

Master's Thesis (Capstone Project) Guidelines

The Master's Thesis (Capstone Project) for the MA in Research in Anglophone Literatures and Cultures provides students with the opportunity to undertake an original, research project while engaging in the collaborative practices of the academic community. Rather than understanding research as an individual process leading just to a final, written submission, **students are required to develop their projects through feedback, peer review, and critical discussion.**

Following the model of an academic conference seminar, the Capstone Project combines independent research with collaborative learning. Throughout the academic year, students will develop their projects under the guidance of their supervisor, and, in the final stage, they will participate in a research seminar where their work-in-progress will be presented and discussed among peers.

Project Development

At the beginning of the project, students will be assigned a supervisor. They should agree on a timetable that includes key milestones, regular supervisory meetings, and submission deadlines. The supervisor's continuous assessment of this process will be part of the final evaluation of the MA Thesis (TFM).

Students will submit a **short seminar draft** approximately **four weeks before the Capstone Seminar**. This schedule allows sufficient time for all participants in each seminar to read one another's work carefully, complete the peer-review component of the project, and prepare constructive feedback for the seminar discussion.

The Seminar Draft

As mentioned above, approximately **four weeks before the Capstone Seminar**, students will submit a **working paper of approximately 2,500-3,000 words**, including a ca. 200- 250-word abstract and a list of works cited.

This seminar draft should present the project in a sufficiently developed form to support meaningful academic discussion while remaining open to revision. It is expected to include:

- a clearly defined research question or problem
- the objectives and critical relevance of the project
- a concise review of relevant scholarship, if necessary
- an overview of the theoretical framework

- a substantial sample analysis of primary sources
- preliminary conclusions
- a list of works cited

The seminar draft is intended as a discussion document rather than a finished piece of work. Its purpose is to invite critical engagement from peers and faculty members, acting as seminar chairs.

Draft Formatting Guidelines

- **Times New Roman, 12-point font**
- **Double line spacing** throughout the document
- **2.5 cm margins** on all sides
- **Justified** text
- **First line of each paragraph indented**; no extra space between paragraphs
- **Headings in bold, left-aligned, and without indentation.** No extra space after headings
- Footnotes: justified, **10-point font**
- **MLA Handbook (9th edition)** for citations and references
- **Works Cited** section with a **hanging indent**

Capstone Seminars

The Capstone Seminars comprise the collaborative stage of the MA Thesis and simulate the format of a specialist conference seminar. Its purpose is not to assess completed research but to create an opportunity for scholarly exchange and critical reflection.

Seminar drafts will be circulated among participants before the Capstone Seminars. Students are expected to read the working papers by other participants in their specific seminar in advance and come prepared to engage in informed and constructive discussion. There will be **approximately four participants** per seminar. Students are expected to participate actively in their seminar session. **The use of electronic devices is not allowed during the Capstone Seminar.**

Peer Review

Each student will serve as a **designated reviewer for one draft** in their specific seminar. Reviewers should prepare constructive feedback addressing aspects such as:

- the originality and relevance of the research question
- the coherence of the argument
- the adequacy of the theoretical and critical approach
- the quality of the analysis
- the use of primary and secondary sources
- recommendations for further development

This peer-review report will be completed by means of a specific form, and it will be handed in before the Capstone seminars. Seminar facilitators will assess this peer review report as part of the MA Thesis (TFM)'s final assessment. During the Capstone seminars, the peer-review report will also be presented and discussed.

Seminar Discussion

Students will work in small seminar sessions of approximately four participants, in which each seminar draft will be discussed. These sessions are intended to promote scholarly dialogue by identifying strengths, raising questions, suggesting alternative perspectives, and exploring possible revisions.

All participants are expected to contribute actively and respectfully to the discussion.

Each student will have a maximum of **10 minutes** to present their draft's research question, critical framework, preliminary findings, and specific requests for feedback.

The presentation will be followed by comments and feedback from the designated peer reviewer and an open discussion (comments and questions) involving the rest of the seminar participants. Seminar facilitators will moderate the group discussion.

Capstone seminar structure

Seminar sessions will involve approximately **four participants each**.

Each draft will be presented individually, followed by peer review and discussion. The structure will be the following:

1. 10-minute seminar draft presentation
2. Comments and feedback from the designated peer review, based on the peer reviewer's submitted report.

- Open discussion among all seminar participants.

Seminar Facilitators

Seminars are led by **two faculty members acting as chairs and facilitators**. These two faculty members, along with each student’s supervisor, comprise the **3-person assessment committee** (Tribunal de TFM) for the corresponding MA Theses (TFM) chairs. They will be responsible for ensuring that their seminar runs smoothly and efficiently. Their duties include welcoming participants, introducing the seminar and each speaker, managing the time allocated for presentations, moderating the question-and-answer sessions, and encouraging respectful and constructive discussion. As mentioned, these two faculty members acting as chairs will also be responsible, along with the supervisor, for assessing the MA Thesis (Capstone Project) as detailed below.

Assessment

Assessment Criteria

Students will be assessed according to their ability to:

- conduct independent research within the field of Anglophone Literatures and Cultures
- communicate research effectively in both written and oral forms
- provide and respond to constructive scholarly criticism
- participate actively in academic discussions

Methods for Final Assessment

Specific assessment rubrics will be provided to evaluate the MA Thesis (Capstone Project) according to the following criteria:

	Assessment Component	Weight	Evaluator(s)
Written Assessment: Draft and Peer Review (70%)	Progress Report	20%	Supervisor
	Working Paper	30%	Seminar Chairs

	Assessment Component	Weight	Evaluator(s)
	Peer Review Report	20%	Seminar Chairs
Seminar (30%)	Draft presentation	10%	Seminar Chairs
	Peer Review	10%	Seminar Chairs
	Seminar Discussion	10%	Seminar Chairs

AI Use

Students are **strongly discouraged** from using generative AI tools (such as ChatGPT or others) in any part of the Capstone Project process. This includes partially or fully drafting, analyzing, or generating ideas for the draft or the peer review report. Students remain responsible for ensuring that the content produced is their intellectual property. Failure to do so or to cite specific uses of AI in their draft will be subject to the disciplinary procedures specified in the **Sistema de Garantía de la Convivencia (BOUC 15-11-2023)**, article 9., g.

The use of ChatGPT or other generative AI tools in the preparation of the Master's Thesis (TFM) is **not allowed**, except in specific cases previously agreed upon with the supervisor and explicitly stated in a justification statement. If supervisors or other faculty members suspect the illicit use of such tools, they will officially escalate the matter to the Vice-Rectorate of Students for review.