she or he will be on sabbatical, if she or he already has so many graduate candidates they cannot serve you well, or if there are any other possible problems on the horizon. The person can also give you suggestions on others who might be willing to serve as your Chair if they cannot. If the professor agrees, then ask for advice about developing the proposal, potential sources, and recommendations for the second and third members of your assessment committee.

Form the treatise assessment committee. Your treatise assessment committee consists of two graduate faculty members from the Department of Speech Communication and, if necessary or beneficial, an outside member from another Department at SIUE or a non-graduate faculty member from within the Department. Talk with your treatise Chair about the makeup of the assessment committee. He or she may already have established a network of faculty who work well together on committees. You do not have to accept all suggestions, but it is to your advantage to discuss your choices with the Chair before

you make them final. Remember that the treatise Chair is your primary adviser regarding day-to-day implementation of your proposal.

Next, set up appointments with the professors whom you would like to serve as second and third (and fourth) members of your treatise assessment committee. At the appointment, tell them who is serving as your Chair, give them a copy of the 2-3 page description, then ask the following questions: (a) Would you be willing to serve as a member of my treatise assessment committee? (b) What suggestions do you have for readings and/or methods? (c) What type of role do you like to play in the treatise process (e.g., only see it when it is close to completion, one chapter at a time, etc.)? Finally, provide all assessment committee members with a TENTATIVE timeline of your treatise research process, from the date you plan to complete your treatise proposal to the date you plan to defend your treatise.

Step Five: Finalize Treatise Proposal

Generally, the treatise proposal provides a description of the focus and rationale for your treatise, a review of related literature, procedures for conducting your research or resolving your identified problem, and the format of the final treatise. Treatise proposals may vary somewhat across various specializations within the Department of Speech Communication. However, each proposal is a plan for the conduct of a specific research-based, applied, or collaborative treatise. The proposal serves as a "blueprint" or "understanding" between treatise assessment committees and the graduate candidate regarding the scope of the proposed treatise. A detailed proposal reduces the chance of misunderstandings between Chairs, assessment committees, and graduate candidates. The proposal typically translates to a head start on chapters one and two. The length of the proposal varies greatly depending on the nature of your proposed treatise and expectations of your treatise Chair. In the Department of Speech Communication, treatise proposals have ranged in length from not more than half a dozen to 25 or more pages.

The deadline for completing your proposal is the end of the semester prior to the one in which you intend to execute the treatise. However, it is recommended that the proposal be completed early in the semester before midterm, for a number of compelling reasons:

- The proposal is completed before the semester winds up; when time to complete it is much more readily available.
- Ideas for your seminar papers for the semester can be linked to the treatise.
- The Human Subjects proposal (if needed) can be completed in a timely manner.

Here are the steps to follow in developing your treatise proposal. You may have already completed some of these steps in writing your 2 to 3 page abstract of preliminary ideas:

- Consult the Graduate Calendar and familiarize yourself with all applicable deadlines
- Obtain, review, and follow as appropriate a copy of the most recent SIUE Master's Thesis Guidelines (available on the Graduate School web site).
- Consult previous treatise proposals and theses for relevant information on format and style. Consult your Chair for suggestions of recent comparable theses.

- Begin to develop your idea conceptually. That is, link your question or problem to theory and practice and begin to articulate a strong rationale for the treatise you propose. Simultaneously, seek input from the three members of your assessment committee.
- Develop a detailed proposal in close conjunction with your treatise Chair. Ask your assessment committee for feedback on that proposal, make necessary revisions, and re-submit. Committee members usually need one-two weeks to read drafts and provide feedback.
- Work with your committee Chair to develop a chapter outline, tentative timetable for when various chapters will be completed, the contents of each chapter, and their approximate length.
- Create files for each chapter NOW. As ideas occur to you on a daily or weekly basis write them up in snippets in each chapter file. This strategy helps in some ways to alleviate the inevitable writing blocks that occur in writing the treatise by allowing you, when moving to a new chapter, to not be one of staring at a blank screen. Instead, material is there waiting to stimulate your thinking and writing.

Step Six: Arrange a Treatise Proposal Meeting

After selecting a treatise Chair and assessment committee, developing the treatise proposal, and circulating the completed treatise proposal to the treatise assessment committee, the candidate must arrange a treatise proposal meeting (coordinating the date, time, and location). There are a number of important objectives for this meeting:

- Committee members have an opportunity to confer with you and with each another about your proposal and ideas for refining the treatise;
- The assessment committee agrees to the proposed timeline for completing the treatise;
- The assessment committee articulates the roles each member prefers to play (ranging from being involved at each step or seeing only the completed treatise);
- The candidate asks any questions he or she may have about the treatise process.
- If a thesis, members sign the title registration form required by the Graduate School. Make sure to bring a prepared copy of this form (found on the Graduate School web page) to the meeting.

Step Seven (if applicable): Submit Signed Thesis Title Registration Form to the Graduate School

This form must be provided to the Graduate School PRIOR TO THE END OF THE SEMESTER PRECEDING THE ONE IN WHICH YOU EXECUTE YOUR TREATISE.

NOTE: Only after your title is registered are you eligible to enroll for Thesis (SPC 599).

Step Eight (whenever applicable): Apply for Human Subjects Approval

If you are going to work directly with people (as opposed to content analysis, rhetorical research, or historical/critical research), you MUST have prior approval from the

Institutional Review Board (IRB). No work with human subjects may proceed without approval from this committee.

Depending on the nature of your research, you would fill out one of three types of protocols: Exempt, Expedited, or Full Committee Review. Generally, if your treatise involves data collection that does not place the people you study "at risk," your research is granted an exemption from full committee review. Information about which type of form you need to fill out, the process of preparing a protocol for review, and copies of the forms can be found at: <http://www.siu.edu/ORP/IRB/index.html> on the SIUE web site. Ask your treatise committee Chair to assist you in considering the necessity and/or procedures for human subjects approval. If your treatise requires human subjects approval, then your IRB form must be signed by both your committee Chair and the Chair of the Department of Speech Communication

EXECUTING THE TREATISE

Typical Organization of a Treatise

- 1) Abstract (a succinct, one-page summary of the paper, stating the problem, methodology, results and conclusions).
- 2) A statement of the problem/justification for treatise
- 3) Appropriate literature review
- 4) Approach (theoretical, historical etc.) and justification
- 5) Methodology/sample selection and justification as applicable
- 6) Statement of hypotheses/research questions as applicable
- 7) Findings/results and Discussion
- 8) Summary and Conclusions
- 9) References
- 10) Appendices

Questionnaires and other research instruments must be approved by both the IRB and the faculty member. Comparative analytic methods are encouraged. All methodologies in which candidates can demonstrate competence are suitable for use in the treatise, including qualitative research methods such as interviews, participant observation techniques, longitudinal studies, ethnographic studies, company case studies, and ethnomethodology, and quantitative research methods such as surveys, experiments, and content analysis, provided that they are applicable to the situation.

For the most part, the treatise should be written in the present tense. The paper should define and justify the problem clearly and must be supported by factual findings, which are properly documented and with assumptions clearly stated. The methodology should be clearly explained and justified as to selection. The conclusions and recommendations should be supported by the analysis, logically and with documentation.

Writing Your Treatise and Working with Your Committee

As previously stated, the most important people in the academic life of graduate candidates are the members of their treatise assessment committee. Keeping your assessment committee happy demands attention to the following:

1. Visit the members of your assessment committee periodically and report on your progress. This suggestion serves several functions. Frequent consultation serves to recharge your creative batteries and helps you finish your treatise more quickly. When you orally defend your treatise prior to final submission/approval, this assures that the faces around your oral examination table are familiar and understanding; you will be less nervous and will perform better.
2. Provide each member of the assessment committee with his or her own copy of the final draft of your treatise **AT LEAST ONE-WEEK PRIOR TO THE DEFENSE DATE**. Most faculty members resent being asked to a treatise defense when they have not seen it until a few days before the defense or if it is presented to them as a "finished product." If you choose your assessment committee members wisely, every one of them can be of help to you with suggestions about style, organization, or approach.
3. Find resolutions to differences of opinions. You do not have to accept all suggestions about minor changes; but you should listen carefully to major objections. Consult, discuss, and redefine. Whether your future career is in academe, government, research, or the private sector, you will be involved in collegial resolution of intellectual problems for the rest of your life. Start now!
4. Maintain good relations with your assessment committee members. Most candidates maintain good relations with their assessment committees, finish their research, and earn their degrees with no problems. Occasionally, however, differences of opinion regarding the research or personality conflicts within an assessment committee may develop. If this happens, remember: By all means, try to stay on good terms with your committee Chair and keep calm. Acceptable accommodations can be found to almost any problem and the Chair can try to help you as you seek to resolve these problems.
5. Initiating and continuing treatise research and writing is the candidate's responsibility. Master's candidates have a great deal of responsibility, and hence, control over what goes on during this period of time--the role of the assessment committee is important but limited. Most significantly, the conduct and presentation of the treatise research is the candidate's responsibility. Meeting the requirements of the Graduate School is also the candidate's responsibility.

In addition to keeping your assessment committee happy, it is essential to organize your writing and your computer files in ways that make the final printing easier, less stressful, and in line with the treatise format guidelines.

Remember to back up your computer work frequently. Keep a log of your meetings with your assessment committee. Specify version numbers on your treatise chapters so that the oral feedback of your committee Chair can be checked from one meeting to the next. Your assessment committee members may vary in their involvement during the writing process. Some want constant input and opportunity for feedback, whereas others may not want to see chapters until close to the final draft of the entire treatise. However, it is your responsibility to communicate with all assessment committee members to inform them of your progress, in anticipation of the oral defense.

Special Considerations for the Thesis

The master's thesis is a formal document that is catalogued and saved in the University library for study by other scholars of communication for years to come. Therefore, the form and style of the thesis is quite exacting. To aid you in writing a thesis, the University publishes Master's Thesis Guidelines. You may obtain the most current version at: http://www.siue.edu/GRADUATE/student/frms_guide.html

Read this carefully before you write your thesis. In the Department of Speech Communication, refer also to the most current version of the Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association or its equivalent for additional guidance in the form and style of your master's thesis.

If you write your thesis on your home computer, be sure that your printer meets the requirements of the University regarding quality of the finished product. Keep in mind that typing your own thesis on a computer means that you must become very familiar with the precise form and style for preparing such documents. You should not expect your thesis Chair or assessment committee members to closely edit your thesis for form and style, nor for compliance with Graduate School requirements.

If you use a typist to prepare your final draft, hire one that has typed master's theses before at SIUE. Discuss with your typist his or her availability and compatibility with your timetable of chapters and defense. Carefully negotiate an understanding with your typist about a price per page and the role he or she will play in helping you with the fine points of form and style. Make sure your typist is aware of all deadlines you must meet. Make sure your typist sets deadlines for you to submit the final thesis for typing.

Special Considerations for the Collaborative Research Study

The collaborative research study is a cooperative effort by the candidate and a member of the Department faculty to produce a co-authored research article which is then submitted to a scholarly journal (or its equivalent) for publication. It is important to remember, however, that the primary goal of *any* exit option is to assess the skill and knowledge level of the master's candidate. It is neither useful nor appropriate to evaluate a candidate for doing "busy work," nor for work done by their faculty co-author. Neither is it ethical to call a faculty member the co-author of a study done primarily by the candidate. Thus,

transparency and a balanced work load are key to successful collaborative research. To accomplish these, it is important that the candidate and faculty co-author establish a clear and agreed-upon division of labor at the very beginning of the process, that enough substantive portions of the project be conducted individually by the candidate to allow for meaningful assessment, and that the research process be documented throughout. It is expected that the overall outline of the project will be collaboratively developed, but that the candidate will then work relatively independently to review the relevant literature and then develop both appropriate hypotheses/research questions and an appropriate methodology. A solid draft of the literature review and the proposed hypotheses/research questions and methodology should then be presented to the faculty co-author for consideration. If necessary, the candidate should make any suggested changes. Once consensus has been reached on these items, the candidate then works relatively independently again to generate, collect, and analyze the required data and then write up draft results. These are again brought to the faculty co-author, and revised if necessary. Finally, the candidate and faculty co-author work collaboratively once more to bring the various completed pieces of the research project together and polish them into a finished form appropriate for submission to the targeted venue.

Extending Treatise Work

Generally, candidates finish their master's treatise in by the second semester (after 6 hours) that they register for either SPC 597, SPC 598 or SPC 599. However, if you need to continue working on your treatise in subsequent semesters, you may sign up for up to 4 additional treatise hours. This retains your status as a registered candidate while you complete your treatise, even if you are taking no other coursework. Student status is required to retain access to the library, the computer system, and other services essential to your research activities. You must be registered in SPC 597, SPC 598 or SPC 599 during the semester that final approval of the treatise is granted by the University. The *Request for Extended Thesis Credit* form is available at:

<<http://www.siue.edu/GRADUATE/faculty/gsforms.html#ThesisForms>>

This form must be completed, signed by your full assessment committee, and submitted to the Graduate School.

DEFENDING THE TREATISE

Once your treatise is written and approved by your Chair, circulate copies of the treatise to your other assessment committee members. You then schedule an oral defense, including scheduling a conference room. Although this meeting is typically called a defense, many prefer to view it as a colloquium. The following steps should guide you in this process.

Set the Date, Time & Place

Once your treatise is written and approved by your Chair, you circulate copies of the treatise to your other assessment committee members. It is customary to provide the final draft of your treatise to your assessment committee at least two weeks prior to your oral

defense. Anything less than two weeks may cause problems to arise during oral defense due to hurried assessment committee inspection. You then schedule a one-hour block of time for the oral defense, including scheduling a conference room. Make sure the Graduate Director is advised of the date, time and place so that this information may be provided to the Graduate School. For a thesis, schedule your oral defense to allow at least one additional week prior to the date you plan to submit the final, typed draft to the Graduate Records office to allow ample time for any necessary revisions.

Prepare for the Defense

Re-read your treatise from beginning to end, making note of changes you would like to make and what you are most proud of about the treatise.

Prepare a 5-7 minute presentation for the defense. A typical presentation might include an engaging 1 minute opening, a 1 minute summary of the treatise process, a 2 minute summary of significant conclusions and implications, and a 1 minute closing that expresses the value of the treatise to your overall education and to the discipline. End by offering to answer any questions your assessment committee may have about your research.

Make sure your Committee Chair has obtained a signature page, and BRINGS THIS TO THE DEFENSE.

TAKE A BREAK FROM THE TREATISE. Take a few days prior to the treatise to relax and not look at it (go to a movie, dinner, sleep, ride the bike trails - whatever you find most relaxing). Then contact your assessment committee members a day or two prior to defense to remind them of day, time, and place. The candidate should also check with the Department Secretary to reconfirm the room's availability at the specified time.

The Day of the Defense

Upon arrival of the entire assessment committee, you may be asked to leave the room for a moment while the assessment committee discusses initial reactions to the treatise and candidate. Upon returning to the defense room, you will be asked to provide a brief summary of the treatise and its highlights. Following the summary the assessment committee asks questions, which can cover any topics deemed relevant to the treatise or any other areas of your graduate studies. Candidates defending collaborative research will be asked to reflect upon those aspects of the process under their individual control, as well as on the overall project. The faculty co-author assumes a dual role under this circumstance, speaking both a co-author of the work and as a member of the assessment committee. You will also be asked to reflect on the overall quality of your academic experience at SIUE. At the end of your defense, you will be asked to leave the room while the treatise assessment committee meets in closed session to decide if your treatise and defense demonstrate mastery of material and processes learned in your graduate program. The assessment committee invites you to return to the defense room and announces its decision.

Outcomes of the Oral Defense

The assessment committee may decide to:

- Approve the treatise as submitted
- Approve the treatise with changes specified
- Not approve the treatise

The second category is a common outcome. Sometimes, the treatise assessment committee will have the treatise Chair supervise the changes. Committee members may sign approval on the spot, or they may wait for the treatise Chair to sign off after the changes have been made before they sign. On other occasions, one or more assessment committee members may review the changes before signing approval of the treatise. On still other occasions, the assessment committee may elect to have you re-defend your revised treatise. If your assessment committee does not approve your treatise, arrange with your Chair to make necessary changes in your treatise and/or oral defense. You may be required to wait until the following semester to defend your treatise again. You may want to consult with other faculty members to assist or advise you regarding any future defense.

Final Review and Duplication

Once your treatise has been revised and all assessment committee members have signed the signature page, submit a copy of your treatise to the Speech Communication Department and, if a thesis, to Graduate Review as well (careful to conform precisely to their submission guidelines).

Based on feedback from a *Thesis Review*, make any necessary changes and resubmit to the Graduate School.

Finally, provide copies of your treatise to each member of your assessment committee, and be sure to keep hard copy for yourself as well.

The following are problems commonly found in Theses submitted to Graduate Review, though this list would be useful for any form of treatise.

1. References not cited or listed according to the required reference style (typically, though not necessarily APA).
 - Be sure no references are missing, all are accurate (citations in text and reference list both match), and are formatted correctly. Confirm the appropriate style guide before you start your research. Then, prepare your reference section as you do your research.
2. Problems with Table of Contents, List of Tables, etc.

- Not formatted properly
- Headings/titles don't match text
- Page numbers are incorrect
- Right- and left-side number alignment is incorrect.

3. Problems with Chapters

- Chapter numbers and titles are not positioned correctly or formatted properly.
- Chapter titles are confused with first-level headings.
- Problems with triple spacing.

4. Problems with Headings

- First-level headings are confused with chapter titles.
- Headings not prepared correctly: the "level" hierarchy is not followed.
- Format regarding use of bold/underline or placement and capitalization incorrect.
- Spacing around the different levels not correct or not maintained throughout.

5. Problems with Tables and Figures

- Misplaced in the text.
- Not identified by number in the preceding text.
- Not formatted according to style and SIUE guidelines

6. Problems with Pagination

- Page numbers are not correctly placed.

7. Problems with the Top and Side Margins

- Margins are shifted to left, right, up, or down. This can be due to variations in printers and paper feeders. Always measure output to make sure it reflects accurately your settings in the document.

8. Excessive Bottom Margins

- Slightly larger (than normal) bottom margins are bound to occur sometimes, such as when avoiding widow lines or headings that would otherwise end up at the bottom of a page without text following. However, they must not occur for the following reasons:
- An illustration (table, figure, etc.) doesn't fit on the same page as the text introducing it. (In that case, continue to fill page with text and present illustration at top of next page.)

- To start a new heading on a new page (where room exists on the preceding page for the heading and at least one--preferably two--lines of text). Text pages can stop short only at the end of a chapter (as chapters must begin on a new page). Headings, to the contrary, must be continuous within the text.

9. Problems with Title and Signature Pages

- The different elements of each page are not properly completed or in their proper positions.

10. Something is Missing!

- Reported examples of missing elements includes: abstract; list of tables, and figures; actual tables and figures; reference sections; and random pages. A thesis can be rejected for missing elements, so be careful!

Generally, follow these words of wisdom in formatting your treatise:

Know your word processing system well in order to format your treatise to the required specifications. Many programs have automatic Table of Contents (etc.) generators, "reference" generators for your text citations, etc. All have features for setting decimal tabs, right-aligned tabs, hanging indents, etc., but you need to know when and how to use them. If you are unsure, get help!

Build in time to format your treatise when you make decisions about a completion date. Plan to spend several hours each on reading the APA (or equivalent) and Graduate School formatting guidelines, as well as your software manual or help screens for help—even if you feel confident about your ability in this area. Allow time specifically for formatting your treatise. Even if you have carefully kept track of formatting as you have prepared your treatise, you could literally spend several days bringing your treatise into compliance with the all the various formatting requirements depending on your level of competence in word processing and on the structural complexity of your treatise. Don't underestimate this part of the process!

Meeting Deadlines

Application for graduation: The University begins accepting applications for graduation the term prior to anticipated graduation. The DEADLINE for each semester is the first day of that semester! If you don't graduate as expected, you must re-apply for graduation for the appropriate term.

Last day to submit theses to Graduate Review: This deadline occurs on the last day of classes of the semester. You must be enrolled in SPC 599 in order to submit a thesis for review.

POTENTIAL INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY RIGHTS CRITERIA

There are many functions served by a treatise, including instruction of a candidate and his/her mentors, enhancement of one's expertise in a given area of knowledge, improving one's chances of being accepted into a Ph.D. program or hired, and of course, advancement of knowledge. This latter function is best served when the treatise is shared with larger audiences, which in turn involves presentation and publication. Students who subsequently present, publish or distribute their works bring prestige to their university, their instructors, and themselves. Clearly, the intention of the collaborative research option is submission for publication, and issues of authorship are clear. However, candidates completing theses and projects are also urged to consider submitting their work for conferences and publication. In anticipation of this possibility, consider the following with regard to shared authorship:

There are many levels of attributions for intellectual credit. A faculty member can be listed as lead author, co-author, noted or acknowledged as an important contributor, consultant, or instructor. The level at which an author or co-author is credited may have consequences for that person's prestige, promotion, tenure, and share in profits, awards, rewards, and/or recognition. However, no person should receive credit for work she or he did not earn.

In general, the treatise Chair and assessment committee members should expect involvement in and attribution as co-author of subsequent versions of the treatise under any of the following conditions (issues such as the order of authorship can be determined by the conditions listed below. These issues are illustrative rather than definitive or comprehensive. The basic rationale is that the more criteria a professor meets, the more likely it is she or he should be attributed with co-authorship, co-ownership, and/or co-credit for the products of the treatise):

- When the faculty member is involved in at least major rewrites or reorganizations of the treatise ("major" suggests substantive and substantial amounts of re-writing, redirection of the basic arguments, rationale, or structure of the treatise);
- When the faculty member actively negotiates and/or provides the sample, location, and/or agreements permitting the treatise to proceed;
- When the faculty member conducts the data analyses;
- When the faculty member develops the measures, methods, or techniques uniquely for this treatise;
- When the faculty member is requested by the candidate to take primary responsibility for editing the treatise for purposes of conference, publication, or show submission.

Of course, exceptions and extensions can be negotiated with the Committee members. However, resulting understandings or conditions should be noted in writing. Remember that authorship order should also be negotiated, or at least the criteria for determining authorship order.

When the assessment committee member(s) and/or Chair involve themselves in less than the ways above, or when their role is primarily advisory and consultative (e.g., providing marginalia, oral discussions in office, suggestions for re-thinking the treatise, etc.), then

co-authorship is not recommended. *However, it is considered good form to note on any subsequent versions of the treatise that a previous version of it was completed as a treatise in the Department of Speech Communication at Southern Illinois University Edwardsville, and to express appreciation to the Chair and treatise assessment committee members for their efforts in facilitating the completion of the treatise.*

-- Special thanks to Dr. Brian Spitzberg and the School of Communication at San Diego State University for their considerable assistance in the preparation of this document --

CANDIDATE NAME:				COMMITTEE MEMBER NAME:				
WRITTEN EXAMINATION DATE:						Unable to Assess	PLEASE PROVIDE NARRATIVE FEEDBACK	Numerical Score
Each cell represents a comprehensive threshold. To advance to the next cell to the left, each and every condition called for in the current cell must be met.								
	EXCELLENT (4)	GOOD (3)	ADEQUATE (2)	POOR (1)	UNACCEPTABLE (0)			
THEORETICAL KNOWLEDGE	Exceptionally conversant in broad range of communication theories; strong evidence of insight, and of both depth and breadth of theoretical knowledge; strong command of relevant vocabulary.	Conversant in broad range of communication theories; evidence of both depth and breadth of theoretical knowledge; appropriate command of relevant vocabulary.	Conversant in adequate range of communication theories; some evidence of both depth and breadth of theoretical knowledge; moderate command of relevant vocabulary.	Conversant only in narrow range of communication theories; little evidence of depth and/or breadth of theoretical knowledge; inadequate command of relevant vocabulary.	Fails to be conversant regarding communication theories; no evidence of either depth or breadth of theoretical knowledge; no command of relevant vocabulary.			
RESEARCH METHODS KNOWLEDGE	Exceptionally conversant in broad range of research methods; strong evidence of ability to identify, interpret, and ethically apply appropriate methodologies in a wide variety of situations; strong command of relevant vocabulary.	Conversant in broad range of research methods; evidence of ability to identify, interpret, and ethically apply appropriate methodologies in a variety of situations; appropriate command of relevant vocabulary.	Conversant in adequate range of research methods; some evidence of ability to identify, interpret, and ethically apply appropriate methodologies in a variety of situations; moderate command of relevant vocabulary.	Conversant only in narrow range of research methods; little evidence of ability to identify, interpret, or ethically apply appropriate methodologies in a variety of situations; inadequate command of relevant vocabulary.	Fails to be conversant regarding research methods; no evidence of ability to identify, interpret, or ethically apply appropriate methodologies in a variety of situations; no command of relevant vocabulary.			
ABILITY TO ANALYZE INFORMATION	Exceptional ability to "read deeply" (think critically, understand multiple perspectives and multiple levels of meaning) into a wide variety of resources both within and beyond the discipline and to make insightful use of such information.	Strong ability to "read deeply" (think critically, understand multiple perspectives and multiple levels of meaning) into a wide variety of resources both within and beyond the discipline and to make use of such information.	Ability to "read deeply" (think critically, understand multiple perspectives and multiple levels of meaning) into an adequate variety of resources within the discipline and to make use of such information.	Limited ability to "read deeply" (think critically, understand multiple perspectives and multiple levels of meaning) into resources within the discipline or to make use of such information.	Unable to "read deeply" (think critically, understand multiple levels of meaning) into resources within the discipline or to make use of such information.			
ABILITY TO SYNTHESIZE INFORMATION	Exceptional ability to insightfully integrate concepts and information from wide variety of sources both within and beyond the discipline into arguments and summaries in a manner consistent with the values of the discipline.	Strong ability to integrate concepts and information from variety of sources both within and beyond the discipline into arguments and summaries in a manner consistent with the values of the discipline.	Ability to integrate concepts and information from variety of sources within the discipline into arguments and summaries in a manner consistent with the values of the discipline.	Limited ability to integrate concepts and information from sources within the discipline into arguments and summaries or in a manner consistent with the values of the discipline.	Unable to integrate concepts and information from sources within the discipline into arguments and summaries or in a manner consistent with the values of the discipline.			
ABILITY TO APPLY THEORY	Exceptionally skilled at identifying and applying appropriate communication theories to a wide variety of real-world situations, and in drawing useful and insightful conclusions from such application.	Skilled at identifying and applying appropriate communication theories to a variety of real-world situations, and in drawing useful conclusions from such application.	Adequate at identifying and applying communication theories to real-world situations, and in drawing conclusions from such application.	Struggles to identify and apply communication theories to real-world situations, limited ability to draw conclusions from such application.	Unable to identify or apply communication theories to real-world situations, or to draw conclusions from such application.			
WRITING STYLE	Writes at a master's level; no grammatical errors or colloquial language present in written work; uses smooth transitions, strong central theses, introductions & conclusions etc.	Writes at a master's level; majority of written work free of grammatical errors; no colloquial language, uses smooth transitions, & has strong central theses, introductions and conclusions etc.	Writes near a master's level; written work predominately free of colloquial language & grammatical errors; has strong theses, some weaknesses in introductions, conclusions, and/or transitions.	Writes below a master's level; grammar errors & colloquial language present in written work; written responses have theses, but do not have strong introductions, conclusions, or transitions.	Writes below a master's level; grammar errors & colloquial language present in written work; written responses do not have theses, have weak or absent introductions, conclusion, and/or transitions.			
ORAL EXAMINATION DATE:								
ABILITY TO SUPPORT & DEFEND POSITIONS	Positions are highly compelling and exceptionally clear, and are well-supported by a range of clear and appropriate examples.	Positions are compelling and clear, and are well-supported by a range of clear and appropriate examples.	Positions are clear, and are supported by clear and appropriate examples.	Positions lack clarity, and are inadequately supported and/or rely on inappropriate examples.	Positions unclear, and are wholly unsupported and/or rely on inappropriate examples.			
ABILITY TO ADDRESS QUESTIONS	Exceptional ability to "think on feet;" always listens to and understands questions; able to quickly generate germane responses.	Clear ability to "think on feet;" always listens to and understands questions; able to generate germane responses.	Able to "think on feet;" listens to and understands questions; able to generate relevant responses.	Seldom able to "think on feet;" fails at times to listen to and/or understand questions; struggles to generate relevant responses.	Unable to "think on feet;" fails to listen to and/or understand questions; unable to generate relevant responses.			
PROFESSIONAL DEMEANOR	Easy, consistent rapport; unselfconscious; non-defensive; respectful; seeks clarification whenever necessary; foresees conflicts and assertively problem-solves; strong mastery of interpersonal interaction skills; exemplary.	Consistent rapport; unselfconscious; non-defensive; respectful; generally seeks clarification if necessary; notices conflicts and seeks collaborative resolutions; mastery of interpersonal interaction skills; effective.	Some rapport; occasionally self-conscious; rarely defensive; occasionally distorts/misunderstands messages and/or positions; handles conflict reasonably; acceptable interpersonal interaction skills; acceptable communication skills.	Little rapport; often self-conscious; occasionally defensive; occasionally distorts/misunderstands messages and/or positions; often treats conflict as "win-lose"; flawed, inconsistent interpersonal interaction skills; weak communication skills.	No rapport; self-conscious; defensive; regularly distorts/misunderstands messages and/or positions; aggressively treats conflict as "win-lose"; poor interpersonal interaction skills; poor communication skills.			
Unconditional Pass = +2.67 & no score below a 2, Conditional Pass = +1.67 & no score below a 1, Not Passing = + .67 &/or any score below a 1						Overall Numerical Score (Sum of right column/9) ----->		
Results: ___ Unconditional Pass ___ Conditional Pass ___ Fail			Conditions:					

CANDIDATE NAME:					COMMITTEE MEMBER NAME:				
THEESIS/PROJECT/COLLABORATIVE STUDY TITLE & SUBMISSION DATE:						Unable	PLEASE PROVIDE		Numerical Score
Each cell represents a comprehensive threshold. To advance to the next cell to the left, each and every condition called for in the current cell must be met.						to	NARRATIVE		
	EXCELLENT (4)	GOOD (3)	ADEQUATE (2)	POOR (1)	UNACCEPTABLE (0)	Assess	FEEDBACK		
THEORETICAL KNOWLEDGE	Exceptionally conversant in applicable communication theory/theories, strong evidence of insight, and of both depth and breadth of theoretical knowledge, strong command of relevant vocabulary.	Conversant in applicable theory/theories, evidence of both depth and breadth of theoretical knowledge, appropriate command of relevant vocabulary.	Somewhat conversant in applicable communication theory/theories, some evidence of both depth and breadth of theoretical knowledge, moderate command of relevant vocabulary.	Inadequately conversant in applicable communication theory/theories, little evidence of depth and/or breadth of theoretical knowledge, inadequate command of relevant vocabulary.	Fails to be conversant regarding applicable communication theory/theories, no evidence of either depth or breadth of theoretical knowledge, no command of relevant vocabulary.				
RESEARCH METHODS KNOWLEDGE	Exceptionally conversant in applicable research method(s), strong evidence of ability to identify, interpret, and ethically apply appropriate methodologies in a wide variety of situations, strong command of relevant vocabulary.	Conversant in applicable research method(s), evidence of ability to identify, interpret, and ethically apply appropriate methodologies in a variety of situations, appropriate command of relevant vocabulary.	Somewhat conversant in applicable research method(s), some evidence of ability to identify, interpret, and ethically apply appropriate methodologies in a variety of situations, moderate command of relevant vocabulary.	Inadequately conversant in applicable research method(s), little evidence of ability to identify, interpret, or ethically apply appropriate methodologies in a variety of situations, inadequate command of relevant vocabulary.	Fails to be conversant regarding applicable research method(s), no evidence of ability to identify, interpret, or ethically apply appropriate methodologies in a variety of situations, no command of relevant vocabulary.				
ABILITY TO ANALYZE INFORMATION	Exceptional ability to "read deeply" (think critically, understand multiple perspectives and multiple levels of meaning) into a wide variety of resources both within and beyond the discipline and to make use of such information.	Strong ability to "read deeply" (think critically, understand multiple perspectives and multiple levels of meaning) into a wide variety of resources both within and beyond the discipline and to make use of such information.	Ability to "read deeply" (think critically, understand multiple perspectives and multiple levels of meaning) into an adequate variety of resources within the discipline and to make use of such information.	Limited ability to "read deeply" (think critically, understand multiple perspectives and multiple levels of meaning) into resources within the discipline or to make use of such information.	Unable to "read deeply" (think critically, understand multiple perspectives and multiple levels of meaning) into resources within the discipline or to make use of such information.				
ABILITY TO SYNTHESIZE INFORMATION	Exceptional ability to insightfully integrate concepts and information from wide variety of sources both within and beyond the discipline into arguments and summaries.	Strong ability to integrate concepts and information from variety of sources both within and beyond the discipline into arguments and summaries.	Ability to integrate concepts and information from variety of sources within the discipline into arguments and summaries.	Limited ability to integrate concepts and information from sources within the discipline into arguments and summaries.	Unable to integrate concepts and information from sources within the discipline into arguments and summaries.				
ABILITY TO APPLY THEORY	Exceptionally skilled at identifying and applying appropriate communication theories to a wide variety of real-world situations, and in drawing useful and insightful conclusions from such application.	Skilled at identifying and applying appropriate communication theories to a variety of real-world situations, and in drawing useful conclusions from such application.	Adequate at identifying and applying communication theories to real-world situations, and in drawing conclusions from such application.	Struggles to identify and apply communication theories to real-world situations, limited ability to draw conclusions from such application.	Unable to identify or apply communication theories to real-world situations, or to draw conclusions from such application.				
WRITING STYLE	Writes at a master's level, no grammatical errors or colloquial language present in written work, uses smooth transitions, strong central theses, introductions & conclusions etc.	Writes at a master's level, majority of written work free of grammatical errors, no colloquial language, uses smooth transitions, & has strong central theses, introductions and conclusions etc.	Writes near a master's level, written work predominately free of colloquial language & grammatical errors, has strong theses, some weaknesses in introductions, conclusions, and/or transitions.	Writes below a master's level, grammar errors & colloquial language present in written work, written responses have theses, but do not have strong introductions, conclusions, or transitions.	Writes below a master's level, grammar errors & colloquial language present in written work, written responses do not have theses, has weak or absent introductions, conclusion, and/or transitions.				
ORAL EXAMINATION DATE:									
ABILITY TO SUPPORT & DEFEND POSITIONS	Positions are highly compelling and exceptionally clear, and are well-supported by a range of clear and appropriate examples.	Positions are compelling and clear, and are well-supported by a range of clear and appropriate examples.	Positions are clear, and are supported by clear and appropriate examples.	Positions lack clarity, and are inadequately supported and/or rely on inappropriate examples.	Positions unclear, and are wholly unsupported and/or rely on inappropriate examples.				
ABILITY TO ADDRESS QUESTIONS	Exceptional ability to "think on feet;" always listens to and understands questions; able to quickly generate germane responses.	Clear ability to "think on feet;" always listens to and understands questions; able to generate germane responses.	Able to "think on feet;" listens to and understands questions; able to generate relevant responses.	Seldom able to "think on feet;" fails at times to listen to and/or understand questions; struggles to generate relevant responses.	Unable to "think on feet;" fails to listen to and/or understand questions; unable to generate relevant responses.				
PROFESSIONAL DEMEANOR	Easy, consistent rapport; unselfconscious; non-defensive; respectful; seeks clarification whenever necessary; foresees conflicts and assertively problem-solves; strong mastery of interpersonal interaction skills.	Consistent rapport; unselfconscious; non-defensive; respectful; generally seeks clarification if necessary; notices conflicts and seeks collaborative resolutions; mastery of interpersonal interaction skills.	Some rapport; occasionally self-conscious; rarely defensive; occasionally distorts/ misunderstands messages and/ or positions; handles conflict reasonably; acceptable interpersonal interaction skills; acceptable communication skills.	Little rapport; often self-conscious; occasionally defensive; occasionally distorts/ misunderstands messages and/ or positions; often treats conflict as "win-lose"; flawed, inconsistent interpersonal interaction skills; poor communication skills.	No rapport; self-conscious; defensive; regularly distorts/ misunderstands messages and/ or positions; aggressively treats conflict as "win-lose"; poor interpersonal interaction skills; poor communication skills.				
Unconditional Pass = +2.67 & no score below a 2, Conditional Pass = +1.67 & no score below a 1, Not Passing = + .67 &/or any score below a 1						Overall Numerical Score (Sum of right column/9) ----->			
Results: ___ Unconditional Pass ___ Conditional Pass ___ Fail			Conditions:						