Asian Studies Thesis Guidelines

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The Asian Studies Thesis FAQ

Writing a thesis may seem like a daunting task, but this guide should help answer some questions about the thesis and the thesis process, and should put some of your fears at rest. After reading through these FAQs, and are ready to start talking out your thesis idea, make an appointment with the Asian Studies advisor (michelle.low@unco.edu) to start brainstorming and figuring out your senior thesis project.

1. What is a "Thesis"?

The Asian Studies Thesis is the culmination of your studies at UNC. It is a primary-source based research project using interdisciplinary methods on whatever appropriate topic within Asia of the student's choice. The thesis must answer a specific research question, and must utilize primary sources from Asia and in Asian languages to answer that question. The student must complete 3 credit hours in Asian Studies Thesis (usually during fall semester of senior year)

2. Why is the Thesis a requirement?

Because Asian Studies is an interdisciplinary program, the Asian Studies Thesis allows you the opportunity to show that you know how to ask and answer a compelling question about something relevant in Asian Studies and can think critically and analytically, and synthesize those thoughts into a coherent discussion of issues in Asian Studies. It shows your ability to use one or more Asian languages skillfully, integrate content from different disciplines and different aspects of Asian Studies, and to work independently conducting original research. Successful completion of the Asian Studies Thesis serves as evidence that you can do all of the above and will help you show employers that you have cultural competence in another culture and an Asian language, and can help you get into graduate programs.

3. How do I get started?

The best way to start the thesis is to decide on the thesis topic. The topic should be on some aspect of Asia that the student is sincerely interested in and would like to do more work on, since the Asian Studies thesis could be the basis for future graduate studies or professional work. From this topic, the student will be able to formulate a specific research question, particularly after consultation with the student's Asian Studies advisor/thesis advisor.

4. How long does the thesis have to be?

While the emphasis of the thesis is quality, not quantity, in general a thesis should be somewhere between 35 to 50 pages of original text. This page count does not include the bibliography or appendices. Original text of much less than 35 pages indicates that either the research question is too narrow for extensive analysis or that the student has not done enough scholarly in-depth analysis. Original text of more than 50 pages indicates that the research question is too broad for undergraduate analysis, and would be a better suited for graduate work.

5. What can I do my thesis on?

While the topic can be on any Asian-related subject that the student is interested in, there are certain constraints for an undergraduate thesis. The most important consideration is that the research question needs to be answered by using primary sources in an Asian language that the

student can read and understand without assistance. If the thesis does not demonstrate the student's Asian language competency, then it cannot count towards graduation. Next, the question cannot be too broad (e.g. why does Neo-Confucianism become popular across East Asia from the 13th to the 19th centuries?) or too narrow (e.g. why did the Mongol invasions of Japan fail to conquer the Kamakura shogunate?), because such questions will not make a successful undergraduate thesis. Finally, the thesis topic should be something that the student is willing to research for over a year, since completing a successful Asian Studies thesis will take at least that long.

a. Some previous topics

Previous topics for Asian Studies theses include: literary analyses of 21st century Chinese literature or the influence of Heian literary classics on modern Japanese popular culture, the historical and political implications of the island boundary disputes between China and Japan, analysis of the experiences of foreigners teaching English in Japan, and the analysis of gender roles in Japanese manga.

Previous thesis titles:

- Voices of the Early 21st Century: Han Han, Guo Jingming and the Literature of the *Baling Hou* Generation
- Gender Roles of Japanese Women in Anime
- Getting the most out of JET
- Rocks in the Sea: Understanding the Senkaku/Diaoyu dispute in the East China Sea
- Genji Then and Now

6. When should I start working on my thesis?

You should be **thinking** about what interests you when you begin the Asian Studies program. The courses in the program are designed to give you a sampling of the different fields and directions you can go in Asian Studies. As you take the Asian Studies courses in Asian civilizations, literature, history, etc., you can start thinking about what topics interest you most, and start thinking about the kinds of things you might want to explore in depth. Start talking with your advisor early on to discuss your interests and try to get some possible directions. By the middle of your Junior year, you should begin working with your thesis advisor, and choose your thesis committee (your "Readers"). The **Recommended Thesis Timeline** breaks down your last three semesters into more detail.

Recommended Thesis Timeline

7. What is a **Thesis Committee**?

When begin working on your thesis, you need to form a "Thesis Committee." The Thesis Committee includes three faculty members; two of the three members must be Asian Studies faculty. One of the committee members serves as the Thesis Advisor, while the other two are Readers.

8. How do I find a **Thesis Advisor?**

Begin by speaking with your Asian Studies advisor to discuss some of the topics and ideas you have for your thesis. Your advisor can help you choose a thesis advisor based on the faculty members' fields of expertise. You will then need to make an appointment with that faculty member to ask if s/he would be willing to serve as your Thesis Advisor. It is your responsibility to explain what you will be researching for your thesis, and what role you hope the faculty

member will play as your Thesis Advisor. If s/he agrees, have the faculty member sign the Thesis Advisor and Reader Agreement Form.

9. How do I get Readers?

When you meet with the Asian Studies advisor to discuss your thesis topic and thesis advisor, you will also talk about which AS faculty members have expertise in your thesis topic, and who might be willing to serve as readers. You will have to meet with the readers you choose to explain your proposed project, and ask them to sign the <u>Thesis Advisor and Reader Agreement Form</u>, too.

10. What is the **Thesis Proposal?**

Your "Thesis Proposal" is a narrative that proposes your research project. It includes a narrative of your research question/thesis, the importance of conducting that line of research, the sources you will use to conduct the research, and your methods for research, a detailed outline of each part/chapter of the proposed thesis, and an annotated bibliography of the sources.

See the section on **Thesis Proposal** below for more information.

11. What is an **Annotated Bibliography?**

An annotated bibliography is a bibliography in proper citation format (using *Chicago Manual of Style*) of the sources you have consulted or will consult (articles, books, etc.) to gather data for your research, with a short paragraph for each entry that summarizes and describes its relevance to your research topic.

See the section on **Thesis Proposal** below for more information.

12. What is **IRB Approval**, and do I need it?

If you are planning a research project in which you will utilize (live) human subjects, such as interviews, etc. with actual people, or research where you will need to have actual human contact face-to-face or phone/email, etc. you will need IRB approval. The use of human participants in research at the University of Northern Colorado is regulated by University policy 3-8-104, enacted by the Board of Trustees, to ensure that all research carried out under the auspices of UNC conforms to ethical standards.

3-8-104 Human Subjects. It is the policy of the University that all research and research-related

activities, in which humans are used as subjects, shall be subject to review under current Public Health Service regulations by an Institutional Review Board (IRB). The involvement of human subjects in research covered by this policy shall be prohibited until the IRB has reviewed and approved the research protocol.

You must submit a proposal to the university's Institutional Review Board (IRB) for approval. As stated in university policy, all research involving human subjects is prohibited until the IRB has approved the research protocol.

For more information, go to Office of Sponsored Programs' website on IRB and ethical use of human subjects: http://www.unco.edu/osp/ethics/irb/

13. When do I do my **Presentation?**

In order to graduate with a degree in Asian Studies, you must present your thesis in a public forum. This is not an oral defense. Rather, it is your chance to speak to interested people about your work. The purpose of the presentation is to educate others on your topic and gain presentation experience.

You are allowed to present at any appropriate venue, but most students present at UNC's Research Day on the "Asian Studies Panel." If you are graduating in December, you should plan to present at Research Day in the spring semester before your December graduation. You are welcome and encouraged to invite whomever you would like to your presentation. Your Thesis Advisor and thesis readers should be present, if possible. You should also invite other Asian Studies faculty, your family, and friends. The bigger the audience, the better!

See the "Recommended Thesis Timeline" below for details.

14. What is the **Format of a Thesis?**

See the section on <u>"Thesis Format"</u> and <u>Thesis Document Organization</u> below for detailed guidelines.

15. Forms are included in the AS Thesis Guidelines and can be downloaded from the Asian Studies Advising page.

AS Thesis Advisor and Reader Agreement Form

AS Thesis Sample Title Page & Signature Page

Recommended Timeline

The following is a recommended timeline and due date to complete your thesis on time for graduation. Although some of the dates can be moved up to shorten the overall time, generally, to allow the appropriate time for research and rewriting, as well as to allow your readers time to give you feedback, you we recommend a minimum of three semesters to complete your thesis.

	before you graduate	
Usually Spring Sen	mester of your Junior Year	
Weeks 1-5	Beginning of the semester	Start narrowing your thesis ideas, and thinking about who you want to work with on the thesis.
		*It is a good idea to start speaking with the person you want to be your thesis advisor about possible topics, so you can start narrowing it down.
Weeks 7-9	By Spring Break	Choose your thesis committee. This consists of a thesis
	(mid-October for Dec. graduation)	advisor (with whom you take your thesis hours), and two readers. Readers play as much or as little a role as you and the thesis advisor feel necessary.
Weeks 10-12	April-May	Meet with each reader/thesis advisor and get
	(or October-November for Dec. graduation)	confirmation that they agree to be a reader for your senior thesis. You should prepare a short explanation (think 2 pages) of what you intend to research, why you chose to include them as readers, your timeline, and their duties (as in when and how they will participate). If they agree to participate, have them sign the Thesis Advisor & Reader Agreement Form .
Weeks 14-15	Early May (late November for Dec. graduation)	Meet with Thesis Advisor and decide on final direction of thesis research, and what your advisor expects you to have when you return the following semester

Break before final two semesters of school

Usually this is the summer between Junior and Senior year

Begin research on thesis topic. READ and seek out sources on your topic. Start compiling your annotated bibliography. Contact your thesis advisor or readers when appropriate, for further guidance if necessary

The 2 nd Semest	er BEFORE graduation	
Usually fall seme	ester of your Senior year	
Week 1	First week of classes (or before)	Meet with your thesis advisor and arrange a meeting time, fill out paperwork for thesis hours (if appropriate), and update your advisor on your thesis status.
Week 2	1 st week in September/Labor Day (or Martin Luther King, Jr. break for Dec. graduation)	Submit Thesis Proposal plus annotated bibliography and outline of your thesis This can serve as a rough draft of your introduction. Submit this to your Thesis Advisor and your Readers. See the AS Thesis Guidelines for more information about the proposal
Weeks 3-5	Mid-September (or early February for Dec. graduation)	Fill in the outline with DETAILS of the thesis with each chapter/topic heading, directions for each section, sources used and theories, arguments etc. for each section of thesis to your Thesis Advisor. Submit to your advisor.
Weeks 2-8	September and October (or February-March for Dec. graduation)	Continue meeting with advisor and working on research, taking notes, translating, and filling out the outline, working on problems in translating or concepts/analysis.
Week 9	Early November (or early April for Dec. graduation)	Outline should be more or less filled out in detail (practically not an outline anymore), most of your research and translations (rough) are completed, begin writing thesis.
Week 12	By Thanksgiving (or late April for Dec. graduation)	You should be working on Rough Draft of thesis and refining translations (if applicable)
Week 16	finals week	Submit COMPLETE 1 st draft of thesis to thesis advisor. Advisor reviews thesis over break. You continue to do research and adding to thesis. This is usually around 20 pages with notes. It will expand and develop in the next few months, but serves as the main framework for your thesis.

FINAL SEMESTER

Week 1 First week of the semester

Meet with thesis advisor, go over your advisor's comments/notes. Arrange schedule to meet with advisor for the semester. Fill out paperwork for thesis hours if appropriate.

Weeks 1-7	First ½ of semester	Continue meeting with advisor as per schedule, and continue revising, adding to and refining thesis. Submit to your advisor when appropriate (for feedback).
Week 7	End of February (or end of September. If graduating in Summer, you must you're your public presentation at UNC Research Day in April)	Register for UNC Research Day with advisor for the Asian Studies Panels, email a copy of the Research Day title, abstract, room/time of presentation to Asian Studies Coordinator. If you are graduating in Dec., arrange a public forum to present your thesis with the Asian Studies coordinator.
Week 9	BEFORE Spring Break/2 nd week in March (or 2 nd week in October, or June 30)	Complete Final Draft of your thesis should be submitted to your main thesis advisor for final approval and comments/revisions
Week 10	AFTER Spring Break/last week in March (or last week in October, or 1st week in July)	Advisor returns your thesis with final comments. You make changes, additions, revisions, etc.
		Make revisions, and be sure that thesis is in the correct thesis format (margins, notes, bibliography, page numbers, title pages, etc. See the AS Thesis Guidelines for information on proper formatting.
Week 11	Beginning of April/1st week in April (or beginning of November, or end of July)	Submit final copy of your thesis in digital and hard copy (depending on reader preference) to all readers.
Week 12	Research Day/2 nd week in April (or mid-November for Dec. graduates)	Shortened version (approximately 8 pages) of your thesis presented at UNC Research Day for Asian Studies panels
Final semester week 14	4 th week in April (or the last week in November, or 1 st week in August)	Collect readers' comments on your thesis, and revise accordingly
Final semester week 15	1st week in May (or 1st week in December, or 2nd week in August)	Visit readers with final revised copy of your thesis and Signature Page . Collect signatures. Submit final, revised, BOUND copy of thesis with signed signature page to Asian Studies Coordinator.
Finals week in your last semester	2 nd week in May (or 2 nd week in December, or 2 nd week in August)	GRADUATE (summer graduates can participate in May graduation ceremonies).

The Thesis Proposal

After speaking with your advisor and narrowing a topic, you will need to submit a **Thesis Proposal** to your advisor and your committee members at the beginning of the semester before your projected graduating semester (typically the fall semester of your senior/final year). The purpose of writing a thesis proposal is to demonstrate that

- 1. Your thesis topic addresses a significant issue in Asian Studies;
- 2. You have an organized plan for collecting or obtaining data/resources to conduct the research;
- 3. You have identified methods of analyzing your data/resources that are appropriate to the research project

If you can outline these points clearly in a proposal, then you will be able to focus on a research topic and finish it rapidly. Much of the material you use to create your proposal, and much of the proposal may end up in the final thesis, so this is really just getting you a jumpstart in an organized way. A secondary purpose of the proposal is to train you in the art of proposal writing. Any future career in Asian Studies, whether it be in industry, government, or academia will require these skills in some form.

The best laid out research plans may go awry, and the best completed theses sometimes bear only little resemblance to the thesis planned during the proposal. Therefore, when evaluating a thesis proposal, we are not trying tie you to a single topic, but rather trying to get you started in your research with a definite direction (which really does make it much easier to finish).

Instead, we're interested in seeing is if you have a clear handle on the *process* and *structure* of research as it's practiced in Asian Studies, regardless of which discipline you follow. If you can present a clear and reasonable thesis idea and can clearly relate it to other relevant literature, justify its significance, describe a method for investigating it, and decompose it into a sequence of steps that lead toward a reasonable conclusion, then the thesis proposal is a success regardless of whether you modify or even scrap the actual idea down the line and start off in a different direction. What a successful thesis proposal demonstrates is that, regardless of the eventual idea you pursue, you know the steps involved in turning it into a thesis.

Proposal Format: standard 12-point font, like Times New Roman, with 1-inch margins

Proposal Contents: Your proposal should contain the following items:

- 1. Title Page
- 2. Copy of signed Thesis Advisor and Reader Agreement signature form (This should have been obtained in the semester prior before you began the preliminary research.)
- 3. 4-page Proposal (page number is approximate, but should be more or less this long)
 - a. Topic/Statement of the Problem/Thesis

State your thesis topic and define it/introduce it, discuss what exactly you are studying (be specific), why it is important to do your research, how your research will contribute to the greater body of knowledge in Asian Studies.

This section sets the context for your proposed project and must capture the reader's interest. Explain the background of your study starting from a broad picture narrowing in on your research question

b. Review of Related Literature/Resources

Summarize the body of knowledge or range of perspectives that inform your particular research topic. Include individual researchers, methodologies, critics, etc. review what is known about your research topic as far as it is relevant to your thesis, cite relevant references

c. Methodology

This is how you are going to conduct your research or approach your topic in terms of research/project design, theories you will use, analysis of texts you will use, primary and secondary sources, etc.)

4. Outline of your thesis

Break down the thesis topic into manageable and logical sections/chapters that will guide readers to understand your argument. This does not have to be detailed, but should provide enough information so that your advisor and readers know what you are doing and how you are going to proceed.

5. Annotated Bibliography

This should be a systematic list of the works you have consulted with a short paragraph for each work that gives a brief summary of the book/article, and discusses how that work pertains to your research project. What you write for the annotation should serve two purposes: First, it should be enough to remind you what that book or article was about so that when you are in the middle of writing your thesis, and you suddenly realize that you might have read something four months ago about what you just figured out, you can easily go to your annotated bibliography to find the source, and quote it in your thesis. Second, it should be enough so that if someone reads your thesis, and finds something interesting, your notes and annotated bibliography should give them further information about whether or not that article or book also helps them with their research, or helps them understand more about your project.

You should follow the *Chicago Manual of Style* for bibliography and note formatting. This is their quick-reference guide online:

http://www.chicagomanualofstyle.org/tools citationguide.html, but we recommend either checking with the library's copy(ies), purchasing your own hard copy of the most recent edition, or purchasing an online subscription while you are working on your thesis. We require *Chicago* because the major Asian Studies journals and publications all use *Chicago*.

Public Presentation of Your Thesis

Presentation Information

In order to graduate with a degree in Asian Studies, you must present your thesis in a public forum. **This is not an oral defense.** Rather, it is your chance to speak to interested people about your work. The purpose of the presentation is to educate others on your topic and gain presentation experience.

You are allowed to present at any appropriate venue, but most students present at UNC's Research Day. You are welcome and encouraged to invite whomever you would like to your presentation. Your Thesis Advisor and Readers, and the Asian Studies faculty should be present, if possible. Invite other faculty, family and friends. The bigger the audience, the better!

For those who are planning to graduate in December, you can present your preliminary research and findings at UNC Research Day. Though you won't have a solid conclusion, yet, by the time of UNC Research Day, you should have a clear idea of your thesis topic, and you can introduce your topic and discuss why your line of inquiry is important, and what you have discovered so far.

Verification of Thesis Presentation

You must notify the Asian Studies office of the date, time, and location of your thesis presentation. Even if you have already been working with the Asian Studies Program Coordinator in preparation to present at Research Day, a formal confirmation of your planned presentation is required. Once you schedule your presentation, you should forward the confirmation of Research Day Presentation form to your Asian Studies Thesis Advisor and the Asian Studies Program Coordinator. Alternately, if you do not present at Research Day, you can schedule a time for your own presentation with the Asian Studies Program Coordinator and your Thesis Advisor.

Your email should include the following information:

- 1. Title of presentation (usually the title of your thesis, but you can work this out with your Thesis Advisor)
- 2. Your name **as you want it to appear in the posters** and if different, how you registered it for Research Day.
- 3. Your presentation abstract
- 4. The room you will present it in
- 5. The time of presentation
- 6. Name of your faculty advisor (your Thesis Advisor)

Thesis Format:

- Standard 12-point font like Times New Roman, Garamond, etc.
- Top and bottom margins 1 inch
- Left and right side margins 1 ½ inches (this is so it doesn't get cut off when you bind it
- Double-spacing is required throughout the body of the text, except in long quotations, table titles, headings, figure captions, endnotes or footnotes, and references.
- Pagination: Preliminary Pages The title page, signature page, and abstract should be assigned lower case Roman numerals in the table of contents but not on the pages themselves. Thereafter, all preliminary pages must show a number. The acknowledgements page will typically be numbered iv, the table of contents will be v, and so on. All lower case Roman numerals should be centered between the margins 3/4 of an inch from the bottom of the page. The remainder of the thesis should be Arabic numerals (1, 2, 3, etc.). Begin with the first page of the actual text and continue through any appendices and references, etc.
- Binding: FINAL FINAL FINAL COPY ONLY. Once your final draft has been approved and you have edited it for typos, etc., submit a bound final copy to the Asian Studies Program Coordinator. You should also see if your readers and advisor would like a bound copy. If so, make one for them.

Thesis Document Organization

Your final thesis should contain the following sections in this order:

- 1. Title Page
- 2. Signature Page
- 3. Abstract

An abstract is a summary of the thesis in 150-300 words. In writing your abstract, You should include a statement of the topic and an explanation of its significance. You should give a summary of the research and briefly state your conclusion(s).

4. Acknowledgements

This page gives you the opportunity to thank or acknowledge all those who helped you complete the thesis project or contributed to your success. Be sure to thank your Thesis Advisor and Readers and the friends and family members who supported you through your work

5. Table of Contents

The Table of Contents should include the title page, signature page, abstract, and the acknowledgements with page numbers. List the chapters for the body of your thesis with the titles of the chapters and the page number on which they begin. List the appendices and the IRB approval (if applicable) before the references, again including page numbers.

6. Lists of Tables:

If you have tables or charts, you need to provide a list of these. Give each table a title or number and indicate the page number on which it can be found.

7. List of Figures or Illustrations:

If you include visual items (pictures, illustrations, graphs) that you refer to in the text of your thesis, give each figure a title or number and indicate the page on which it can be found.

8. Thesis Body:

- a. The body of the work is usually about 35-50 pages, although some may be shorter or longer, the emphasis is on quality, not quantity. The final written portion, in general, should not exceed 75 pages, including all end/footnotes, bibliography, and appendices.
- b. The body of your capstone should be divided into chapters, with chapter divisions in appropriate places in your text.
- c. The body of your written project will adhere to the *Chicago Manual of Style* guidelines.

- d. Each section of the capstone should also be viewed as a stand-alone portion, for example, sections often include the following:
 - Introduction
 - Method
 - Results
 - Conclusion
- e. By focusing on the sections individually, students often find it is easier to approach the project whole.

9. **Appendices:**

Appendices should contain information that is not a part of the capstone but is useful in understanding it. If you include appendices, assign each a number or letter, a title, and a page number.

10. **IRB Approval:**

If IRB Approval was required for your thesis you must include a copy of the authorization letter from UNC's Institutional Review Board as verification that your research process was approved. The IRB Approval should be incorporated into the appendices preferably as the final appendix in your document.

11. **References**:

A list of your references should be given at the end of the capstone, typically following the appendices.

Asian Studies Program Thesis Advisor & Reader Agreement Form

This form serves as a working agreement between the Asian Studies student, the Thesis Advisor and the Readers. It signifies that the student has spoken to the faculty members about the proposed thesis project, and that they have agreed to serve as a reader or advisor for the project. The student has explained the general direction of the thesis project and the faculty member's role in the project. The student should submit this completed form to the Asian Studies Coordinator's office (CAND 0190) in the third semester prior to graduation (approximately 1 year from the anticipated date of graduation). The materials will be kept in the student's Asian Studies Program file, with copies given to the student and the Thesis Advisor and Readers.

Name:	E-mail:	Bear Number:
Thesis Advisor	r:(print name)	
	(print name)	(signature)
Reader: :	(print name)	
	(print name)	(signature)
Reader: :		
	(print name)	(signature)
Anticipated Da	ate of Graduation:	
	ly your thesis topic and research que to serve your committee:	estion, and why these particular faculty members
Student Signat	ure:	Date

(Sample Title Page)

University of Northern Colorado Greeley, Colorado

TITLE OF THESIS IN INVERTED PYRAMID FORM IF TWO OR MORE LINES

A Thesis Submitted in Partial

Fulfillment for

the Degree of Bachelor of Arts in Asian Studies

Student's Name		
School or College of_		
	20	

(For Thesis Proposal: Month and year proposal is submitted)

(For Thesis: Month and year of proposed graduation)

(Sample Signature page)

Prepared By:	(student signature)
Student name, typed here	,
Approved By:	
Thesis Advisor:	(advisor signature)
(Advisor name typed below the line, space for signa	ture above the line)
	,
Reader:	(reader signature)
(First reader name typed below the line)	
Reader:	(reader signature)
(Second reader name typed below the line)	

RECEIVED BY THE ASIAN STUDIES THESIS PROJECT COMMITTEE ON:

Month, Day, Year

(this is your graduation date)