

# M.A. Thesis Course Instructions

Please read the *Student Handbook* section on Thesis Courses, the instructions below, and the accompanying information before completing M.A. Thesis Course Registration form.

## **What is a thesis course?**

- A thesis is a major research paper done toward the end of a student's program to demonstrate their research and writing abilities. A thesis can be taken for one or two course credits depending on the student's particular program and research interests. The thesis must be done within the student's area of concentration; it generally develops from work done in other courses and, therefore, should be undertaken in the final year of study. These courses are subject to all policies and deadlines governing other 'standard' courses.

## **What policies and procedures pertain to thesis courses?**

- Students must be invited by the division in order to write a thesis. Once a student has been invited and the topic of research has been determined, then he/she must submit a thesis proposal to the appropriate division chair. The proposal, typed and 200-500 words in length, must be submitted for approval no later than April 1<sup>st</sup> for a Fall semester thesis and November 1<sup>st</sup> for a Spring semester thesis. It must provide a rationale for the thesis topic, outline the body of the thesis (tentatively), describe the chronology for completion and make preliminary suggestions for bibliographical resources where possible.
- Once approved, the division will select the supervisor, who will also serve as the first reader. The supervisor, in consultation with the student, will choose the second reader and additional readers as necessary. These readers will form the thesis committee, who will later administer the oral defense. The choice of supervisor and reader(s) must meet with the approval of the appropriate division. Requests to have an instructor other than a GCTS faculty member serve as supervisor or second reader must be made in writing to the registrar no later than April 1<sup>st</sup> for a Fall course and November 1<sup>st</sup> for a Spring course. The appropriate divisional chair as well as the academic dean must approve such requests.
- Upon approval, the student will register for the thesis using the attached petition form.
- The numbers 891 and 892 will be used (i.e., NT 891 – Thesis I; NT 892 – Thesis II). The thesis will be scheduled within one major semester (Fall or Spring) or two consecutive major semesters. When carried over two semesters, it is the student's responsibility to ensure that the second section is registered by the standard registration deadlines. A one-course thesis must be 24,000 to 30,000 words (approximately 80-100 pages) in length. A two-course thesis must be 12,000 to 15,000 (40-50 pages) in length.
- The student will be responsible to initiate meetings with the thesis supervisor as needed during the writing process. The first meeting must take place within 10 days of the semester's beginning.
- No later than three weeks prior to the end of the semester, the student must submit to the supervisor and second reader(s) copies of the completed thesis; it must be typed (double-spaced) and follow the most recent Turabian manual of style. Submitted copies may be photocopied. The student may request guidelines detailing proper thesis format from the Registration Office.
- The student will be examined orally on the thesis at a date scheduled by the supervisor and at least two other readers, who will administer the oral thesis defense. The readers will each assign a grade. The average of the grades will constitute the final grade submitted for each of the thesis courses, 891 and 892.
- Thesis examinations requiring extension beyond the standard deadline for written work in a given semester will require an approved extension from the registrar.
- See the *Student Handbook* for more policies pertaining to theses.

## **What must I do when my thesis is completed and has been presented to the thesis committee?**

- Provide the Registration Office with two unbound revised copies of the integrative paper or project.
- Sign Gordon-Conwell's *Copyright Release Form for Deposited Student Works*.
- Complete and sign the *Distribution Agreement for TREN* [do **not** complete/sign the second section, *Copyright Registration Information Section*.]
- Pay the appropriate binding fees (check the *Special Fees* section of the *Student Handbook* for current fees). **Note:** Any student who is graduating in May and receives a passing grade on the thesis but does not submit two final copies to the registrar by the deadline in the Academic Calendar, will still be allowed to graduate; however, his/her diploma will be withheld until the copies have been received. In such cases, final copies should be submitted no later than one month following graduation. (Please check the *Special Fees* section of the *Student Handbook* for current fees.)

**Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary**

# M.A. Thesis Course (891/892)

Please read the M.A. Thesis Course Instructions accompanying information before completing this form.  
Obtain the signature of the thesis supervisor, second reader(s), and divisional chair.  
Then return this form to the Registration Office for final approval.

Name	GCTS ID #	Date	GCTS Box #
Degree(s)	Telephone	Term(s) course(s) is/are to be registered (i.e., Fall 2008, Spring 2009, etc.)	

Course Number (Include the department code (i.e., CH, TH, etc.) and either 891 (one-course thesis) or 891/892 (two-course thesis) for the course number.)	Course Title (This is a self-created course title (e.g., "The Impact of 19 <sup>th</sup> and 20 <sup>th</sup> Century Revivals on Today's Church"))
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**Student, please check the appropriate box(es) below:**

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> This is a one-course thesis (3.0 credit hours)<br>to be registered in the _____ term. | <input type="checkbox"/> This is a two-course thesis (6.0 credit hours):<br><input type="checkbox"/> Register both parts (891 and 892) in the _____ term.<br><input type="checkbox"/> Register 891 in the _____ term and 892 in the _____ term. |
|--|---|

The student should first secure the signature of the thesis supervisor, then the second reader, and finally the division chair. After that, the petition should be submitted to the Registration Office for final approval.

The student and the thesis supervisor will receive a copy of this form upon approval by the Registrar.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Student Signature (REQUIRED)

**Required Approvals:**

\_\_\_\_\_  
Thesis Supervisor (REQUIRED)

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Second Reader(s) (REQUIRED)

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Divisional Chair (REQUIRED)

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Registration Official (REQUIRED)

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

**FOR REGISTRATION OFFICE USE ONLY:**

Date of Final Approval: \_\_\_\_\_