



# Finishing the M.A.

*As you work on the “culminating experience” of the M.A. in English Composition, you’ll need to follow the steps below to complete the program and graduate. Please keep this document and follow all of the steps carefully for either the thesis or the comprehensive exam option until you’ve completed the degree.*

## For all students

### **ENGMA listserv and CSUSB email accounts**

You must be signed up on the ENGMA (“English MA”) listserv. The Graduate Coordinators and faculty use this listserv to email important announcements about program policies and professional opportunities. To sign up for ENGMA, contact your Graduate Coordinator.

You should check your CSUSB email account regularly. The University no longer uses off-campus email addresses, and the Graduate Coordinators and faculty will only contact you through your CSUSB email account.

### **Dual concentration**

If you are interested in pursuing a dual concentration, please see the requirements for dual concentrations on the program website.

### **Advancement to candidacy and program plan form**

After you have completed 16 units of graduate coursework in the program (along with any remaining prerequisite courses or other conditions on your admission status), contact your Graduate Coordinator to complete a “Program Plan” form. The Graduate Coordinator will submit a copy of this program plan to the Records office and you will then be “advanced to candidacy.” You must have this program plan filed for you at least one quarter before you graduate. Please also consult your Graduate Coordinator if you wish to make any changes to your program plan so that s/he can submit a “change in program plan” form for you.

*M.A. in English Composition  
Program Website  
[english.csusb.edu/grad](http://english.csusb.edu/grad)*

## ENG 695

ENG 695 (Thesis Proposal/Comprehensive Examination Preparation) will help you either plan and begin writing your thesis proposal or help you prepare for the comprehensive exam.

You may enroll in ENG 695 after you have completed ENG 609 and 24 units in the program, and have the consent of the Graduate Coordinator of your concentration. ENG 695 requires a permit from your Graduate Coordinator, so when you are ready to enroll in it, contact your Graduate Coordinator and give him/her your Coyote ID number so that s/he can permit you.

## Commencement

Cal State San Bernardino has Commencement ceremonies twice each year: June and December. If you wish to participate in the Commencement ceremony, please see the requirements for "Participation in Commencement" on the program website. You should also contact the Graduate Coordinator of your concentration by May 1 (for the June ceremony) or November 1 (for the December ceremony) so that s/he can check on whether you are eligible to participate.

# The thesis option

## Eligibility to pursue the thesis option



Angela Asbell, the College of Arts & Letters Outstanding Graduate Student in 2006-07

If you entered the program in Fall 2006 or later, in order to undertake the thesis option for the culminating experience, you must have a minimum GPA of 3.7 overall in degree-applicable coursework or the permission of the Graduate Coordinator. This GPA requirement must be met before you undertake to write the thesis proposal, and you must have completed at least 24 units of the program coursework upon which the

GPA is based. Thus, if you have completed at least 24 units in the program and are considering the thesis option, you must meet with the Graduate Coordinator of your concentration to review your GPA and obtain permission to undertake the thesis option. Your graduate coordinator will sign an "Eligibility to Pursue

the Thesis Option" form, and you will staple this form to the thesis proposal you submit. Only students who have obtained this permission from the Graduate Coordinator will be allowed to submit a thesis proposal to the Graduate Committee.

## Forming a thesis committee and writing a proposal

You must form a thesis reading committee of two to three faculty readers, one of whom is your "primary reader." Typically, students have two readers, but you and your first two readers may decide to have a third reader. You may seek readers from among professors you have had in the program and/or from other full-time faculty in our department; the research specializations of the English faculty are listed at [english.csusb.edu/ftfaculty.htm](http://english.csusb.edu/ftfaculty.htm). If you wish to have a CSUSB faculty reader outside of our department, you and your readers must submit a letter justifying the need for this reader when you submit your thesis proposal.

If you are pursuing a dual concentration, your thesis must be clearly relevant to both concentrations.

In particular, the Graduate Committee looks for the following characteristics in proposals:

- *clear statement of the purpose and nature of your proposed thesis project*
- *familiarity with relevant and current research and theory related to the thesis topic*
- *grounding of the project within this research and theory*
- *explanation of the project's contribution to the field (i.e., the proposal should answer the "so what?" question for your project)*
- *reasonable scope of a project for an M.A. thesis, which when completed usually runs 50-65 pages in 12-point Times font*
- *appropriate methodology for conducting the project*
- *clear organization and writing style*
- *appropriate use of sources and appropriate citation style (MLA style for composition and literature theses and APA style for TESL theses)*

You will work with your readers through multiple drafts of your proposal until your readers specify that it is ready for you to submit to the Graduate Committee. Thesis proposals must be submitted to members of the Graduate Committee one week in advance of the

Graduate Committee meeting by 4 p.m. (e.g., if the committee meets on Wednesday, proposals must be submitted by 4 p.m. Wednesday of the previous week.). Late submissions will not be considered. The Graduate Committee meeting dates are posted on the M.A. program website. Also on the website are the thesis proposal cover sheet and instructions for submitting the thesis proposal. Please review the instructions carefully.

The maximum length of 1000 words for the proposal (exclusive of title and annotated bibliography) is strictly enforced; if your proposal is more than 1000 words, it will be returned to you unreviewed. In order to have your thesis proposal considered, you must submit the following to the Graduate Committee members' mailboxes:

- the thesis proposal cover sheet, signed by your 2-3 readers;
- the "Eligibility to Pursue the Thesis Option" form, signed by your Graduate Coordinator
- a memo of support from your first reader; and
- your thesis proposal and annotated bibliography.

These items should be stapled together as one packet and placed in each Graduate Committee member's box. In addition, you must submit an electronic copy of your thesis proposal and annotated bibliography to the Graduate Coordinator. You must be enrolled during the quarter in which you submit your thesis proposal, or your proposal will be returned to you unreviewed.

After the Graduate Committee has reviewed your proposal, you and your readers will receive an email message from the Graduate Coordinator explaining what revisions, if any, the Graduate Committee requests that you make to your proposal. If revisions are required, the Graduate Coordinator will also specify whether you must submit a revised proposal to the entire Graduate Committee for a second review or whether your



*A group of our graduate students (and Professor Carol Haviland, third from right) at the 2003 Conference on College Composition and Communication in New York City, where they presented a workshop on tutoring.*

revisions need only be approved by your thesis readers. Revisions are requested for approximately two-thirds of the proposals submitted.

### **ENG 699A/B and thesis writing**

After your thesis proposal has been approved by the Graduate Committee, you are eligible to enroll in ENG 699a (Thesis, 2 units) and ENG 699b (Thesis and Research, 2 units). These two courses are required courses for all thesis students. You may enroll in these two courses in the same quarter or in different quarters. These courses require permits, so when you are ready to enroll in them contact your Graduate Coordinator and give him/her your Coyote ID# so that s/he can permit you.

At the beginning of the writing process, you should discuss with your readers a plan for writing your thesis and submitting drafts for their feedback. Sometimes readers prefer students to work mainly with the primary reader on initial drafts of the thesis, and other times readers prefer that students work with both (or all) of them throughout the thesis writing process; you should discuss this with your readers before beginning your thesis. In addition, if you are working on your thesis over the summer, you should check in advance with your readers regarding whether they are available to comment on drafts over the summer. Faculty are not required to do so, but some choose to.

### **Thesis format deadlines and submission to the Office of Graduate Studies**

The deadlines for submitting your thesis to the the Office of Graduate Studies for Fall, Winter, Spring, and Summer

*CSUSB Office of Graduate Studies*  
*Website*  
*gradstudies.csusb.edu*



quarters are found on the Graduate Studies website (click on the link for Thesis/Project).

For each quarter, the Office of Graduate Studies has deadlines for "First Format Review," "Final Format Review" and "Binding Payment" (The deadline for "Thesis Defense" does not apply to our program, as we do not require an oral defense.) *These deadlines are strictly enforced. If a student misses a deadline, s/he will not graduate that quarter and will be required to enroll the next quarter.*

### First Format Review

After your thesis readers have fully approved the final content of your thesis, you are allowed to submit your thesis for First Format Review to the Graduate Studies office. For this First Format Review, you must turn in to Graduate Studies (in AD-127) the following three items:

- the Thesis/Project Certification form signed by your thesis readers; this form is available from the Office of Graduate Studies or from that office's website;
- your completed and formatted thesis;
- an electronic copy of your formatted thesis on a disk; the Office of Graduate Studies uses this electronic version to check theses for plagiarism.

Please note that on your thesis signature page, you must have three reader names listed. If you only have two thesis readers, the third name must be of one of the English Graduate Coordinators or the English department chair. However, on the Thesis/Project

Certification form, you only need the signatures of your two readers.

*Important:* If the the Office of Graduate Studies deems your thesis to have significant errors in formatting, they will return it as a "No Review." In such a case, if you do not resubmit the thesis again by the First Format Review deadline, you will have missed that deadline and will not be allowed to graduate that quarter. It is thus very important that you carefully



Davina Padgett, 2006 recipient of the Kellie Rayburn Award for outstanding thesis.

follow the formatting guidelines available from the Graduate Studies website (see the links under Thesis/Project). Your Graduate Coordinator may also have

information about paid thesis formatters whom you can hire.

### Final Format Review

After the Office of Graduate Studies has completed its first format review of your thesis, they will send you a memo detailing the formatting corrections that you need to make.

You must make these corrections and resubmit your corrected thesis to the Graduate Studies office. Graduate Studies will continue to review your thesis and send you memos with corrections that you still need to make; you must continue to resubmit a corrected thesis each time. If you have questions about the corrections, you can schedule an appointment with one of the thesis format reviewers by calling the Office of Graduate Studies at (909) 537-5058.

When the Office of Graduate Studies sends you a memo saying that your thesis is ready to be printed on cotton paper, you are ready for "Final Format Review." For the Final Format Review, you must submit to the Office of Graduate Studies (by the deadline) a minimum of three copies of your final corrected thesis on 100% Cotton paper; please also see the *Graduate Student Handbook* (available as a .pdf document from the Graduate Studies website) for more information on formatting and copying requirements. On the signature page of each of your thesis copies, you must obtain the signatures of your thesis readers. If you only have two thesis readers, you must have one of the three English Graduate Coordinators or the English department chair be your third signature.

You will turn in these signed copies of your thesis to the the Office of Graduate Studies. When you receive notification from that office that your thesis is ready for binding, you will pick up from the Office of Graduate Studies a "Summary of Binding Charges." You will take this notice to the Bursar's office and pay for the binding charges. This must be done by the Thesis Binding deadline.

### Binding receipt and grades for your thesis courses (ENG 699a and 699b)

Once you have paid the binding charges for your thesis, you will receive a receipt for the binding. You must place a copy of this receipt, along with a copy of the "Summary of Binding Charges," in the mailbox of the Graduate Coordinator of your concentration. S/he will then notify

your first thesis reader that you have completed all of the thesis requirements. Your reader will then submit grades for your ENG 699a and ENG 699b courses.

### Graduation Check

As you near the end of your thesis revisions and you and your readers have a clear idea of the quarter in which you will graduate, you should file a Graduation Check ("Grad Check") with the Records Office on the first floor of University Hall. On your Grad Check, you must specify the quarter in which you will graduate (i.e., complete all requirements for the degree). If you are completing a dual concentration, you must file two grad checks, one for each of your concentrations.

When the Records Office has processed your Grad Check, you will receive a form showing the courses that you still need to complete in order to receive your degree. *Please note: Should you not graduate in the quarter for which you've submitted the Grad Check, you will need to file a new Grad Check (with a new graduation date) before you will be able to enroll in classes.*

If you have not yet completed your thesis, the form will list your two thesis courses (ENG 699a and ENG 699b) with grades of "RP" (report in progress). These two thesis courses will be completed when your first thesis reader turns in grades for these courses; this will occur after you receive final format approval from the Office of Graduate Studies and have obtained your thesis "Binding receipt" (see details above).

### Continuous enrollment, ENG 697, and leave-of-absence petition

Cal State San Bernardino requires that students remain continuously enrolled in their graduate programs until they graduate. If (1) you have completed all of your coursework except for ENG 699a and 699b (which you will receive grades in after you complete your thesis) and (2) you are working on either your thesis proposal or thesis, you should enroll in ENG 697 (Thesis and Comprehensive Examination Independent Study, 4 units) or ENG 698 (Continuous Enrollment, 0-6 units). If you wish to enroll in another course to maintain your continuous enrollment, you must receive approval for that course from your Graduate Coordinator. Please note that neither ENG 697 or ENG 698 count toward the degree.

For domestic students, ENG 697 and ENG 698 are on the same fee schedule (i.e., they cost the same because 0-6

units are all at the same fee rate). Students typically enroll in ENG 697, which is graded CR/NC (Credit/No Credit). However, international students, who are on a different fee program, may prefer to enroll in ENG 698Z for 0 units.

ENG 697 and ENG 698 require permits from your Graduate Coordinator, so when you are ready to enroll in either course, contact your coordinator and give him/her your Coyote ID number so that s/he can permit you. At the end of each quarter in which you are enrolled in ENG 697 or 698, you must write a 1/2-page summary of the work you completed toward your thesis proposal or thesis, and submit this summary to your Graduate Coordinator.

The only quarter in which you are not required to be continuously enrolled is summer quarter, except if you are filing your thesis with the Office of Graduate Studies in summer. The Office of Graduate Studies will only review your thesis if you are enrolled.

If you must be away from the program for one or more quarters, you must petition for a Leave of Absence. You may obtain a "leave of absence" petition from the Office of Graduate Studies in AD-127 or download the "leave of absence" form from their website. If you are not enrolled at the University and do not have an approved leave of absence, you will be automatically dropped from the University system and must reapply to continue in the program. If re-admitted, you will be subject to the most recent Catalog requirements.



Professor Sunny Hyon (third from right) shows graduate students the sights in San Antonio, at the 2004 Conference on College Composition and Communication (CCCC)

# The comprehensive exam option

## COMPEXAM listserv

The COMPEXAM listserv is for English graduate students interested in or studying for the exam. Unlike ENGMA, this list will be open for your comments and conversation; you can use it to arrange study groups/partners, discuss readings, etc. Posting to the list will be limited to subscribers, however, to limit spam. If you would like to be added to COMPEXAM, contact your Graduate Coordinator.

## When students can take the comprehensive exam

The comprehensive examination is offered Fall and Spring quarters. You are eligible to take the comprehensive examination no earlier than your last quarter of coursework in the program. In the quarter in which you take the exam, you must be enrolled in ENG 999 (Comprehensive Examination). Before enrolling in ENG 999, you must have completed ENG 695 (see above), been advanced to candidacy, signed the Declaration of Intent form (see below), obtained the permission of your Graduate Coordinator, be in good academic standing, and have no remaining grades of Incomplete (I) in any of your coursework in the program.

## Preparing for the comprehensive exam

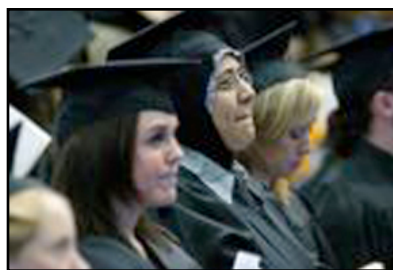
It is very important that you print out and thoroughly read the "Comprehensive Examination Preparation Booklet" and "Comprehensive Examination Procedures Bulletin" for the academic year in which you plan to take the examination. Those two documents, which are available on the program website, provide reading lists and sample questions for different components of the examination, and describe in detail the examination requirements and procedures for students in the different concentrations.

After reading both of these documents, feel free to ask your Graduate Coordinator questions you have about the examination requirements and processes. Please also see the program website for the dates of different exam components and for sample student responses to previous exam questions.

Some of the readings from the examination reading lists can be found in our CSUSB Pfau library reserves under

ENG 999; some are in "Electronic reserves" and others are in "Library Use reserves." Readings not on reserve may be found on your own through the library collection, databases, and inter-library loan.

## "Declaration of Intent" form and the permit for ENG 999



*M.A. graduates at the December 2007 commencement ceremony.*

The comprehensive examination is given Fall and Spring quarters. You are eligible to take the comprehensive examination no earlier than your last quarter of coursework in the program. In the quarter prior to the quarter in which you will take the

examination, you and your Graduate Coordinator must sign a "Declaration of Intent" form; see the sample Declaration of Intent form on the program website.

Once you and your coordinator have signed the intent form, you will receive a permit into ENG 999. You may then register for ENG 999 for the upcoming quarter.

## Graduation Check

At least one quarter prior to taking the comprehensive examination, you should file a Graduation Check ("Grad Check") with the Records Office on the first floor of University Hall. On your Grad Check, you will specify the quarter in which you will graduate (i.e., complete all requirements for the degree). If you are completing a dual concentration, you must file two grad checks, one for each of your concentrations.

When the Records Office has processed your Grad Check, you will receive a form showing the courses that you still need to complete in order to receive your degree. *Please note: Should you not graduate in the quarter for which you've submitted the Grad Check, you will need to file a new Grad Check (with a new graduation date) before you will be able to enroll in classes.*

