

CHATHAM UNIVERSITY

LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE AND LANDSCAPE STUDIES PROGRAMS



APPLIED THESIS GUIDELINES

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APPLIED THESIS GUIDELINES



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SECTION ONE: PROJECT GUIDELINES

This guide is issued by the Landscape Architecture Program at Chatham University to help students prepare an applied thesis. An applied thesis, in addition to the required coursework, partially fulfills the degree requirements for the MLA.

An applied thesis should represent the culmination of your graduate education by demonstrating a connection between academic theory and the practice of Landscape Architecture. Equally important, your applied thesis should be a product you can share with prospective employers as an example of your specialized professional interests.

1.1 Definitions & Terms

Before proceeding, it is essential to define the distinctions between the existing thesis options within the program. The first option is a research thesis. A research thesis is generally defined as the advancement of an original point of view within the context of an existing body of knowledge. The specific guidelines for developing a research thesis are established in a separate manual. However, an acceptable research thesis can be broadly classified in one of two categories:

- *Research that generates new knowledge*
- *Scholarship that organizes, classifies and analyzes existing knowledge*

The second thesis option is an applied study/project and is covered in further detail by this manual. The defining characteristic of an applied thesis is the completion of a comprehensive design process that applies existing knowledge to an actual site, for a well-defined program, and to serve specific users. The applied thesis must implement professional project standards and present a holistic design process. In addition to these

standards, the applied thesis project must also have a well-developed theoretical context that includes case studies and precedent studies, and have implications beyond the immediate project.

1.2 Selecting a Topic and a Site

There are several ways to decide on the right topic for your thesis. The first is to ask yourself what kind of work you want to do after you graduate and design a thesis that lets you showcase your skills in that specific area of work. The second method is to ask yourself what topic you are passionate about. In addition, a student may select a project type that the job market demands more than other areas of the field.

After selecting a defined topic, an applied thesis must also have a “real” site. It is your responsibility to define the limits of the site and the users of the project, as well as gathering all the appropriate materials and data. The scale and scope of the project must include a professional level of complexity and rigor. Also, the site must have a defined program consistent with your topic and scholarly interests. Final site selection and project requirements must be approved by the thesis advisor, in consultation with other members of your committee.

Professional Practice Network

When selecting a topic, the ASLA’s Professional Practice Networks (PPNs) are a useful resource and good starting place. The PPNs identify seventeen specialized areas of landscape architecture. The specialized areas include:

1. *Campus Planning and Design*
2. *Children’s Outdoor Environments*
3. *Design-Build*
4. *Digital Technology*
5. *Healthcare and Therapeutic Design*
6. *Historic Preservation*

7. *Housing and Community Design*
8. *International Practice*
9. *Landscape Architecture and Transportation*
10. *Landscape-Land Use Planning*
11. *Parks and Recreation*
12. *Reclamation and Restoration*
13. *Residential Landscape Architecture*
14. *Sustainable Design and Development*
15. *Urban Design*
16. *Water Conservation*
17. *Women in Landscape Architecture*

ASLA Student Awards

Each year, the ASLA Student Awards honor excellent student projects from across the country and abroad. A strong applied thesis has the added benefit of potentially being submitted for this competition. Please review the past student award winners as a source for thesis topics. This resource should also be used to gauge scholarly expectations for applied research projects.

<http://www.asla.org/2010studentawards/index.html>

1.3 Forming a Committee

When defining a topic and site, it is also critical to define who is going to be on your committee. It is helpful to identify a thesis topic that is related to the research interests and/or the professional experience of a faculty member. If the thesis topic is outside the expertise of the faculty, you will be encouraged to identify an outside expert to sit on your committee.

Your committee must be comprised of one full-time faculty member from the program as the committee chair and a minimum of one additional member. The additional committee member should provide expertise and focus related to your topic. All members must be approved by the program director.

Generally, the chair of the committee will work directly with the student. The additional committee members should act as consultants. All committee members are responsible for the level of scholarship exhibited in the thesis. In addition, it is the responsibility of all committee members to ensure that the thesis is well-written and that the final product is professionally presented. At the discretion of the thesis committee, a student may be directed to the PACE Center at Chatham University for professional tutoring in writing.

1.4 Registration

Students must be enrolled for thesis credits during every semester that work is complete on the applied thesis. Students can take additional thesis credits beyond the required six credits if their project is not complete after two semesters. This extension of the thesis coursework is still subject to the five-year limit to complete all degree requirements as set by the graduate college.

1.5 Applied Thesis Proposal

Students can work with their assigned academic advisor at the beginning of the thesis process. During this time, students must develop a proposal that includes all sections and elements outlined below. When completed, the academic advisor will present the proposal at the LAR faculty meeting for review. If approved by the faculty, students should use this document to select a thesis chair and form their thesis committee.

Please note that students cannot register for Thesis I credits without having an accepted proposal at the start of the semester. This proposal typically ranges from three to five pages in length, and should generally conform to the structure outlined below.

Applied thesis proposal guidelines

- I. Introduction
 1. What is the context and background of your selected site?
 2. Who are the proposed users of the project?
 3. What is the proposed program for the site?
 4. What is the area of specialization related with the selected site and topic, and how does it relate to ASLA's defined PPN?
 5. Briefly describe the existing literature on the topic and potential precedent studies or typologies that can inform your design.
 6. Why is this topic appropriate and/or related to the profession of Landscape Architecture?
 7. How is the selected site and topic relevant beyond this project?
- II. What is your proposed design process?
 1. What type of information/data will you be collecting?
 2. Are the required sources of data available?
 3. What software is required?
- III. Proposed Timeline
 1. What is the proposed timeline for this project?
 2. When will the specific design phases be completed?
 3. When will the documentation and required chapters be written?
 4. What college and program deadlines must be met?
 5. When will be the proposed defense?
- IV. What will the final products include?
 1. What products and graphics will be produced throughout the stages of the design process (i.e. plans, sections, models etc.)?
 2. What products will be presented at the mid-point review (end of the first semester)?
 3. What deliverables will be submitted at the completion of the project for the defense?

P.S. Typically, Thesis I presentation sheets communicate the case studies, literature review, inventory, analysis and preliminary conceptual development.
 4. How will these products be documented and included in the final bound thesis?
 5. What products will be presented at the mid-point review (end of the first semester)?
- V. References:
 1. Bibliography: A full list of potential sources related to your topic and methodology.
 2. Consultants and Specialists: A full list of potential experts and human sources that you will depend upon during any particular phase of the project.

1.6 IRB Approval

All research proposals that involve human subjects must be submitted for review by the Internal Review Board (IRB). According to the Chatham University website, “the purpose of the Chatham IRB is to ensure that the health, well-being, and rights of human subjects are protected, as researched by members of the Chatham University Community. This is in accordance with federal law as mandated through the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS), and includes ensuring that risks to participants are minimized, the selection of participants is equitable, and participants are informed fully of what their participation will entail.” IRB submission forms must be reviewed and signed by the thesis chair. Students must receive IRB approval before any data can be collected with human subjects. The forms can be found at the following link:

<http://my.chatham.edu/irb/index.cfm>

1.7 General Process Requirements

An applied thesis is essentially a comprehensive documentation of a design proposal for a given site and a given group of users. As stated earlier, the project and design process must be informed by the existing scholarship on the related topic. In addition to regular meetings with their committee, students will be expected to present their progress to the faculty and the student body at the end of each semester.

Students will be expected to present the first half of the project during exam week of the first semester. This design presentation should include all precedent studies, the site program, the site inventory, the site analysis and the early conceptual development for the project. The details of this presentation and the products that are prepared for this presentation should be discussed and approved by the thesis committee chair.

The committee will use the end-of-the-semester presentation to evaluate and assign a grade for Thesis I. Thesis I evaluation criteria will focus specifically on the strength of the design process, as opposed to, the strength of the design concept. The assessment process will also consider the student's ability to meet deadlines outlined in the semester's contract. Students that have not appropriately satisfied the initial phases of the design process will not be permitted to enroll in Thesis II. Thus, it is suggested that students should meet with their committee during week nine of the semester to assess the strength of their work prior to the first semester presentation. At Chatham, students can withdraw from any course up to week ten without academic penalties.

The second semester of the project and the Thesis II credits should be used to complete the final phases of the design process, as well as prepare the written part of the project. All applied theses must include both appropriate illustrative and technical drawings. All final project elements should be discussed and approved by the committee before issuing the final grade.

Finally, the applied thesis must be documented in a standard thesis format. Specific writing guidelines are outlined in the next section. However, the documentation should incorporate specific graphic elements (plans, sections, details, etc.) from the final board set into the text to describe and detail the process. The final boards themselves should be reduced and added as appendices to the document.

1.8 Proposed Schedule

Summer – Third Year

1. Enroll in Seminar III (thesis prep.)
1. Develop an applied thesis proposal
2. Acquire approval of the thesis proposal
 - a. The proposal must be accepted before registering for Thesis I
2. Identify all committee members

Fall – Third Year

3. Register for LAR 698 (3 thesis credits)
 - a. Develop a contract with your advisor that outlines your expectations and the products that will be produced throughout the semester
4. Apply for graduation with the registrar's office (early fall)
5. Complete all inventory and analysis work by December
6. Begin the documentation process
 - a. The documentation process should run concurrently throughout the entire design process
7. Present the typology studies, inventory, analysis and initial concept work to the committee, faculty and student body during finals week

Spring – Third Year

1. Register for LAR 699 (3 thesis credits)
 - a. Develop a contract with your advisor that outlines your expectations and the products that will be produced throughout the semester
2. Complete the required design development phases
3. Complete the final graphics and required boards
4. Complete the project documentation and written thesis
5. Submit a rough draft of the written thesis to committee
 - a. Due two weeks prior to the defense
 - b. The first draft should be submitted the second week of March (Spring Break)
6. Defend the final applied thesis
 - a. The defense should be scheduled before or during the first week of April
 - b. The Defense must be completed 10 days before the last day of classes
 - c. Permission to defend must be approved by all committee members
7. Revise any suggested corrections
 - a. The final revisions should be completed by the third week of April
8. Submit the final thesis 5 days before final grades are due
 - a. Typically, last week of April

1.9 Applied Thesis Defense

The defense for an applied thesis should be a comprehensive design presentation of a professional caliber. Final sheets must highlight all phases of the design process from inventory to implementation. Specific criteria should be developed with your committee. However, the program requires that you submit an electronic copy of all presentation sheets. These digital copies of all graphics should be included as a CD within the cover of the text.

All students are required to orally present and defend their thesis in a meeting that is advertised and open to the Chatham community and the public. Students should allocate approximately 30 minutes for the presentation and 30 minutes for questions from the thesis committee and audience. All members of the thesis committee must be present at the thesis defense.

A thesis defense can only be scheduled when the thesis is fully written and permission to defend is approved from all members of the thesis committee. The thesis defense must be scheduled at least 10 full days before the last day of classes for the term in which the student is enrolled. Students should allow sufficient time between the defense and the final submission of the thesis for revisions. After a student has successfully defended a thesis, the committee must sign the second portion of the thesis report form.

SECTION TWO: WRITING GUIDELINES

Using the chapter outline as a guide, the student must document the design process, findings and the resulting project proposals. The documentation of the project should not be “pushed-off” until the end of the second semester. Rather, documentation should be incorporated throughout every phase of the design process. The committee chair should decide on a timeframe for submitting chapter drafts and making revisions.

2.1 Typical Chapter Outline:

1. Chapter 1: Introduction
 - a. *What is the topic you will explore and why is it important? Is it typical or unusual for this issue to arise in design practice?*
 - b. *What is the broad theoretical context of the topic?*
2. Chapter 2: Literature Review and Typology Studies
 - a. *What does the existing research on the topic tell us? What are the significant studies and findings related to the topic?*
 - b. *What are appropriate precedents or typologies for the design topic?*
 - c. *What existing knowledge will you be applying to your design process?*
 - d. *What are your evaluation criteria as defined by the case studies and literature review?*
3. Chapter 3: Site Inventory, Site Analysis & Program
 - a. *Using a combination of graphic elements from the final boards and written text, document:*
 - i. *The inventory findings*
 - ii. *Analysis conclusions*
 - iii. *Defined site program*
 1. *Site, Users and Program*
 - b. *Copies of the final sheets should not be inserted into each chapter. Rather, individual graphic elements should be incorporated directly into the text. Also, a CD should be included with the text that archives digital versions of all final sheets and graphics.*
4. Chapter 4: Design Proposal
 - a. *Using a combination of graphic elements from the final boards and written text, document:*
 - i. *Conceptual development and illustrative graphics*
 - ii. *Construction documentation and technical graphics*
 - b. *Copies of the final boards should not be inserted into each chapter. Rather, individual graphic elements should be incorporated directly into*

the text. Also, a CD should be included with the text that archives digital versions of all final sheets and graphics.

5. Chapter 5: Discussion
 - a. *Evaluate your proposed design against the criteria developed in the literature review.*
 - b. *What was learned by the application of the existing knowledge?*
 - c. *What are the implications beyond the immediate project?*

2.2 Manuscript Submission Date

The final thesis must be submitted at least five days before final grades are due. Check with your thesis advisor to confirm the final submission deadline. The final draft of the applied thesis must be signed by all committee members on the submission page. Also, the thesis report form must be signed by all committee members and placed in the student's file.

2.3 Graduate College Requirements

The College for Graduate Studies at Chatham University is in the process of developing specific paper and binding requirements. Thus, consult the library and copy center before printing the final text.

Graduate students are required to submit both a print and an electronic copy of their thesis to the JKM Library. You will be required to submit two bound copies of your thesis to your Graduate Program Director. The Graduate Program Director will then make sure the JKM Library gets one of the bound copies.

Requirements for Submitting an Electronic Copy

You can submit an electronic copy of your thesis to the library through an upload option in Moodle. Simply log in to Moodle, click on *J.K.M. Library Technical Services*, click on *Tutorial – Thesis – Capstone (Library e-copy)*, and then submit your electronic

copy by uploading the file. You can also use this link to get there directly:

<http://moodle.chatham.edu/mod/assignment/view.php?id=56725>

If your thesis is too large to upload, or you have any difficulty with this process, please contact Dan Nolting at dnolting@chatham.edu.

2.4 Graphic Requirements

As mentioned earlier, reduced copies of all final boards should be included in the thesis as appendices. The final boards should be a maximum size of 11” x 17.” The resolution of the final boards should be a minimum of 300 dpi.

All presentation graphics should also be incorporated directly into the body of the text as illustrations. Each illustration should be a single graphic from the final boards. These graphics should be reduced in size to meet the typical 8.5” x 11” format. However, the resolution of the illustration must remain a minimum of 300 dpi.

2.5 Technical Writing Requirements

The appendix of the Turabian Manual has suggested format and submission guidelines. These guidelines should be used as a supplement to the style and formatting requirements outlined here. The specific guidelines of this program take precedent over any guidelines suggested by the Turabian and/or Chicago manual.

2.6 Formatting & Style Guides

The “Turabian Manual for Writers” (Turabian et al. 2007) is the accepted style guide for a thesis developed in partial fulfillment of a Master of Landscape Architecture degree. The Turabian Manual presents a concise guide to the Chicago Manual of Style, 15th edition. However, specific formatting requirements in this guide take precedence over either style manual.

Students should first reference the seventh edition of “A Manual for Writers of Research Papers, Theses, and Dissertations” (Turabian, et. al. 2007). The Chicago Manual of Style published by the University of Chicago Press can be used as a supplemental reference when any formatting, grammatical or citation issues are not covered in the Turabian Manual.

Citation Style and Requirements

There are two citation styles accepted by the Chicago Manual of Style and, by default, the Turabian Manual for Writers. Students must use the Parenthetical Citations-Reference List Style as presented in the Chicago Manual and covered by the Turabian text. This style is also known as the author-date style because these are the critical elements used for identifying sources. Typically, scholarly references will include three components: parenthetical citations in the body of the text, endnotes found at the end of each chapter, and a complete reference list found at the end of the text.

All sources must be cited in the documentation of the project and on any final presentation boards. Below are the specific requirements regarding when to include a source citation in your thesis and what information must be included in the citation. The Turabian Manual should be consulted for additional Parenthetical Citations guidelines.

1. When you *paraphrase ideas* that are associated with a specific source, even if you are not directly quoting the source – use a parenthetical citation (author date)
2. When you want to *point readers* to a source but have not quoted or paraphrased the source – use a parenthetical citation (author date)
3. When you *discuss a specific idea, data, or method* attributed to any source, even if you are not directly quoting the source – use a parenthetical citation with the page number from the source (author date, page number)
4. When you *quote exact words* from a source – use a parenthetical citation with the page number from the source (author date, page number)
5. When you quote *multiple sentences* from a source – use a block quote with parenthetical citation and page number typically located outside the punctuation (author date, page number)

6. If you wish to make substantive comments on your text or an associated source, use endnotes instead of parenthetical citations.

The use of endnotes

For substantive comments related to your text that are not necessary to include within the body of the text, use endnotes located at the end of each chapter. Do not use footnotes. The Turabian manual should be referenced regarding the formatting and placement of such notes.

In general, endnotes can be helpful to cite specific pages and complete reference information of sources you are directly quoting or pulling significant ideas from. Endnotes can also be used to expand on an idea that might not be specific to the topic of the paragraph. In both cases, an endnote can more immediately direct the reader to your sources because it is located at the end of the chapter and not buried in the extensive reference list located at the end of your text.

Reference list

As mentioned previously, a reference list must be included at the end of your final chapter. The reference list presents full bibliographic information for all the sources you cited with parenthetical citations. You may also include significant sources related to your topic that were not specifically cited in the text. The Turabian manual should be referenced for the formatting and arrangement of all references.

Margins and Spacing

The margin on the left side of the paper must be 1-1/2 inches. Top, bottom, and right margins should be 1 inch. Double-space all text with the exception of block quotations, table titles, figure captions, endnotes, and reference lists. These exceptions should be single-spaced.

Typeface

All type in the body of the text should be Times New Roman and twelve-point font. All titles are twelve-point Times New Roman font in small-capitalization. All headings and sub-headings are twelve-point Times New Roman font with the specified level distinctions (see text). All endnotes, table titles and figure captions should be ten-point Arial font.

Pagination

All front matter (title page, copyright notice, acknowledgements, table of contents, list of tables, list of figures, abstract) except the submission page are counted in lowercase roman numerals (i, ii, iii, iv, etc.). The page number on the title page is not shown thus, the first visible page number should be (ii) on the copyright notice page.

(see Appendix B)

Main text pages and back matter (appendices, reference list) are counted in Arabic numerals (1, 2, 3, etc.). All page numbers should be placed in the center of the footer ½” from the bottom. All page numbers should be ten-point Arial font. (see Appendix C)

Front Matter

Front matter includes all information and required pages that precede the body of the text. The front matter must fulfill the requirements listed below. These guidelines are also depicted in Appendix A and B.

Submission page

All theses must include a submission page as the first page of the document. The submission page is not counted in pagination of the front matter. The submission page

must include the title of the thesis, the required text and signature space as formatted and depicted in Appendix A.

Title page and copyright notice

All title pages should be twelve-point, Times New Roman font with small capitalization. The title itself is set in a bold typeface. The page number on the title page is not shown. All additional format requirements for the title page and the copyright notice are reflected in Appendix B.

Abstract

All theses must include an abstract. The abstract should directly follow the copyright notice page and include the thesis title and your name. The abstract should be a maximum of 150 words and single-spaced with no spacing before or after each line. The typeface of the acknowledgements should be twelve-point, Times New Roman font. (See Appendix B).

Acknowledgements

The inclusion of an acknowledgment page is optional and generally follows the formatting guidelines of the abstract page. See appendix B as a reference.

Table of Contents

A table of contents does not list the pages that precede it but should include any front matter that follows it. The page is titled “Table of Contents” with small capitalization and twelve-point font. Two blank lines separate the page title and the first item listed. The remaining items are single-spaced with a blank line between each item (see Appendix B).

The table of contents should list the first page of each chapter and any first level subheading. The subheadings should be indented ½ inch. There should be no leaders connecting the page number with each item. The Turabian Manual and appendix of this guide should be reference for additional formatting requirements.

List of illustrations

All tables and figures should be listed in the front matter following the table of contents. Use the same formatting as the table of contents, but divide the tables and figures into separate sections. All table and figures should be listed with double numeration where the first number equals the chapter and second refers to the sequential order(i.e. fig 1.3). See the appendix for specific formatting requirements.

Text

The text of the paper includes everything between the front and back matter. Chapter titles should be twelve-point Times New Roman font in small capitalization. The first paragraph should be separated by two spaces from the chapter title.

Up to three subheading levels are permitted. See Appendix C for the formatting requirement of each subheading level. Follow all other formatting requirements described in typeface section.

Back Matter and Illustrations

Typical back matter should include any appendices and the reference list. Illustrations should not be included in the back matter. All illustrations should be included in body of the text immediately following the first reference to the illustration. Remember that each illustration must be titled and labeled with the appropriate page number.

The appendices and the reference list should be numbered with Arabic numerals consecutive to the final page of text. In general, the appendices and reference list should be single-space, twelve-point Times New Roman font. The second line of a single reference should be indented ½ inch (this is referred to as a “hanging indent” in Microsoft Word). All references should be separated by a single space. Consult the Turabian Manual for specific formatting requirements of Parenthetical-Reference List Style.

2.7 REFERENCES

Chatham Institutional Review Board. *eIRB system* [website] 2010 [cited 12/16/2010].

Available from <http://my.chatham.edu/irb/index.cfm>

Turabian, Kate, Wayne Booth, Gregory Colomb, and Joseph Williams. 2007. *A manual for writers of research papers, theses, and dissertations; Chicago style for students and researchers*. 7th ed. Chicago, IL: The University of Chicago Press.

American Society of Landscape Architects. *ASLA Professional Practice Networks*

[website] 2010 [cited 12/16/2010]. Available from

<http://www.asla.org/PPNLanding.aspx>.