

Comprehensive Study Option: Professional Paper Guidelines & Timetable

1. Students considering the Comprehensive Study (Non-Thesis) Option should:

- > Regularly consult with the M.A. advisor regarding **course work** to be applied toward the M.A. Degree
- > Inform M.A. advisor early in the semester on the topics of their **three professional research papers** (in at least two sub-fields) to be submitted in lieu of a thesis, and indicate the professors working with them on the papers.
- > Students are encouraged to complete these professional papers over the course of two or more semesters rather than one.

2. A formal professional paper, similar to one appropriate for an academic journal, normally addresses a single, focused topic. The length of each paper should be **@25 pages (or 6500 words in Times or Century, 12 point font)**, including footnotes and a selected bibliography. Please put word count at the end of text page. Students should consult Chicago - Turabian format.

3. These three professional papers may be the product of research work from a seminar, a class, or an independent study project taken for graduate credit. *Cautionary note:* be aware that an “A” paper from a graduate seminar or course does not automatically make it a professional paper. In consultation with their professor, students are typically required to do further editing, research, and, in some cases, extensive revisions of a paper originally submitted to satisfy the course requirements. This means that students should submit completed drafts of any remaining professional papers **no later than the 6th week** of their **final semester**, so as to give themselves time to make any necessary revisions. Students who fail to meet the fall or spring semester graduate school deadline for completing the MA degree requirements will need to sign up for three credits in the summer or following semester to complete their degree. To insure that students meet their graduation deadline, they should work out a timeline for submitting drafts with each of the professors who they will be working with them on their professional papers. Once a timeline has been agreed upon, students will receive comments on their professional paper drafts from faculty within two to three weeks after having submitted them. (Student should also keep in mind that faculty are not always available during the summer.) Students must also submit drafts of each paper abstract (see reverse side for format) to their professors **no later than the 12th week** of the final semester. All three papers to be submitted must be based upon work done in the Political Science Department.

4. The heading format for each paper should be as follows:

John Smith
Fall 2006
Political Theory
Prof. Mary Jones

JUSTICE AS FAIRNESS AND/OR NEUTRALITY?: A CRITICAL STUDY OF JOHN RAWL’S
POLITICS

5. The final copy of all three papers (covering at least two subfields) will be submitted to the Department on a disk or email attachment as one file under the student’s last name, first name (in WordPerfect or Word) for transfer to a Department computer file. The “**abstract sheet**” for the three professional papers must be submitted with papers (*see reverse side of this sheet for format*). A hard copy of the abstract sheet (on 20% cotton, acid-free paper) will be retained in the Department Office, and must be signed by each of the supervising instructors and submitted to the M.A. advisor to indicate faculty approval of each research paper.

ABSTRACT FORMAT SAMPLE
(electronic and hard copy)

Please use Times or Century; 12 pt font

Smith, John Q., M.A., May, 20XX

Political Science

Missoula County Voting Behavior (26 pp.)

Director: Mary Jones (Political Science) M. Jones

Missoula County voting behavior is characterized by a long history of
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The United Nations and United States Foreign Policy (27 pp.)

Director: John Brown (Political Science) J. R. Brown

Since 1945, the United Nations and United States foreign policy have
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The Political Philosophy of Justice Clarence Thomas and the Case of Smith v. Jones (22 pp.)

Director: Sally Brown (History) S. Brown

U.S. Supreme Court Justice Clarence Thomas has always believed that
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XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX.

- each abstract **50 to 100** words
- notice 2 space indentation for paragraphs
- 1 copy of abstract on CD or email (WordPerfect or Word) as a *cover sheet to three research papers* submitted for Comprehensive Study Option; *1 hard copy of abstract* (cotton paper), signed as shown above by each instructor approving student's research paper
- the electronic copy of the abstract page and three papers (as one file under the student's last name, first name) will be transferred to a Department computer file for storage; the hard copy of the abstract page will be retained in the Department Office.