

**MA THESES IN ENGLISH AND AMERICAN LITERATURE
AT THE DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH
FACULTY OF ARTS, UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH BOHEMIA**

For general guidelines concerning the submission of the thesis proposal, the submission of the thesis, and the format of the thesis, see the Dean's Decree 12/2018.

The Department of English issues the following guidelines concerning the contents and the form of theses in English and American literature.

Topic

- The topic of the thesis is chosen by the student based on consultations with the future supervisor of the thesis. The topic and the choice of supervisor are approved by the Head of the Department after the thesis proposal (zadání) is submitted.
- The topic must be clearly related to the field of English and American literature. Theses dealing with other cultural or social phenomena (such as film, music, visual art, politics, religion, media, etc.) will not be accepted for defense; the main focus of the thesis should be on a particular work or a group of works by one or more authors who are major representatives of British or American literature.
- The thesis as a whole should focus on one clear main idea, with all parts of the thesis relevant to that main idea. It should present a clearly defined argument based on the student's own critical examination of primary and secondary sources. The main argument should be the student's own.
- The thesis should not merely repeat the results of the existing research, it should attempt to make a scholarly contribution (albeit a small one) to the academic community.
- The thesis should not be merely descriptive, but should offer the student's original critical insight.
- The thesis should not contain long passages of factual information (biographical, bibliographical, historiographical, etc.). All factual passages should be clearly related to the main argument of the thesis.

Length

- The minimum length of an MA thesis is 60 pages (108,000 characters including spaces) of main text, not including quoted material, front matter (title page, declaration, acknowledgments, contents page, abstract, etc.) and back matter (bibliography, etc.).

Language

- MA theses should be written in English, unless the use of Czech is justifiable with regard to the topic chosen.
- The standard of language use is part of the assessment.

Use of sources

- Primary sources
 - The student must use a printed book edition of the primary text(s) discussed in the thesis (electronic editions of the primary literary works are not acceptable).
 - Regardless of the language of the thesis, the interpretation must be based on the English original of the work, not a Czech translation.

- Secondary sources
 - The student must prove his or her familiarity with the extant critical approaches to the topic chosen, and be able to relate his/her own approach to these.
 - The student must refer to an adequate number of critical sources (the quantity of the sources depends on the topic chosen, but it is expected that the student will use no less than 10 works of criticism – either full-length books or articles).
 - Only scholarly works on high professional level can be used as secondary sources.
 - The student's handling of secondary sources is based on the relevance and quality of the sources used, the student's ability to make a clear connections between the sources and the student's own interpretations, and the student's understanding of the sources used.
 - It is assumed that the student knows the quoted source in its entirety (i.e. does not know only the quotation used in the thesis). Knowledge of secondary materials can be one of the areas of examination at the defense

Plagiarism

- It is essential to clearly mark all the quotations and refer to the source at the end of the quotation. If you paraphrase someone else's idea, it must be clear from the text that it is a paraphrase, not your original idea, and again, the source must be referred to immediately after the paraphrase. Failing to refer to your sources can be a serious problem: in the case of plagiarism, the thesis will not be accepted for defense and other sanctions may follow.

Citations and bibliography

- Theses written in English should follow the most recent edition of the MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers (for a summary of the MLA Style guidelines see the Purdue University OWL web site).
- Theses written in Czech should follow the norm ISO 690.

Credit (zápočet) for the MA thesis seminar is granted by the thesis supervisor. To obtain the first credit it is necessary to submit an entire chapter of the thesis. To obtain the second credit, it is necessary to submit the entire thesis to the supervisor.

The student has to see the supervisor for consultations on the thesis. The supervisor will set deadlines for the submission of the individual chapters and/or the whole thesis as well as dates for consultations. The student must meet the deadlines. The supervisor can set other credit requirements.

Defense

The defense usually has the following format:

- The student briefly introduces the topic of his/her thesis, describes his/her approach and arguments, explains the chosen method, and states the conclusions reached.
- The supervisor and the reader summarize their reports.
- The student responds to the supervisor's and reader's commentaries and criticism.
- There is a discussion in which all members of the defense board participate. The student must answer questions from the board satisfactorily.

The defense is in the language of the thesis.