



**FORENSIC PSYCHOLOGY
MASTER'S THESIS
GUIDELINES**



1. Expectations of Master's Level Thesis Students

- a.** The master's thesis is designed to expose current master's level students to research design and methodology. Students are expected to complete a novel research study, and are not to use work that has been previously published. Work must be written and executed under the supervision of the student's Thesis Advisor and Advisory Committee.
- b.** Students intending to complete a master's level thesis for the Forensic Psychology MA program are expected to work directly with a full-time faculty member (Thesis Advisor) and complete the necessary coursework as mandated by the program director. It is ultimately up to the student to complete the thesis in a timely fashion, ensuring adequate contact with faculty advisor and committee throughout thesis process.
- c.** The thesis is intended for students to do advanced level research – the completed project should reflect:
 - i.** Aptitude for professional writing
 - ii.** Ability to synthesize scholarly material
 - iii.** Ability to critically analyze literature
 - iv.** Design of a sound project with sound methodology
 - v.** Contribution to the field in a novel way

2. Required Coursework

- a.** Required courses: PSY715, PSY769, PSY737, PSY738, and PSY791
- b.** Students wishing to graduate with a thesis must receive either an A or A- in the above courses, students failing to do so will be unable to graduate with a thesis. Bear in mind, students at John Jay College are not allowed to retake courses unless they are the recipient of a failing grade: "F"
- c.** Final determination of thesis track status will be made by the thesis advisor and the professor for PSY738 after reviewing the prospectus.
- d.** PSY 791 should be taken in conjunction with PSY 738.

3. Thesis Advisors

- a.** Thesis Advisors must be full-time faculty in the Psychology department at John Jay College.
- b.** Students are responsible for securing a Thesis Advisor.
- c.** Thesis advisors may have specific requirements for acceptance of working as Thesis Advisor, such as taking required courses or participation in their research lab. These requirements should be discussed with the specific faculty member when discussing potential thesis advisement.

- d. Students will be required to develop a contract with their thesis advisor indicating the following:
 - i. Designation of meeting times
 - ii. Designation of project timeline
 - iii. Expectations of Thesis Advisor
 - iv. Expectations of Student

4. Advisory Committee

- a. Students must secure a three person Advisory Committee for final defense of their thesis.
- b. Students must select 2nd and 3rd members of their committee (the 1st being the student's faculty advisor).
- c. The Advisory Committee must be secured by student in consultation with the Thesis Advisor, but should consist of members who can provide needed expertise in the area of the student's thesis project.
- d. Student's 2nd Advisor on Committee:
 - i. Must be a full-time faculty member in the Psychology department at John Jay College
- e. Student's 3rd Advisor on Committee
 - i. May be a full-time faculty member in the Psychology Department of John Jay College
 - ii. May be an adjunct faculty member in the Psychology Department at John Jay College
 - iii. May be an expert outside of the Psychology Department or John Jay College must be an academic, scholar, or professional and an expert in the area of study.

5. Thesis Timeline

First Semester: Thesis Conception

- i. Students should be enrolled in PSY700, PSY 715, and PSY 769
- ii. Receive A/A- in PSY715 and PSY769
- iii. Contact faculty members
- iv. Join research labs
- v. Secure thesis advisor
- vi. Develop potential topics

Second Semester: Thesis Prospectus

- i. Students should be enrolled in PSY738 and PSY 791
- ii. Receive an A/A- in PSY738, pass 791
- iii. Complete thesis project proposal

- iv. Secure 2nd and 3rd members for committee
- v. Students must obtain approval from Thesis Advisor and professor of PSY738 to continue with project as a thesis (forms can be secured through the MA Office) **Students are not considered to be on the thesis track until the form has been approved and submitted to the department**

Third Semester: Thesis Data Analysis

- i. Students should be enrolled in PSY737
- ii. Receive A/A- in PSY737
- iii. Collect data and analyze
- iv. Continue to work with thesis advisor on project

Fourth Semester: Thesis Submission and Oral Defense

- a. **Oral Defense Processes:** student must defend thesis project on defense day – Thesis Advisor, and Advisory Committee must attend. Student may invite others to view. The student will complete a 15-minute presentation, followed by a 10 minute Q and A from faculty. Student will be evaluated via the **MA Thesis Approval Form**.
- b. Students must file the **Schedule Thesis Defense Form** with the MA office in order to schedule their defense time. This requires signatures of the Thesis Advisor and Advisory Committee. This indicates the student is prepared to defend their thesis and that all members of their committee have received the final written thesis document.
- c. All members of the committee are required to attend the oral defense.
- d. **Completed Thesis Document:** In addition to passing the oral defense, students must also submit a completed Thesis Document, with approval from all three readers to the MA office for final approval. Copies must also be submitted to the library. Papers submitted to the MA office do not need to be printed on weighted paper, regular paper will be suitable. Use the **Signature Page** when submitting the final documents.
- e. The student will be graded with the following: **(on oral and written combined)**
 - a. I approve the student's written thesis and oral presentation.
 - b. Except for minor revisions, I approve the student's written thesis and oral presentation. I assume that the candidate's chairperson will assume responsibility for these revisions.
 - c. I do not approve the student's written thesis and/or oral presentation as it now stands. Successful completion of the oral defense and thesis document will result in the ability to graduate with the conferral of Thesis on the student's record.
- f. Students oral defenses and written theses will be evaluated in conjunction on the **MA Thesis Approval Form** so it is imperative all members of the committee have read the final document by the student's scheduled oral defense date.
- g. All three members of the student's committee will file a separate **MA Thesis Approval Form**.