

MFAC EXTENDED CRITICAL ESSAY WRITING GUIDELINES

Third Semester: Extended Critical Essay

During the residency preceding their third semester, students will meet with their faculty advisors to discuss the topic, research need, and process for their extended critical essay. They will turn in a title and thesis statement to their faculty advisors. In the third semester, in addition to monthly creative work and reading, students complete a **15-20 page critical essay** focusing on an aspect of children's/young adult literature, or an aspect of craft or literary theory pertaining to the field. Students should plan on turning in the first draft of critical thesis midway through the semester and complete a revision based on their faculty advisor's feedback by the end of the semester.

The third semester faculty advisor has the final say over whether or not a student's extended critical essay is of passable quality. If a project is in doubt, the faculty advisor will confer with the director. Another faculty member can be brought in to offer a second opinion.

Style Guide References

Papers written for the MFAC program follow the editorial style of the Modern Language Association (MLA). Recommended reference manuals include Diane Hacker's *A Writer's Reference* and *MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers*.

The responsibility for writing and editing the paper is the student's. Matters of style, content, the arrangement of contents, and length are decided by the student and his/her faculty advisor. Correct grammar, punctuation, and spelling are the student's responsibility. All references and documentation are to be accurate and complete.

Format

All pages are to be (8.5 inches x 11 inches), double-spaced. Standard word processing practices, including spacing and punctuation, must be consistent throughout the manuscript.

The typeface must be a standard, bookface type (e.g. Times Roman).

The only acceptable font size is twelve points.

Double spacing is mandatory, except for poetry manuscripts.

All pages must be clearly and consistently numbered.

Italics may be used in conjunction with the typeface as a substitute for underlining titles or foreign terms, provided it used consistently.

The margins for each page-preliminaries, text, reference material-must be sufficiently ample to allow for easy reading. Here are some suggested guidelines:

left 1.5 inch; right 1 inch; top 1.25 inch; bottom 1.25 inch

Additional Considerations

Photographs or other images should be scanned onto the final copies of the text. If photographs or images are pasted into a word document, the student is responsible for converting the document to a PDF and ensuring that the images and text are formatted properly after this conversion.

GUIDELINES

Title Page (see template)

The essay title appears, as does the author's name. No reference is to be made to academic or other degrees or titles.

The submission statement is printed in upper and lower case letters, single-spaces, and centered. In the submission statement, the project title is "Extended Critical Essay" or "Creative Thesis."

Hamline University, Saint Paul, Minnesota, and the month and year of the completion of the thesis is printed below the submission statement, double-spaced, in upper and lower case letters, and centered.

The person who directly supervised the thesis is cited as the faculty advisor. Include only the academic title, but not academic degrees, of the faculty member (e.g. Professor Joan J. Jones).

Copyright Page (See example below)

Copyright of the thesis is at the discretion of the student. Students wishing to copyright their work may file the claim to copyright by corresponding directly with the U.S. Copyright Office, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C. 02540. Alternatively, students may include a copyright notice without official filing.

If the paper is to be copyrighted, the official copyright notice is centered left to right and slightly above center on this page, single or double-spaced, with the current year.

Example:

Copyright by YOUR NAME IN CAPITAL LETTERS year All Rights Reserved

Reference Material

Reference material includes the appendices and bibliography, and provides supporting and supplementary information to the text.

Appendix (or Appendices)

Examples of material that may be appropriate for the appendices include explanations helpful to a reader but too long for inclusion in footnotes or text, texts of original documents such as letters, laws, questionnaires, listings of material, original data, and computer programs.

Bibliography, References, Notes/Footnotes

Every thesis project that makes use of other sources either by direct quotation or by reference must have a bibliography or listing of these sources at the end.

The MFA program follows the editorial style of the Modern Language Association (MLA).

Final Electronic Submission

Once you have completed your extended critical essay following the above guidelines, send your advisor a final electronic copy. While not required, we'd also like to make the critical theses available in our online archive. The archive is only open to students and faculty in the program. If you would be willing to give others in the program access to your extended critical essay, confirm this with the Programs Coordinator when s/he asks during the semester.