

## ***Guidelines on the Non-Thesis Research Paper***

The 2020-2021 GSU graduate catalog (section #3110, College of Arts & Sciences, Degree Requirements, subtopic: Master of Arts/Master of Science) states --

“Non-thesis: A non-thesis option is available in some departments. In lieu of the thesis, research competence must be demonstrated on the basis of a research paper or a creative project. A committee of at least three members of the faculty, of which the student’s adviser will serve as chair, will pass on the acceptability of the paper or project. Two-thirds of the committee must indicate approval. This approval must be submitted to the Office of Graduate Services by the appropriate deadline (see: <https://cas.gsu.edu/current-grad-student-resources/>).”

A coursework-intensive (non-thesis) degree option is available in the Department of Communication Master’s program. In lieu of the thesis, research competence must be demonstrated on the basis of a research paper. This paper should be exemplary of the research and writing skills the student acquired during the degree program. For students on the Digital Media Strategies track, this is on the basis of a research paper completed in one of the courses taken in the required Media Studies area of the Plan of Study. Those in the Mass Communication or Human Communication areas may use a research paper (with a fitting research assignment) from any graduate-level or cross-listed (B.A./M.A., M.A./Ph.D., B.A./M.A./Ph.D.) course in the Department of Communication. All such courses must be taught by a permanent member of the faculty who is either a tenured or tenure-track faculty member.

If a student wishes to use a paper assigned in one of their courses as their non-thesis research paper, the student must consult with their course instructor in advance of writing the paper to determine if the paper will satisfy the university’s requirement for this paper. Once that determination is made, the instructor will be able to focus special attention on the paper and provide the necessary feedback for the student to be able to expand upon the paper. The student will follow the instructor’s recommendations and re-submit the paper to the instructor prior to the pre-arranged deadline. Sufficient time must be given to allow the instructor to review the paper a second time.

In terms of content requirements, the research paper must meet the requirements set forth by the course instructor.

Acceptable papers must be approved by a 3-person committee, which will include:

1. the instructor of the course where the paper was originally written and revised;
2. the Graduate Director of your program area;
3. the Chair of the Department of Communication.

Each member of your research committee must sign off on the Approval Form for the non-thesis research paper (obtain the form in the Handbook). To satisfy the requirement, all components are due to the Graduate Administrator, Tawanna Tookes, no later than the end of the second month of the semester you plan to graduate (ex: end of October for Fall, or end of February for Spring). Therefore, it is

the student's responsibility to plan ahead accordingly once you have applied for graduation. Failure to do so could result in a delay of the graduation date. The safest plan is to finalize this research paper *the semester before* the semester you plan to graduate.

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