

Final Project Proposal Guidelines

1. **ATTEND ADVISING SESSION (course 5-6).** Consult with MALS Director about overall progress in the program, your degree progress, and your Final Project ideas.
2. **ATTEND PROPOSAL WORKSHOP (course 6-7).** Every semester, the MALS Writing Consultant offers a workshop ("From Idea to Proposal: Approaching the Final Project") on writing the final project proposal.
 - We strongly recommend that you attend during your sixth -- or, at the very latest -- seventh course in the program.
 - You cannot submit your Project proposal until you have taken this required workshop.
 - See MALS Calendar (http://www.mals.duke.edu/cur_calendar.htm) for next scheduled workshop session.
3. **DETERMINE PROJECT TOPIC & SUPERVISOR (course 8-9).** Consult with the MALS Director to discuss your topic and choice of supervisor. We strongly recommend that you work in a field in which you have already done academic work; you are welcome to amplify a research paper from one of your courses. Your supervisor can be any Graduate School faculty member, but we strongly recommend that you work with someone you have worked with before.
 - Projects must be interdisciplinary and must be based in or include written analysis.
 - Your supervisor must be approved before you can proceed.
4. **SCHEDULE AND ATTEND BIBLIOGRAPHIC CONSULTATION (course 8-9).** Consult a library resource expert who specializes in any field pertinent to your Project.
http://library.duke.edu/about/directory/subject_librarians.html
5. **SECURE HUMAN SUBJECTS APPROVAL (course 8-9).** If you are planning to use human subjects in your research, you must obtain the approval of the Institutional Review Board, Office of Research Support, before submitting your proposal. The document certifying that your project is approved or waived should be attached to your proposal when submitted to the MALS office. Website: <http://www.ors.duke.edu/irb/regpolicy>. Contacts:
 - Lorna Hicks (684-8773) lorna.hicks@duke.edu
 - Holly Williams-Stafford (681-8686) holly.williams.stafford@duke.edu
 - Meg Lewis (688-1777) meg.lev@duke.edu

6. **DETERMINE GOAL AND METHOD; DRAFT PROPOSAL (course 8-9).** Determine a central question or goal, and then determine the best method for answering that question or reaching that goal. In consultation with your supervisor, write a draft of your proposal according to the Final Project Proposal Format. If you wish, consult also with the Writing Consultant.

7. **SCHEDULE AND ATTEND PROPOSAL MEETING (course 9).** Contact the MALS Program Assistant (684-3222) to schedule a meeting in the MALS Office with your supervisor and the MALS director to discuss your Project. It is your responsibility to find out your supervisor's availability and to inform your supervisor about the time and place of the Proposal Meeting.

➔ Please submit a draft of your proposal 48 hours before the meeting.

- Proposal Meeting Deadlines
 - Summer project the 2nd Friday in March
 - Fall project the 2nd Friday in June
 - Spring project the 2nd Friday in October

8. **SUBMIT PROPOSAL PACKET (course 8-9).** After the Proposal Meeting, you will be working with either the Director or the Writing Consultant to draft a final version of your proposal. Once you have done so, submit it to the MALS office with the cover sheet, preliminary bibliography, signed Student Checklist and signed Faculty Agreement to Supervise form. Once the Advisory Committee has met (usually in about three weeks), we will inform you of their decision.

- Proposal Submission Deadlines
 - Summer project last Friday in March
 - Fall project last Friday in June
 - Spring project last Friday in October

APPROACHING THE FINAL PROJECT: A TIMELINE OF REQUIREMENTS

Course	FIVE	SIX	SEVEN	EIGHT	NINE	TEN
						Final Project Sem- ester
	1) Attend Advising Session with Director to discuss overall progress, organization and direction of your degree program, Final Project. (5-6)	2) Attend FP Proposal Workshop (6-7)		3) Consult with Director about your supervisor and topic; attain agreement of Supervisor . (8)	4) Attend Bibliographic Consultation (w/ library expert) (8-9) 5) Attain Human Subjects approval (from IRB), if necessary (8-9) 6) Determine your Project Goal and Method; draft Project Proposal in consultation with supervisor (8-9)	7) Attend Proposal Meeting (w/ Director & supervisor) before deadline (9) 8) Submit final Proposal Packet before deadline (9)

FINAL PROJECT PROPOSAL FORMAT

I. COMPONENTS OF THE PROPOSAL. Answer the following questions under separate headings. Use 2-3 (no more than three) double-spaced pages.

A. Goal (Central Question) (1-3 sentences)

What question, issue, or problem does this Project seek to address or analyze? Typically, this takes the form of an analytical, open-ended central research question.

B. Method (1-2 paragraphs)

How will you go about answering this central question or achieving this goal? Most Projects take the form of an academic essay based in the scholarly literature (much like an extended class research paper). If you choose this approach, what sort of theories and research materials will you use in your Project and why? If you are doing primary research, what is the research design and how will you evaluate your results?

However, the Final Project can also encompass other approaches, such as policy advocacy, applied knowledge (e.g., designing a curriculum), creative writing or fine arts. If you choose to undertake a project other than the extended academic essay, it must include a shorter academic essay that analyzes your work within a scholarly context.

C. Context (2-3 paragraphs)

What background or context do I need to know in order to understand what is really at issue or at stake in this Project? Discuss what is already known about this question, what we might learn from your Project and why this is significant.

D. Preparation (1 paragraph)

How have you prepared yourself, through MALS courses, personal or professional background, or other means, for this project?

II. PRELIMINARY BIBLIOGRAPHY. Attached to each draft of your Proposal should be a 1-2 page bibliography that indicates what you anticipate will be the key sources for your project, and thus demonstrates your awareness of scholarly sources that will be important to your research. Use an accepted bibliographic format, listing primary and secondary sources separately.

III. PROPOSAL PACKET. The final draft of your Proposal should be submitted with the following documents in the following manner:

- a) Proposal Cover Sheet
- b) Final Project Proposal & Preliminary Bibliography
- c) *Signed* Student Checklist form
- d) *Signed* Faculty Agreement to Supervise form
- e) If your project involves research using human subjects, attach the document of approval or waiver from the Institutional Review Board, Office of Research Support.

Master of Arts in Liberal Studies
Final Project
Proposal Cover Sheet

Attach completed form to the front of proposal.

Final Project Semester: _____

Student Name: _____

Faculty Supervisor: _____

Project Title: _____

Does this project involve research using human subjects? Yes ___ No ___

If "yes," include copy of certification that you have met the requirements of the Office of Research Support.

Student Information

Daytime Phone : _____ Evening Phone: _____

EMAIL Address: _____

Faculty Information

Daytime Phone : _____

EMAIL Address: _____

For Office Use

Date Submitted to MALS Office: _____

Approved: ___ Approved with Comments for Revision: ___ Returned for Resubmission: ___

LS 350 Permission Number: _____

Student Checklist

for

Final Project Proposal

Student Name: _____

Project Title: _____

Faculty Supervisor: _____

_____ I have attended the Final Project Proposal Workshop.

_____ I have consulted an appropriate Library Resource Specialist about appropriate areas of bibliography.

_____ I have met with my supervisor and the MALS Director (or another appropriate MALS staff member) to discuss the details of my project and proposal. (Proposal Meeting)

_____ I have developed this proposal in consultation with my faculty supervisor, who has completed and signed the attached Faculty Agreement to Supervise Final Project form. My supervisor and I have agreed to meet on the following schedule:

_____ My project involves research with human subjects, for which have attained the approval of the IRB.

Upon approval of my project by the MALS Advisory Committee, I will register for LS 350, Final Project, during the _____ term.

Signature: _____ Date: _____

Master of Arts in Liberal Studies
**Faculty Agreement to Supervise
Final Project**

Student name: _____

Project Title: _____

Supervisor: _____

The MALS final project is the culminating educational experience of the Liberal Studies program. Since the MALS degree is not a stepping-stone to a Ph.D., the project's purpose is *not* to demonstrate that the student can contribute specialized knowledge to a particular field of study. Instead, the project provides an opportunity for students to integrate the knowledge and skills that they have gained through the program to produce independent work of the student's own design.

The project usually involves a sustained piece of writing on a topic of mutual interest to the student and faculty supervisor, but it may also involve a practical, creative, or research-based component. We hope that students' projects will integrate material or perspectives from a number of disciplines, and we encourage students to be creative and innovative in their approach. Some students will use the project semester to expand and further develop a paper written for a previous course; others will develop an idea that places their professional interests within the broader academic context of their MALS studies; still others will undertake a creative project. In all cases, however, we expect that the project will include a written, analytical component.

During the project semester, you should plan to meet regularly with the student. We recommend meeting about every two weeks.

The student's proposal will be reviewed by the Liberal Studies Faculty Advisory Committee. After that meeting, MALS director Donna Zapf will be in touch to pass along the comments, suggestions, and concerns of this committee. Sometimes we will ask that the student revise and resubmit the proposal.

After the student's proposal has been approved you will receive a contract letter. In the meantime, please feel free to contact the director at (684-3222) or e-mail her at dzapf@duke.edu if you have questions.

By signing this form, you agree to the following:

____ I agree to supervise the final project of the above MALS student.

____ I have read and approved the student's Final Project proposal.

____ I have arranged a regular schedule of meetings with the student. Our next meeting is scheduled for

Signature: _____ Date: _____