

# The MA Dissertation in the English Department (2016-2017)

- 
- English Literature and Culture
  - Writing, Editing and Mediating (WEM)
  - Educational Master English Language and Culture
- 

## Master's Thesis Protocol

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### Description of an MA dissertation in the English Department

A Master or MA dissertation (*Ma-scriptie* in Dutch) in the English Department is a coherent and well-argued written account of research based on a specific thesis statement or a clearly defined problem in the field of English Literature and Culture or Linguistics. An MA dissertation is an original piece of work, written largely independently and showing critical and analytical ability at MA-level. An MA dissertation is assigned 20 ECTS. The dissertation is usually completed in semester 2 of the academic year, and to enable a successful procedure, some preparatory work is scheduled in the preceding semester (see timetable below). Students may also start and finish the dissertation procedure in semester 1 of the academic year.

The MA dissertation is an individual piece of work, but collaborative work by no more than two students is allowed in exceptional cases. Students must apply for permission on the basis of a detailed dissertation proposal, demonstrating that each student contributes an equivalent of 20 ECTS to the total amount of work.

### Contact People

MA Co-ordinator: Dr Irene Visser (i.visser@rug.nl).

MA Study Advisors: Ella Sebamalai (English Literature and Culture and WEM) and Hanneke Boode (Educational MA). Email address (for both): [studieadvies.ma.europesetalen@rug.nl](mailto:studieadvies.ma.europesetalen@rug.nl)

### **Admission**

MA students cannot start the official dissertation procedure until they have completed their Bachelor's degree as well as having attended MA courses of 20 ECTS in total (OER-B, art. 4.1). Students must sign up for the MA Dissertation course of their programme in Progress. They must apply for supervision by submitting a *Preliminary Dissertation Proposal* to the MA Co-ordinator.

### **Information meeting**

The Department will announce an MA Dissertation information meeting in semester 1. At this meeting students will receive instructions and information about the dissertation process. This meeting is also an opportunity to ask questions. Attending the information meeting is normally a requirement for all students planning to start their dissertation.

### **Length and duration**

The length of a Master dissertation is 15,000 words, with acceptable deviations of up to 10% in either direction. The dissertation must have an accurate word count on the cover page. This word count includes footnotes, but not the bibliography/Works Cited and appendices. If the dissertation involves an edition of a text, this rule may not apply and the dissertation's length may vary with the supervisor's prior approval.

The dissertation process follows the timetable set out in this document. This schedule ensures that students receive the full supervision time allotted them by the faculty regulations. The average time required for the dissertation process is 560 hours, which is circa 25 hours per week (two thirds of a week's work). Students who have planned an internship and others who may not be able to follow the regular time path must indicate this clearly on their preliminary proposal. Note that the MA degree is not a part-time programme and that no allowance is made for the requirements of employment or obligations outside the department.

The successful completion of the dissertation will require steady, continuous application. Failure to complete the dissertation procedure in semester 2 means that students will have to re-enrol in the following academic semester. It is evident that time management is an important aspect of the writing process. There are allowances for serious illnesses or other unpredictable serious events. Student should inform the study advisor immediately if they expect their work to be delayed due to unpredictable circumstances. Extensions may be granted by the Student Dean in consultation with the study advisor, according to Faculty regulations. The extension period will be officially recorded. The student must notify the MA co-ordinator of the extension.

### **The supervision procedure**

Students are advised to seek advice about the topics of their choice from members of staff well before writing their dissertation proposal.

The first document to be submitted at the start of the procedure is the preliminary dissertation proposal, which must be sent by email to the MA Co-ordinator. It is important to heed this first deadline. Late submissions will lead to delays in the supervision process and possibly to the rejection of the proposed topics, since it may be impossible to find suitable supervisors at a late date.

The MA dissertation process is supervised by a member of staff from the relevant field of research, and falls under the responsibility of the corresponding section of the Department. The department's sections are Premodern Literature and Culture (OTL), Modern Literature and Culture (MLK), and Linguistics (MTK). Supervisors set deadlines for drafts, accept or reject chapters, and discuss any necessary changes of parts of the procedure with their students.

While students' preferences are taken into consideration, students do not choose their own supervisors and supervisors cannot simply accept them. Instead, supervisors are assigned by their sections on the grounds of their area of expertise and availability. In exceptional cases, an external supervisor may be invited to supervise or co-supervise the dissertation. In the latter case, the external specialist and the supervisor from the English department are jointly responsible for the dissertation supervision.

Draft chapters and outlines are handed in on due dates and in a format (e.g. hard or electronic copy) agreed to by the student and the supervisor. Supervisors may require a week or longer to read and comment on a chapter, depending on their other commitments. The number and duration of supervision tutorials varies between 4-8 tutorials of between 20-45 minutes per session.

Since the emphasis in the MA is on independent learning, supervisors give directions and advice, encouraging and assisting students to perform to the best of their ability. They do not provide corrections or dictations, nor will they repeatedly point out the same errors in a student's work. It is the students' responsibility to heed the supervisors' comments and advice, to carry out accurate and appropriate revisions and to submit a final version that is of an acceptable standard. Correct use of the required academic style (e.g. MLA, APA) is part of the students' responsibilities. It is important to note that errors in referencing will not be corrected by the supervisor and may not even be commented on, since the full responsibility for these lies with the student. The correct use of academic style is part of the assessment.

Supervisors will pass on the dissertation to the second reader when the supervision procedure has reached its final stage. It is not the students' task to find a second reader; this will be done by the section and students may only be informed about the second reader at a late stage in the procedure. The second reader is not directly involved in the supervising process and will only read the final version. The supervisor and second reader assess the dissertation and decide on the final grade together. The supervisor will finalize the process by submitting the dissertation's formal assessment report and its grade.

It is the students' responsibility to know about the rules of the Office for Student Affairs (Bureau Studentzaken) and to meet their requirements. Consult: [www.rug.nl/let/voorzieningen/bureauStudentzaken/Afstuderen/scriptie](http://www.rug.nl/let/voorzieningen/bureauStudentzaken/Afstuderen/scriptie)

## Required documents

The student submits a *Preliminary Dissertation Proposal* to the MA Co-ordinator (required document 1) on or before the due date (see the timetable below).

After the first consultation with the supervisor, the student submits the finalized *Dissertation Proposal* to the supervisor (required document 2) by a due date set by the supervisor.

## Timetable

The timetable follows the regular procedure in all three MA programmes: some preliminary work is done in semester 1, and the actual writing process takes place in semester 2.

In the timetable below all of the steps after the information session are compulsory and must be completed as indicated if the student wants to finish the dissertation process.

| Timetable   | Dates                        |
|---|------------------------------|
| Dissertation information session  | Semester 1.1                 |
| <i>Preliminary Dissertation Proposal</i> by email to MA Co-ordinator  | <b>Due: 24 November 2016</b> |
| Supervisor assigned: first meeting  | December 2016                |
| <i>Dissertation Proposal</i> by email to supervisor (not to the MA Co-ordinator).   | January 2017                 |
| Drafts and meetings   | Semester 2                   |
| Submit dissertation in digital version and two bound paper copies to supervisor   | <b>Due: 25 May 2017</b>      |
| If applicable: submission date of revised dissertation  | <b>Due: 26 June 2017</b>     |
| After successful completion send a digital version to supervisor (unless otherwise instructed) and upload on:<br><a href="http://www.rug.nl/let/voorzieningen/bureauStudentzaken/Afstuderen/scriptie">www.rug.nl/let/voorzieningen/bureauStudentzaken/Afstuderen/scriptie</a> |                              |

## Formal presentation

The MA dissertation must comply with the formal requirements and conventions of academic writing. The style must be clear, precise and relatively formal. Gender-biased, derogatory or patronising language is unacceptable. The dissertation has four main parts: an introduction; the main or body chapters; a conclusion; and the bibliography (or Works Cited). It may also have a preface (a personal note, with acknowledgements) and appendices.

### *The constituent parts of the final dissertation*

The final dissertation handed in to the supervisor should contain the following parts:

- A. The title page. This must contain:
  - a. The title. It should be of a reasonable length and must accurately reflect the contents of the dissertation;
  - b. The student's name and student number;
  - c. The supervisor's name including academic title;
  - d. The date of completion;
  - e. The word count (including notes but not appendices and bibliography);
  - f. One of the following formulae:
    - o Master's Dissertation Literary Studies. Programme: Writing, Editing and Mediating, University of Groningen.
    - o Master's Dissertation Literary Studies. Department of English Language and Culture, University of Groningen.
    - o Dissertation Educational Master. Department of English Language and Culture, University of Groningen.
- B. The contents page. This lists the chapters, subsections (if applicable) and appendices. Each entry is followed by the number of the first page on which it appears.
- C. A list of abbreviations if required. Avoid excessive use of cryptic abbreviations or abbreviating things that only appear once or twice in your dissertation. Standard abbreviations (e.g. for biblical books, statistical tests) need not be explained.
- D. The abstract. This is a careful summary of your dissertation and its main conclusions. This should be approximately 250 words.
- E. The body of the text, consisting of an introduction, chapters and conclusion. If you are presenting an edition of a text this may be somewhat different.
- F. Bibliography/Works Cited. This must be correctly formatted according to the requirements of your discipline.
- G. Appendices. A required appendix is a text of 500-1,000 words explaining the dissertation's topic and main conclusions in accessible style, intended for a non-specialist audience. Other appendices may include tables that are not included in the main text, poems, summaries, or translations. If you refer to a short text that is not readily available it is helpful to include it in an appendix. Note that you cannot include texts that are in copyright.

### *General presentation guidelines*

- The dissertation must be double-spaced in a plain twelve-point font.
- Pages should be printed on one side only and numbered.
- Footnotes or endnotes are only to be used as approved by the supervisor.

- Consult the style manual for your discipline (e.g. MLA, APA) for formatting quotations etc.
- Illustrations should only be included where they are relevant to the dissertation.

## **Plagiarism**

Section 4.13 on plagiarism in the Teaching and Examination Regulations (OER) Part A of the MA programme Literary Studies is applicable to the MA dissertation. Plagiarism is defined as the use of ideas or the copying or paraphrasing from another person's work without documenting the source in the conventional academic manner. Plagiarism is reported to the Exam Board, which may decide to void the MA dissertation and exclude the student from supervision for a period of time determined by Faculty and University regulations.

## **Assessment**

The assessment of the MA dissertation is based on the following criteria, in accordance with the learning outcomes specified in the Teaching and Examination Regulations (OER) Part B (numbers added).

Knowledge and Understanding:

- evidence of advanced knowledge and understanding of the material (1, 15);
- advanced contextual knowledge and understanding (3);
- knowledge of critical and theoretical approaches (2).

Argument and Analysis:

- the ability to form an interesting and persuasive argument or to produce a critical edition or to answer a research question using an appropriate research methodology (4,9);
- the ability to work on a specialist topic in depth and with some originality (6);
- the deployment of relevant theoretical language and analysis (literary, book-historical, linguistic, statistical etc.) (19, 24);
- critical engagement with the work of others (8, 10);
- the analysis and synthesis of ideas (7).

Research:

- evidence that the student has surveyed previous work in the field (15);
- the ability to search for and evaluate sources (6, 21);
- use of up-to-date sources (13);
- bibliographical skills (11);
- independent learning (e.g. choosing the topic, completing on time) (14).

Communication:

- the ability to write in clear, well-structured English (19, 24);
- the ability to communicate key information about their topic in a manner appropriate to specialist and non-specialist audiences (11);
- academic presentation (e.g. correct use of an academic stylesheet) (11).

Grading is on the usual 1-10 scale. The minimum passing grade for dissertations is 6.0. Grades will be recorded to one decimal place (e.g. 6.5, 7.0).

The grade for the accepted final dissertation is decided between the supervisor and the second reader. The assessment and grade will be explained clearly to the student, in the form of an oral or written report. A formal assessment report with a detailed justification of the grade is sent to the secretariat of the department. The exam slip is dated on the final submission date of the dissertation.

After a student has received his or her grade s/he will have to submit a copy to the electronic depository in the RUG library. If the grade is 8.0 or higher this document can be made public with the agreement of the student and supervisor.

Publication of all or part of the dissertation can only take place with the mutual consent of the student and the supervisor.

## **Dissertations in the WEM or English Literature and Culture Programmes (OTL, MLK)**

These are instructions specifically for meeting the requirements of the MA dissertation in the Literature or WEM programmes. It is a student's responsibility to read this document carefully and to ask questions about anything that is unclear.

### ***Responsibilities***

A supervisor will give you clear and useful advice about your work, but this does not mean that you are required to follow it. The emphasis in the MA is on independent learning and although it is always a good idea to heed the supervisor's suggestions carefully, the final choices and responsibility are yours. A supervisor is there to help you to build on your ideas and not simply to enforce his/her own. A supervisor does not guarantee that your work will pass. It is not attendance at every meeting that assures you of a sufficient grade, but the degree to which you work with feedback and advice independently and competently.

### ***The topic***

The dissertation must be on a topic related to your MA programme. You must choose this topic yourself, but you are encouraged to discuss it with any staff members who you think might be helpful. The choice of dissertation topic must in part be determined by the availability of supervisors and their expertise. Staff members in the literature and culture sections believe that the student's own choice of topic is a very important part of the procedure. To help students choose a topic area, a list of suggestions is posted on Nestor. You must avoid writing on a topic that overlaps significantly with work you have written previously in this or another university (e.g. a Proficiency essay or your BA Dissertation), but you are encouraged to build on topics that you have studied previously.

The dissertation you plan must be feasible with the time and resources you have. As much scope as possible will be allowed, but if no suitable supervisor can be found for your topic, if there are few available sources in the library, or if it would clearly require more than a semester to complete, a different topic must be chosen. The dissertation must be of MA standard. It is important to remember this if you intend to write about aspects of culture that you have never written on before (e.g. art, music, film, empirical studies). We advise you to keep to topics of which you already have degree-level knowledge.

### ***WEM dissertations***

Dissertations in the Writing, Editing and Mediating MA should reflect the nature of the WEM courses. The choice of topic must in part be determined by the availability of supervisors and their expertise, but all topics will be related to writing, editing, translating and publishing texts. Possible subject areas are: English literature in social contexts, editorial scholarship; bibliography. Topics include:

- the function of literary works in their social contexts;
- an edition of a text;
- a theoretical reflection on an aspect of the history of the methods used in writing, editing, translating and mediating texts;



- an examination of the ways in which literary texts are mediated to a particular social group or groups (e.g. reading groups, book-reviews, school syllabi, censorship);
- any aspect of Book History;
- institutions and practices associated with literary texts (e.g. libraries, copyright, literary prizes);
- ways of disseminating texts involving historical or modern technologies (e.g. internet platforms, e-books).

### ***Literature dissertations***

The department can supervise a broad range of literature dissertations dealing with texts written on topics from Old English, Middle English, Early Modern, and Modern literature. Dissertations can focus on literatures written in English from various parts of the world, including, for example, American and African writing. Although some dissertations may refer to literature in languages other than English, especially works that have been influential in English literatures, this cannot be a major part of the dissertation. Dissertations dealing with recent authors, canonical authors, popular authors and lesser-known works are equally welcome where appropriate supervision is available.

### ***Style***

The style of the Master dissertation is to be clear, precise and relatively formal (e.g. no sexist use of language; no colloquialisms such as “a lot of”; do not use “you” or “the reader” unless these entities are specified). In using a source reference, you must take care that you do not mix the ideas of your source and your own ideas. For instance, to start a statement and change it halfway into a quotation must be avoided by clearly acknowledging when you are quoting a source.

If you disagree with a critic’s statement, you should express your disagreement, but do support your argument carefully. It is a sign of independent thinking to engage critically with established opinion, but remember that you are an MA student and speak from a necessarily limited knowledge of the subject.

The references and Works Cited/Bibliography must conform to the MLA style sheet, unless your supervisor instructs you otherwise.

### ***Organization of your dissertation***

In the introduction (note that an introduction is not a numbered section/chapter) you should introduce your dissertation’s central elements. These are: your dissertation’s subject area, your topic, primary works and authors, your research questions and/or thesis statement, and your methodology or theoretical framework. There is no need to start your introduction with broad generalizations; it is better to start with a clear focus on your topic and its context. Bear in mind that you write an introduction from the perspective of having finished the dissertation. For example, do not write a phrase like “I intend to explore” or “I hope to conclude” but instead “I explore” or “I conclude.” You are encouraged to end the introduction with a short overview of each chapter and a sentence stating its main argument.

The main or body text is divided into three or four numbered chapters. Chapters must be coherent and unified. You may present the content of each chapter in an introductory summary at the start of the chapter, but such signposting is not necessary if you present adequate transitions between the chapters and within the chapters.

The first chapter usually presents the background to the dissertation, drawing the literary, theoretical, critical and/or historical context necessary to the following analyses. This chapter should provide detailed explanations of the specific terminology and conceptual framework that you will be using in the next chapters. While you have introduced the methodology and context in the introduction, this chapter will go into far more detail, but will also provide links with the chapters to come in order to ensure the dissertation's overall cohesion. The other body chapters will present your analyses, discussions and interpretations of your primary texts, in the service of answering your central research questions or arguing your central thesis statement, and with competent critical and cultural contextualization.

The conclusion brings together your findings, main arguments and preliminary conclusions. In writing the conclusion, it is usually advisable to start with a short recapitulation of your research questions or preliminary thesis statement. This allows you to make a smooth transition to your dissertation's findings (insights, results) and to the conclusions to be drawn from them. The function of a conclusion is not to summarize the preceding chapters, but to present the major points made in the chapters in order to compare and contrast them, and draw final conclusions from them.

In referring to previous chapters, you may use a phrase like "as I have demonstrated in Chapter Two" to avoid having to repeat details of your argumentation. Please note that this is not the same as the phrase "as I mentioned before," which you had better not use at any stage. Most students (and academics in general) find writing conclusions very difficult. We strongly advise you to use the phrase "I conclude" several times in the conclusion, as this helps you move away from the tendency to summarize and prompts you to actually formulate a conclusion. You may, if you wish, write a paragraph in which you offer suggestions for further research, but this is not required. Likewise, you may add a few personal or speculative comments in a final paragraph, which do not belong in the main text of the conclusion.

## Dissertations in Linguistics (MTK)

Students of the Educational MA in English may want to choose a topic from the area of linguistics. These are further guidelines for meeting the requirements of the MA dissertation in the English Linguistics section (MTK). It is the student's responsibility to read this document carefully and to ask any questions about things that are unclear. The section as a whole agrees to accept dissertation topics, sets the deadlines, and discusses changes of procedure. Members of staff do not formally accept students for supervision without consultation with the section's coordinator.

### *The topic*

The dissertation must be on a topic related to English Language or Linguistics, or the development of English as a first or second language. You must choose this topic yourself, but you are encouraged to discuss it with any staff members who you think might be helpful. You must avoid writing on a topic that overlaps significantly with work you have written previously in this or another university (e.g. a Proficiency essay or your BA Dissertation), but you are encouraged to build on topics that you have studied previously or that you encountered in earlier modules. Indeed, to ensure the MA standard of the dissertation, the dissertation topic should logically follow from (MA and BA) courses you have attended.

The dissertation you plan must be feasible with the time and resources you have. As much scope as possible will be allowed, but if no suitable supervisor can be found for your topic, if there are few available sources or if the dissertation would clearly require more than a semester to complete, a different topic must be chosen.

### *Style*

The style of the Master dissertation is to be clear, precise and relatively formal. All the rules you have learned in the BA and MA writing courses apply (e.g. no sexist use of language; no colloquialisms such as "a lot of"; do not use "you" or "the reader" unless these entities are specified). In using a source reference, you must take care that you do not mix the ideas of your source and your own ideas. In the MTK section we expect you to use the APA referencing style. Use it consistently from the very first drafts and do not leave it as a later concern. To prevent errors in your bibliography and the documentation in your text, you are advised to use reference management software (RefWorks).

### *Organisation of a linguistics dissertation*

In the introduction (Chapter 1) you introduce your subject area, your topic, your research questions and/or thesis statement, and your methodology or theoretical framework. The relevance of the topic to its wider context must become clear from your introduction. Imagine that you are writing for a reader who wants to know *what* the thesis intends to do and *how* it intends to do it, and who wants to get a sense of *why* you have chosen this specific topic, approach and research method. The research question must be explicitly mentioned in the introduction. Usually, the introduction ends with a brief overview of the rest of the dissertation.

The main or body text is divided into chapters, which are normally subdivided into numbered sections. Chapters must be coherent and unified. You may present the content of

each chapter in an introductory summary at the start of the chapter, but this is not a requirement. Such signposting is not necessary if you present adequate transitions between the chapters and within the chapters.

The second chapter, following the introduction, usually presents the background to the dissertation. It presents the theoretical framework and the critical and/or historical context necessary to the analysis of the following chapters. Make sure that you present a logical line of argumentation, and that your own ideas are clearly distinguishable from the ideas you cite from secondary sources. Use this chapter also for a detailed explanation of the specific terminology and conceptual framework that you will be using in the next chapters. When a dissertation involves several areas of study, it may be necessary to split up the background into two chapters. The background chapter should end with a *statement of purpose*, in which you summarize the main findings from the literature and link this to your research question(s).

The third chapter presents your research findings and interpretations. In empirical studies, this Method chapter has a fixed order of presentation, consisting of

a. An introduction to the methodology

This section describes precisely what method was used to investigate your research question. First, provide a general sketch of your research design (dependent and independent variables) and gives a rationale for the operationalisation of the constructs used.

b. Participants

This section contains all information on your participants and subject groups. How many participants were there in total, how many in each group (if necessary, you could provide subjects table(s) here, showing the distribution of subjects over the test conditions, etc.). Who were the participants? When and where were they investigated? Provide any additional information that is relevant (age, sex, school level, nationality, native language background, level of proficiency in second language, socio-economic status, etc.). However, only include information that you think is relevant for your study. Also include information on how the participants were selected (random groups or naturally occurring groups, etc.). Explain your choices.

c. Materials

This section gives a detailed description of the test forms, teaching materials, questionnaires, rating scales, etc. Examples of test forms etc. should be included in an appendix. Refer to this appendix in this section. Any information on the type and range of scales, method of scoring, as well as reliability and validity of test scores should be included here. This section should particularly describe the nature and scoring of the dependent variable(s).

d. Procedures

This section should describe how the materials were used. What were the subjects required to do in the experiment? What were the conditions under which the tests etc. were taken? Was that the same for all subjects? How much time did the experiment

take? Describe in detail how the materials were administered and scored. Also report on mortality (drop-outs) and other problems in administering and scoring the tests.

e. Design and Analyses

This section may vary as a function of the nature of your study. For qualitative investigations, the purpose of this section is to describe precisely how the data were arranged and analysed in the study. As from this stage (until the discussion –g), you should no longer refer to the constructs of your study, but of the specific variables! Report on the specific role of each variable (within-subjects / between subjects; pre-test / post-test) and the number of levels of each independent variable. Specify which statistics were used to analyse the results and motivate the choice of the statistics. Formulate specific statistical hypotheses and choose the  $\alpha$  decision level.

f. Results

In this section, you should provide the results of the analyses described in earlier. The starting point should be the statistical tests: state whether the differences tested were significant and provide all statistical detail required (the outcome of the statistic, the degrees of freedom and the level of significance ( $p$ )). For outcomes that appear to be significant, you can provide tables and graphs representing group means, interactions, etc. Do not show differences that are not significant; for these results it is sufficient to say that “the difference was not significant at  $p < \dots$ ” Limit the report of the results to the ones that are relevant to your hypotheses. Do not include any interpretation or discussion in this section; just give the outcomes (so do not say: “Unfortunately, the differences appeared not to be significant”). Use the conventional way of reporting on statistical analyses, like “an independent samples t-test demonstrated that the difference between the control group ( $M=34$ ;  $SD=4.1$ ) and the experimental group ( $M=21$ ;  $SD=3.2$ ) turned out to be significant ( $t[54]=2.6$ ;  $p=0.015$ ).

Illustrate your results using tables and graphs. Only include figures of results that turned out to be significant. Tables showing descriptive statistics must not be copied directly from SPSS. All tables and graphs should come with clear and full captions. Insert the captions below the figures and above the tables.

If your design is complex or if you want to investigate many different relations, it may be useful to make sub-divisions with subheadings and report on each analysis separately.

g. Discussion

In this section, the results are interpreted and “translated” to the hypothesis/es formulated previously (in 2.1). Do not use technical terms and statistics in this section. Try to account for the results found. Address the hypotheses in the same order as presented in the Results section.

The final chapter (Conclusion) brings together your findings, main arguments and preliminary conclusions. Present clearly what aspects of the essay’s argument and analysis are most significant in supporting the initial thesis statement or answering the research question(s). You are advised to discuss the aspects that have proven particularly innovative

and insightful and to distinguish these from other, more traditional or less useful aspects. Try to indicate as clearly as possible the relevance of your findings to the wider subject area. You may, if you wish, offer suggestions for further research, but this is not required. Likewise, you may add here a few personal or speculative comments which do not belong in the main line of argumentation.

## **Preliminary Dissertation Proposal (Required Document 1)**

*Copy this page, fill it out and email it to the MA Co-ordinator. State your **last name** in the subject heading of the email (e.g. Prel. proposal Smith)*

This proposal is only a preliminary sketch of your work and it does not bind you in any way. If you have more than one idea, fill out more than one section below (or add sections yourself). If you have no concrete thesis statement yet, that is perfectly fine. What is not acceptable is to hand in a nearly blank sheet, or a sheet that shows you have no ideas. Having some idea of what you might like to work on is a prerequisite for the course.

### **Student's name, email address and MA programme:**

Name:

Email address:

MA Programme:

### **Possible supervisor (make a suggestion if you wish):**

**Potential delays:** Are you doing an internship? Do you expect any delays? If these questions apply, please answer them fully. Consult the information above on the hours required to write a dissertation.

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### **IDEA 1**

1. Outline of your ideas for your main thesis statement/argument:
2. What primary texts are you thinking of using?
3. Have you perhaps already selected central secondary sources?
4. What methodologies or theoretical approaches do you think might be helpful (e.g. feminism, post-colonialism, close reading, historicist reading)?

### **IDEA 2**

1. Outline of your ideas for your main thesis statement/argument:
2. What primary texts are you thinking of using?
3. Have you perhaps already selected central secondary sources?
4. What methodologies or theoretical approaches do you think might be helpful?

## Dissertation Proposal (Required Document 2)

Use this form for a revised dissertation proposal to be drawn up following the consultation with your supervisor. This is still only a proposal of the work you plan to do and you may make changes to your plan during the writing process.

**Student's name:**

**MA programme**

**Supervisor:**

**Topic:**

### *1. Thesis statement or research question(s)*

Whether you use a thesis statement or a research question largely depends on the type of work you are going to carry out. A research question can be expected in an (exploratory) empirical study, but for most of the other types of studies, a thesis statement is most suitable. Remember that the thesis or the research question stated in this proposal is tentative and may well be adjusted in the course of the writing process.

### *2. Framework*

Here, present a reflection of the secondary literature you have read. How does your dissertation relate to previous work that has been done in this area? Try to explain what you plan to contribute to this field.

### *3. Research method(s)*

Here explain what methodology you are going to use in arguing and supporting your thesis statement or in answering the research question(s). What are the theoretical assumptions underlying your study?

### *4. Outline of the contents*

Which chapters and sections are you planning to include in your dissertation? Provide a brief outline that can be used as a starting point for your work, and add a rough indication of each chapter's length.

### *5. Annotated bibliography*

Include an annotated bibliography of all the references that you have read so far, and list some of the books and articles which you plan to use. This list should be in the format your supervisor prescribes. For OTL and MLK, the usual format is the MLA format; for MTK, this is the APA format.

### *6. Timetable*

In consultation with your supervisor, deadlines will be set for finishing different stages of the writing process. If applicable, include a note indicating predictable delays (e.g. due to internships).