

September 1, 2009

International Studies Degree Program Senior Thesis (INTS 481 or INTS 491) Guidelines For Students and Instructors For Courses to Meet the INTS 481 Requirement

These guidelines are intended to facilitate consistency in thesis format and grading for courses that are intended to serve as the equivalent of the INTS Senior Seminar/Thesis. Instructors are encouraged to use these guidelines in evaluating the thesis and determining a grade. INTS will honor any specific course requirements which exceed these general guidelines. The student agrees to abide by all requirements listed by the instructor in a 481 syllabus or 485/497 contract.

The Senior Thesis will be based on the student's area of specialization in the INTS curriculum. Its focus should be primarily on a current topic, with historical discussion in a secondary, supporting role. It must be specific to the country where the student did the international experience but a comparative context relating the topic to another region is encouraged. Finally, the research should show an ability to work with the designated foreign language.

The INTS Senior Thesis project must be original work done for this course alone. If the INTS Thesis shares a topic and research data with any of the student's other academic projects past or present (including INTS 201), the student must first consult with the instructor. If students wish to include previous research they have done as a source for their Thesis, it should be cited like any other source and made available to the instructor. Students are advised to keep Xerox copies of foreign-language and other texts that they found online or from other sources outside of the TAMU libraries and make them available upon request.

Formatting and other guidelines for the Research Thesis


- ☞ **Formatting:** Use Times New Roman font, size 11 or 12. Double-space. Indent quotations longer than four lines of text. For citing and crediting your sources use the MLA or an equivalent standard (e.g., APA). Consult with the instructor first regarding the standard to be used and use it consistently.
 - Include:
 - a. title page (unnumbered)
 - b. text (numbered, starting with page 1)
 - c. optional endnotes (not footnotes!), after the text but before the "Works Cited" section (page numbers continuing)
 - d. "Works Cited" (page numbers continuing)
- ☞ **Important!** Indented "block" quotes must also be double-spaced. These are used for quotation longer than four lines of text and do not count toward the Thesis' required length.
- ☞ **Length.** The thesis should range from 15-20 pages of text, not counting the title page, prefatory materials, bibliography ("Works Cited") and sections such as an appendix of tables, pictures, interview transcripts, etc.) following the actual text.
 - ☞ Staple your paper and turn it in in a simple folder with your name and course number plainly visible outside. ☞ **E-copy:** Email your instructor an electronic copy of your Thesis including bibliography as one MS Word attachment by the due date.
- ☞ **Sources:** The number of sources you use is up to you but should reflect the scope and breadth of your research project. A simple rule to go by: no fewer than 10 book-length and hard-copy


article sources (from peer-reviewed academic journals or equivalent). “Hard copy” means that the source exists in paper form and can be obtained at libraries (through the Interlibrary Loan Service if TAMU libraries do not have it) or for purchase, even if there is also an online version. It is up to you to find out the status of your sources.


An edited book made up of articles by different authors may serve for multiple bibliographical entries in your Works Cited, but each entry must then also list the entire book (see MLA Handbook).

In addition to the basic sources, you may use other sources such as newspaper articles, video, interviews, and items available online. Some of these could be in your foreign language.

The earlier you delve into your research, the earlier you can recognize problems in meeting this source requirement. If necessary, broaden your topic so as to find enough good sources.

 **Foreign language:** It is strongly recommended that 2-3 of the ten basic sources are in the foreign language. Directly quoted material from those sources must have a translation, in brackets, follow the original in your paper; this applies to short as well as longer block quotations.

 **Accurate and fair use of sources:** Be meticulous in how you use your sources. Use direct quotes judiciously. If your paper relies too heavily on quotation it is at best weakened by looking “padded”, at worst not truly your own effort.

 **Plagiarism.** Be careful when you paraphrase a source and make sure that the result is a restatement of that source’s information and/or ideas truly in your own words, with the proper citation. Note that even when you cite (and thus credit) your source, a paraphrase that uses your source’s turns of phrase, vocabulary and sentence structure will almost certainly be an instance of plagiarism. You are responsible for informing yourself about ways to avoid doing so. The Texas A&M University Web site’s information regarding academic integrity, the Writing Center’s resources, and your *MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers* should be your first line of information. All the above also applies to foreign-language sources. In other words, a translation becomes the “original” and must also be used accurately and fairly. Plagiarism will be treated as an academic violation in this course.

To meet minimum requirements and a passing grade your thesis must, among other things, be at least 15 pages in length, not counting the bibliography, etc. and be turned in on time (i.e., by the date specified by your thesis instructor).

An A-level thesis is expected, among other things, to be at least 20 full pages of text (see Formatting Guidelines).

An A-quality thesis usually offers, when appropriate, a comparative dimension in its analysis and to some extent relate the issues pertaining to your chosen country to the context of another (preferably non-U.S.) country or a region. The primary emphasis ought still to be on the first country.

Suggested Senior Thesis grading criteria:

A Evidence of original and balanced scholarship; clear ability to use foreign language sources and to incorporate findings and perspectives of non-U.S. writers; carefully chosen sources; excellent

organization of entire paper; clear articulation of focus and main thesis; correct formatting; accurate and fair use of sources; accurate citation format; no or very few spelling and grammatical errors; generous length.

- B** Solid scholarship; good, balanced mix of sources including foreign language sources; clear organization and articulation of focus and thesis; good grasp of grammar and careful editing; accurate and fair use of sources and citation format; minimum length (at least 15 pages of actual text, not counting title page, bibliography, block quotations, tables, illustrations and so on).
- C** Articulation of focus and thesis is quite hesitant; reliance on superficial sources; careless editing; fair use of sources, but one or two inaccuracies in citation format; grammatical errors are more widespread; minimum length; adequate use of foreign language sources.
- D** Muddled thesis and focus; very careless editing; may have multiple inaccuracies in referencing sources (such as incorrect page numbers, presence of sources in the bibliography but not cited in the thesis).
- F** This thesis fails to meet overall standards and is too short; may be a “D” paper but turned in very late. Instances of plagiarism, even unintentional.
- F/Zero** Unfair use of sources: More evidence of plagiarism, or other scholastic dishonesty as defined by the course syllabus, *MLA Handbook*, and TAMU Student Rules.

Note to Student:

Please submit two copies of your thesis by the due date agreed upon with your instructor. One copy is to be submitted directly to your instructor; the other to the INTS office, to the attention of the Director (see address below). This copy is for our records and library. In addition, please send the INTS Director an electronic copy of your thesis, to ensure clearance for your graduation.

Note to Instructor:

Once you have graded the thesis, please send the INTS Director a memo indicating the thesis title, student name, and the grade you have assigned for the thesis, along with any summary comments on the thesis.

Please send a hard copy of the thesis (and comments/grade) AND an electronic copy to:

Dr. Michael L. Greenwald

Professor and Director, INTS

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