



INSTITUTE
— FOR —
PASTORAL
LEADERSHIP

Master of Arts in Pastoral Studies
Thesis Project Handbook

2019-2020

Contents

I. Introduction	3
II. Project Proposal	3
Sources for the Pastoral Situation	3
Project Proposal Format	3
Submitting your Proposal	4
III. Writing Your Thesis Project	4
Style and Formatting	4
Formatting Paragraphs	4
III. Elements of the Thesis Project.....	5
Title Page	5
Text	5
Sections of the Thesis Paper	5
Introduction	5
Section I.....	5
Section II.....	6
Conclusion.....	6
Footnotes.....	6
Bibliography.....	6
APPENDIX.....	7
Appendix 1: Proposal Format	7
Appendix 2: Title Page	8
Appendix 3: Literature Review of Sources	9

I. Introduction

The Master of Arts in Pastoral Studies Degree is completed with a substantial thesis written by the student. The thesis is a requirement for the degree. The expectation of the Institute for Pastoral Studies of the University of Saint Mary of the Lake is that, by completion of a Masters-level thesis, the student demonstrates his or her ability to apply the theological knowledge received over the course of study to an applied pastoral situation in a way that is consistent with Church teaching while, at the same, pastorally responsive to the particular context.

II. Project Proposal

The first step in preparing to write your thesis is to identify the pastoral situation/experience you intend to examine in your thesis process. You are looking to demonstrate the intersection between theology, pastoral situations and pastoral practice. Use the same writing guidelines for the project proposal as those that guide the formatting of the thesis itself.

Sources for the Pastoral Situation

You may draw your pastoral situation, encounter, or experience from any of these areas:

- Pastoral Care
- Spiritual engagement
- An aspect of parish life and ministry
- An experience in liturgy and/or Sacrament
- A Social Justice Teaching
- An experience from the Health Care field

Project Proposal Format

The project proposal consists of three sections:

1. The precise experience, encounter, or situation you intend to make the focus of your thesis project.
2. A thesis statement that indicates the pastoral concern you will address in the paper and how you intend to address the concern. This statement should be in the form of a 3-5 sentence paragraph.
3. An annotated bibliography that lists the resources you intend to use. An annotated bibliography gives a one paragraph summary of the source with a sentence at the end as to why you consider it an important source for your topic. *(See Appendix 3 for information regarding sources.)*
 - a. You need at least seven key sources; four of these need to be sources from Catholic authors/sources. Your principal sources should be academic sources rather than popular or devotional sources or sites. The purpose of

the annotation is to inform the reader of the relevance, accuracy, and quality of the sources cited.

The subject areas would include:

- Catholic Scripture
- Catholic theology
- Spirituality
- History
- Ethics and Morality
- Social Teachings
- Cultural, Social and Human Sciences

Submitting your Proposal

You will submit your proposal to the Director of the MAPS degree program or to his/her delegate/teacher of record. The format should be as indicated in Appendix 1 of this document. It will be reviewed by one or more members of the Institute staff or faculty. You will be notified within a month of turning it in as to whether it is accepted, accepted with modifications or not accepted.

III. Writing Your Thesis Project

Style and Formatting

- Follow the instructions in the *USML Writers Manual* provided by the Writing Center of USML <https://library.usml.edu/c.php?g=874966&p=6282533>
- Use Turabian, *A Manual for Writers of Term Papers, Thesis, and Dissertations* for guidance in areas not covered by the *USML Writer's Manual* or this document. You will find Turabian on Amazon as well as in the USML Library.
- Margins should be 1" all around the page
- Double space text in a uniform manner; use 12 pt. font (*Times New Roman* or *Segue UI*)
- Follow the *USML Writers Manual* for proper formatting of quotations from texts and/or Scripture
- Page numbering should be in Arabic numerals, on the lower center of the page except for the title page

Formatting Paragraphs

Indent the first line of each paragraph. Do not separate paragraphs with additional space. Print on only one side of the paper using portrait orientation. Only left justify the text.

A paragraph consists of three sections: a topic sentence, a sentence(s) that expands the topic, and a final sentence(s) that summarizes the topic and points toward the next

paragraph. Be sure to close a paragraph with a sentence that transitions the reader into the next paragraph.

Write your paper for a reader who is not familiar with the topic; do not write it for the teacher or director of the program. By writing it for someone whom you know is without understanding of your topic, you will need to be more specific in your language.

Lastly, each section should end with a transition that summarizes what you did in that section and informs the reader as to what you intend to do in the next section of the paper.

III. Elements of the Thesis Project

Title Page

- Follow the example given in appendix 2 of this document; the title page must follow it exactly
- Use your proper name on the title page without any job titles or organizational affiliations
- The date on the title page is the month and year in which you intend to graduate

Text

- Center the text of the label for each section of your paper (Introduction, Section I)
- Use the *USML Writers Manual* for the proper formatting of the text body

Sections of the Thesis Paper

Introduction

Lay out your thesis statement in the introduction to your thesis paper. State your purpose and the scope of the thesis project, why you chose this topic and what you believe it will add to your understanding of pastoral ministry. This section should be three-five paragraphs in length.

Section I

Articulate your vocational and ministerial identity; how you have grown through the LEM and MAPS programs and how the programs have prepared you to be an ecclesial minister in today's world.

Identify your own operational theology; your particular views of God, Jesus, the Holy Spirit, the Church, Salvation and Redemption. This section should be between four and six paragraphs.

Section II

This is the major section of your paper and the longest. State your ministerial focus or situation. Be specific. Offer background information that is needed for context.

Describe any challenges that may influence or impede this ministry. There are three subsections to this second section:

1. Address the pastoral situation through the wisdom of the Great Tradition using at least 3 Catholic academic areas, i.e. Scripture, Doctrine, Morality, etc. Include your understanding of evangelization and conversion stages as they apply.
2. Next, look at the wisdom that comes from the social and human sciences as well as the culture as they pertain to this pastoral situation. Indicate how they may help or hinder pastoral care.
3. After reflection on the first two sections, articulate the two insights you came to in response to the pastoral situation. Then explain the process as to how you arrived at those responses.

Conclusion

Revisit your thesis statement and summarize how you achieved what you set out to do in the paper. Tie together the various sections into this conclusion. This section is usually two to four paragraphs in length.

Footnotes

- All citations must be recorded as footnotes in your paper (*in Word, use the "References" tab to help you with inserting footnotes.*)
- Each footnote is numbered in consecutive order throughout the paper
- Each footnote is to be indented five spaces – see *USML Writers Manual* – and double space between footnotes
- Use 10pt font for footnotes

Bibliography

The bibliography is always the last section of the thesis project. Format your bibliography according to the guidelines in the *USML Writer's Manual* and Turabian. Please note that the format for ecclesiastical documents is different than that for other texts. You may find the "Manage Sources" tab under "references" tab in Word to be very helpful. However, it will not automatically create your bibliography in whole according to Turabian and the *USML Writers Manual*.

APPENDIX

Appendix 1: Proposal Format

Student Name
MAPS Capstone Project Proposal
Date Submitted

I. The Ministry Experience

You state the situation or issue you will address. Then you state the approach you will take regarding the situation i.e. pastoral, spiritual, ecclesiological, etc.

II. Thesis Statement

Create a thesis statement that lays out the focus of the project and explains why it is important in terms of Catholic Pastoral Ministry.

III. Annotated Bibliography

Identify no less than seven sources for your project. (4 sources need to be from the Catholic Tradition.) These should be academic sources or ecclesiastical documents. After citation listed, give a brief summary and sentence or two on why it is an important source for your topic. This is about 1 paragraph in length.

Appendix 2: Title Page

UNIVERSITY OF SAINT MARY OF THE LAKE

TITLE OF THESIS

A THESIS SUBMITTED TO
THE INSTITUTE FOR PASTORAL LEADERSHIP
IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS
FOR THE DEGREE OF
MASTER OF ARTS IN PASTORAL STUDIES

BY

Name of Student

MUNDELEIN, ILLINOIS

Date

Appendix 3: Literature Review of Sources

From The USML Scholar's Manual – page 19 -
https://library.usml.edu/ld.php?content_id=50021798

The Literature Review

To develop your proposal, you will begin with a review of the literature. The literature review gives you a comprehensive picture of the status questions. You may have a general idea of your topic, but the very act of reading the relevant literature will help you refine it, narrow it and, most importantly, determine if your idea is indeed original. Additionally, you will determine if there is actually available resource material necessary to reach your goal.

Reading the literature helps fill in the other points of the outline. Perhaps you will find a gap in the secondary literature that your thesis could fill. Or you may have found a slightly different way of looking at a problem. Or you might just be organizing material that has never been brought together before. Either way, this is how you will discover your original contribution, which tells the reader why your (dissertation) thesis is important.

*From Mr. Tom Dougherty, **Mundelein Writing Center**, in an email 12.12.2019*