

**ENGLISH MA THESIS/PROJECT GUIDELINES  
(ENGLISH 6720)**

1. In addition to 10 courses (30 units), 8 of which must fulfil Domain requirements, you will need to complete a **thesis/project (6720)** OR the comp exam (6710) to gain your MA degree. This means you need 33 units minimum for an English MA.

2. **Thesis committee.** You will need a **three-professor committee**, with one professor as your **committee chair**. *The committee chair will likely be the professor whose specialization is closest to your topic, and he/she/they will guide you through to graduation.*

3. **Prospectus requirement.** *You must have a prospectus for your thesis/project approved by all three members of your committee no later than the semester before you plan on graduating. Do not enroll in English 6720 until the semester after your prospectus has been approved.* Once you can show your complete prospectus (with a complete signature page) to the English graduate program director, he/she/they will alert the English Department administrative coordinator to generate an Independent Study 6720 for you with your thesis chair, and your chair thereafter is your advisor for the entire thesis/project graduation process. (See sample prospectuses on our website.)

4. **English 6720** is a placeholder for your Thesis/Project **Independent Study** (your research and writing). Once your thesis/project has been \*accepted by your committee members, and you have \*defended it (oral defense) and \*submitted it to the library, you will receive a grade of CR in 6720. *Familiarize yourself with the rules for library submission so that you do not miss the deadline and have your graduation delayed.* **Oral Defense requirement.** Once all three committee members agree that your thesis/project meets requirements and is complete, you must defend your work. In our department, this is usually done in a graduate course: you prepare a presentation of about 20 minutes, explaining what you did and your conclusions. You may invite friends and family, and the defense will be announced to all graduate students and department faculty UNLESS you wish to defend strictly in front of your committee members or in a particular graduate course with no additional visitors apart from your committee members. Alert your chair of your preferences.

5. Enroll in **English 7000** through Open University in fall/spring terms when you are *out of coursework* but still working on your thesis/project. This will keep you active as a CSUB student.

6. **Copies of your prospectus and thesis/project must be retained in the department records;** this is mandated by the state. Please provide your chair with a copy when you submit your thesis to the library; he/she/they will upload it to the appropriate Box file.

**TIPS**

*Students have turned in entire drafts of theses to chairs only to find out that they must go back to the drawing board from the very beginning. So, be sure to submit sections of your thesis/project as you write them (in other words, when you finish your introduction, send it along. When you finish a chapter, send it along. Etc.).*

*Please keep in mind that faculty are on a ten-month contract and expected to do their own research and writing over the summer break; in other words, they might not be able to offer feedback on work submitted less than two weeks before the end of the academic year.*

*Questions about thesis/project formatting or requirements? Consult the English Dept website or ask your thesis committee chair. Need help forming a committee and finding a chair? Consult with the graduate program director. (See sample theses and projects on our website.)*