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Your Topic

FINDING A TOPIC

It is never too early to start thinking about a topic. Choose a topic that will hold your enthusiasm - something you would be excited to work on for a full year and that you feel passionate about. Think about ideas that interest you, themes that keep re-emerging in your papers and projects. Remember the thesis can be as interdisciplinary as Plan II is, so you can put together ideas and topics that aren’t necessarily linked in traditional ways. Talk with your professors about subjects that interest you. If you already know which professor you would like to work with, go brainstorm with him or her. The thesis should be a capstone experience, the culmination of your four (or so!) years in Plan II, so consider it an opportunity to create something that has intellectual and personal meaning to you.

Ask your friends and professors for ideas. Theses from the previous three years are available in the Plan II student computer lab and in the Joynes Reading Room in CRD 007. We have a set of model theses on special display, because we think they are good examples to follow.

Do not forget about the wonderful resources at libraries such as the Ransom Humanities Research Center, the Texas History Center, the LBJ Library, and the Benson Latin American Collection. Also, keep in mind the fine collections of art now available in the Blanton Museum of Art. These materials provide subjects for unique theses, and the librarians and curators of the collections are eager to help students make use of them.
BACKGROUND AND EXPERIENCE IN YOUR TOPIC

You must have some background in your topic. The Associate Director will review your thesis proposal and suggest modifications if she feels you lack experience in the suggested area of study. It is impossible to define a topic unless you already know something about it. You do not need to be a specialist in the area, but you will have to show us that you have some general knowledge of the subject before the Associate Director approves your topic.

*If You Feel You are Wandering...*

We will be happy to help you define your topic or assist in finding a supervisor, especially if you do not put it off until the last minute. The Director, Associate Director, and Academic Advisers are available to aid you in your quest, and the Plan II library will also have copies of well-known guides to research and writing. Also, feel free to peruse the Joynes Reading Room.
HUMAN SUBJECT RESEARCH

Students working on a thesis that involves human subjects in any way (and this includes just interviewing peers on campus) must complete and submit to the Associate Director documentation and forms for approval from the university Institutional Review Board (IRB). Students must then wait for formal approval from the Office of Research Support and Compliance (ORSC) before they may begin their research.

Interviewing human subjects before you have received IRB approval could result in disciplinary proceedings by the Review Board for non-compliance, so be sure to submit your online application early in the semester. If you have questions as to whether you might need IRB approval for your research, contact Jean Germain at ORSC (jgermain@austin.utexas.edu, 232-2625). For more information, also visit the IRB website: http://www.utexas.edu/research/rsc/humanresearch/.

CREATIVE THESIS

Creative projects are especially demanding, so we try to make sure in advance that you know what you are doing. The Associate Director will only approve a creative thesis in a field you have done course work in. If you want to write a collection of poems or short stories for your thesis, be sure to take a creative writing course in that area—and preferably two—before the end of your junior year. Given the challenges of creation and revision, anyone considering a creative project must plan on doing a two-semester thesis. If you are considering writing a novel, we strongly recommend short stories instead. That way, advisers can give helpful criticism on the first story early in the year without interfering in the creative process.

We also require you to write a treatise and introduction or afterward to your creative project that explains the nature of your work and the influences on it. In the case of a performance, your writing should examine the artist who created the works you are presenting. The theoretical or analytical section of a creative thesis should be of the same intellectual caliber as any other Plan II thesis. While it does not have to be as long as a traditional two-semester project, it should demonstrate substantial engagement with a set of questions or problems addressed in the creative work. The written section should count for no less than 40% of the final grade for the creative thesis.
SCIENTIFIC & TECHNICAL THESES

Technical theses are those based on laboratory research. They must be accompanied by a treatise approximately ten to fifteen pages. You should describe the experiment in lay terms or describe the process and/or experience of creating your particular project. In all cases, you should write the introduction, conclusion, and abstract as if you were addressing the interdisciplinary board of a grant-giving agency and had to explain the significance of your project to a group of intelligent people who knew very little about your field.

Topics primarily based on laboratory research are generally not appropriate for a Plan II thesis. Students who want to pursue a lab-based thesis should plan to do so as a departmental honors thesis (see page 8). If a student is not eligible for departmental honors (and thus cannot write a departmental thesis), we recommend a Plan II thesis based on library research related to the field of interest.

TOPICS TO AVOID

Deadly Secrets: In general, your thesis (or any information in it) cannot be kept confidential. These are kept in the Plan II office and are available for other students or visitors to read. Only in very specific and unusual situations will the director give approval for keeping a thesis confidential.

Autobiography/Hagiography: The story of your life so far is not a good idea for a thesis — no matter how fascinating you’ve found it, your readers probably won’t and there are far more interesting topics than self-reflection. And as much as you love your mother/father/grandparents, etc., it is best to steer away from the stories of their lives as well. Finding the right degree of distance to write about family would take more time than you’ve got, so look for something a little less close to home.

Opinions: Left-wing or right, your opinions will not count as a thesis, no matter how eloquently they are expressed. If you wish to tackle a social issue, you will be expected to do research with an open mind. If you are not prepared to be surprised by the results you find, or if you are unwilling from the start to change your mind on the issue, pick another topic.

Raw Material: Plan II does not accept raw data or transcripts. If you plan a thesis in oral history, consult the Associate Director for guidelines.
Supervisors and Second Readers

FINDING A SUPERVISOR

A supervisor is typically a professor that has taught you before, but this is not a requirement. If you are having trouble finding a supervisor, consult the Associate Director, the Director, or an Academic Adviser. They know the faculty and can give good advice.

Feel free to meet with several professors and run your ideas past them. Even if they cannot advise you, they may point you in a helpful direction. Don’t dread this process. Finding a good adviser is like finding the perfect pair of shoes: it will be a comfortable fit, and the outcome will be attractive.

You may also want to look at past areas of research and advising professors on the thesis information page on the Plan II website. ([www.utexas/edu/cola/plana/advising/thesis/](http://www.utexas/edu/cola/plana/advising/thesis/))

THE ROLE OF THE SUPERVISOR

The supervisor is an adviser who guides your research, provides constructive criticism of your writing, and assigns your grades for the thesis course, in consultation with the second reader. If your supervisor judges your work to be an acceptable honors thesis, he or she will sign your title page.

You should meet with your thesis supervisor regularly, at least once every two weeks, to discuss your progress. Regular meetings and communication with your supervisor are essential for successful completion of your thesis. Thus, your primary supervisor MUST be someone who will be working on campus for the length of your project. Make sure that you and your supervisor understand what you expect from each other; we recommend that you put your expectations in writing at the start. Early in the process, your supervisor will offer suggestions, directions and advice to help you narrow down your topic to something you can cover well.

Make sure you hand in your drafts and meet all deadlines, which are published each academic year on the Plan II website.
THE SECOND READER

Second readers must be regular UT faculty members or recognized, established experts in the field, approved in advance by the Associate Director.

The second reader is an adviser who reads your thesis, gives you helpful comments, and signs your title page if he or she judges your work to be acceptable as an honors thesis. It is your responsibility to talk to your second reader and work out what you expect from each other. Be clear about dates: when drafts are due, how often you need to meet, etc. If your topic crosses fields, then the second reader’s expertise may complement that of your supervisor, and he or she might meet with you regularly throughout the semester(s). Moreover, if you are writing an interdisciplinary thesis, be sure that your work takes into account the scholarly practices of different fields. Scholars from different fields read theses with different expectations.

Your second reader must receive the thesis by the twelfth week of classes. Often, however, the second reader will want to see a rough draft earlier so that you can incorporate his or her comments into your final copy. For more information, see the schedule page at the back of this manual.

Finding a second reader is like finding a supervisor, only easier. Usually your supervisor will help you in your search. If not, follow the steps for finding a supervisor or ask us for advice.
WRITING A THESIS IN ANOTHER DEPARTMENT

If you have an additional major, you can graduate with special honors in that discipline by substituting a departmental honors thesis for your Plan II thesis. This option is strongly recommended for students interested in pursuing a graduate degree in a particular discipline. You may not complete both a departmental honors thesis course and the Plan II thesis course using the same thesis project.

Please make sure you fill out the Departmental Thesis form (available in the Plan II office and online) to request this substitution. You must also submit a typed, well-informed and well-written abstract describing your topic. The form is due in the Plan II Office on the 4th class day of the first semester you register for a thesis course. You are responsible for all other deadlines set by the department that oversees your thesis course.

Plan II places two conditions on the substitution of an honors thesis in another department for the Plan II thesis:

1. Submit a suitably printed and bound copy of your thesis to Plan II, following the guidelines outlined in Appendix 3 (if you do not have a second reader, you may omit that portion of the title page).

2. Participate in the thesis symposium.

See Page 10, “Registration,” for more information on this.

DEPARTMENTAL SPECIAL HONORS

If you complete a history major and write your thesis through History Honors, for example, you will graduate with special honors in history instead of Plan II. The same is true if you are completing two separate degrees. You may not, for instance, receive special honors in Plan II and special honors in Engineering. You are still eligible for University honors (honors, high honors, or highest honors), which is determined by your grade point average.
HOW TO REGISTER FOR THE THESIS

The registration forms for thesis have two parts. The first is due the semester before you plan to register for the thesis course. Once you have a general idea of what your topic will be, and you have an idea for a supervisor, complete part one of the Thesis registration form (available at the Plan II office and online) and arrange to meet with the Plan II Associate Director. Once the first part of the form is approved, you may register for the thesis course. NO LATE PROPOSALS WILL BE ACCEPTED. Missing the deadline could mean delaying your thesis and graduation by a semester.

The second part of the form is due on the **fourth class day** of the semester you are beginning the thesis course. On this part, you must be sure that your supervisor and second reader sign the form and that you attach a typed, well-informed and well-written abstract describing your topic. The abstract should be a full paragraph to one page in length. You may be asked to rewrite it if it is unclear, vague or too brief. Students commonly make the mistake of waiting until classes have begun to arrange meetings with their proposed supervisor and second reader. Since this is an incredibly hectic time of the semester, faculty may not always be available to meet with you before the deadline. DO NOT WAIT UNTIL THE LAST MINUTE! You will be dropped from the course if part two of the paperwork has not been submitted and approved by the deadline.

Students starting the second semester of the two-semester thesis can register themselves for TC 660HB online. Students who receive an incomplete in the first semester will be dropped from TC 660HB if they do not have a final grade submitted by the twelfth class day. There will be no late thesis registrations after the twelfth class day. This is a firm deadline.

**NOTE ABOUT SUMMER REGISTRATION:** Although it is possible to register for TC 660HA or B during the summer, we strongly advise against this and will counsel you to think of other timelines that will facilitate your project. Faculty are far less available to guide you over the summer, and the majority of students who attempt summer thesis work end up with incompletes, thus delaying their graduation plans.
THESIS SEMINAR MEETINGS

The thesis course includes three mandatory seminar meetings each semester (typically on the evening of the first Monday in September, October, November, February, March and April). Seminar meetings will assist you in staying on track with Plan II thesis deadlines and requirements, help prepare you for Thesis Symposium, and provide support and encouragement through connections with fellow students working on similar topics. Meeting times and locations will be emailed to you at the beginning of the semester as well as published online via the Plan II Thesis Seminar Blackboard organization. Seminar attendance is a required part of the thesis course; unexcused absences will result in a grade penalty for the semester (see page 14 for additional information on grading policies).

ONE-SEMESTER THESES

Approval to register in the one-semester thesis course, TC 359T, is extremely rare. The one-semester thesis option is approved on an individual basis and by petition with the Plan II Associate Director. Students should never put off their thesis until their final semester under the assumption that they will be approved to start a one-semester project. Circumstances that merit consideration for registration in TC 359T must be presented to the Plan II Associate Director ONE SEMESTER IN ADVANCE. NO LATE PROPOSALS WILL BE ACCEPTED. Students pursuing the Plan II major only and those doing creative theses are not eligible for the one-semester thesis option. Students who complete the one-semester thesis course are not eligible for special honors in Plan II (see page 15).

DEPARTMENTAL THESIS

Registration in a departmental honors thesis is controlled by the department office, thus you must meet their requirements for adding the course. For Plan II, you must submit the Plan II departmental thesis form by the fourth class day to notify us that you are taking this option. Because we require you to participate in Symposium, we need this form with an attached abstract. Students completing departmental theses are not required to attend the Plan II Thesis Seminar meetings, however attendance is recommended, particularly at the seminar meeting prior to Symposium.
Standards

REVISION, REVIEW, AND GRADING

Either your supervising professor or second reader may call for further revision to your final paper, even if doing so will delay your graduation. Be sure you know in advance what standards your professors expect you to follow. If your supervisor expects too much, let us help you resolve this before it is too late.

The Plan II office requires that you submit your thesis in a particular format. The Associate Director will review your thesis before your grade is submitted. If she determines that a thesis is below standards, she will hold back the grade for that thesis, pending a conference with the supervisor. The supervisor and second reader, however have the final say on both standards and grading. Like all work at UT, the full range of grades may be applied to senior theses.

VARIED SET OF STANDARDS

We cannot enforce a single set of standards on every thesis, as standards for both research and format vary from field to field. What follows is a set of guidelines that you should read before starting. If the thesis you plan to write does not conform to one of these standards, or if you have special reasons for seeking an exception, ask the Associate Director for approval, in writing.

SUBJECT

Although you may not know exactly what you are doing at the start, a finished thesis should have a well-defined problem or purpose clearly stated in the introduction. A research thesis should use primary material when it is available. A technical thesis may be written in the language of its field, but the abstract and the conclusion must be written for the intelligent lay-person. A creative thesis should have an introduction, afterward, or accompanying treatise that explains the rationale or gives background for the project.
METHODOLOGY

Your thesis should follow the rules of the discipline of your topic. For example, a psychology thesis should use one of the methods acceptable in psychology, while history and English theses should follow convention in use in those fields. There is more flexibility, however, for Plan II theses that are interdisciplinary. If you are writing a thesis that crosses disciplines, you, your supervisor, and your second reader should determine what methods you will use. It is your responsibility to make sure you communicate frequently with both your supervisor and second reader and understand their expectations.

CONCLUSION

Your thesis should have a conclusion. Creative theses accompanied by a treatise or introduction are an exception to this. No thesis will be accepted that is plainly unfinished. A thesis that breaks off after sixty pages without a conclusion is not acceptable.

LENGTH

Our guidelines are approximately 15,000 words (around 60 pages) for a two-semester thesis. These page limits are not arbitrary; they indicate the scope of a thesis project. A thesis that is 40 pages, no matter how concisely written, is almost certainly not dealing with a sufficiently substantial topic or is not dealing with such a topic in enough depth. However, this may vary with the nature of the thesis; creative writing projects tend to be longer, while technical theses (e.g., those reporting on experiments), and performance-related treatises are usually shorter. All are held up to the same intellectual standard, regardless of length.

CITATIONS

You must use notes that cite the sources of your information and give credit for ideas and phrases that are not your own. Footnotes, endnotes, and parenthetical notes are all acceptable, but you might consider the beauty of footnotes for longer citations. However, talk with your supervisor about their preferred method of citation. Whichever method you decide upon, form a lasting relationship. Consistency might be the hobgoblin of small minds, but it is the key to acceptable citations.
REFERENCES

In addition to your many citations, your thesis needs a list of works cited in a standard bibliographic form. If you think your thesis is an exception, please discuss with the Associate Director.

FORMAT

A thesis or treatise should meet the following requirements:

1. Neatly typed or laser-printed
2. Numbered pages
3. One-inch margins
4. Follow a manual of style that is in use in its field.
5. Proofread - a thesis with more than a few errors in spelling, grammar, or punctuation will not be accepted.
Grades

RANGE

A full range of grades may be given for a senior thesis from an A to an F. You are not guaranteed an A. An A thesis should be much better than an A term paper, but is not expected to be at the graduate level. If you turn in a thesis that is below average, you may prefer to accept a very low grade rather than take an incomplete and delay graduation while you rewrite it.

GUIDELINES FOR YOU AND YOUR SUPERVISOR

You should give your supervisor and second reader a full draft of the thesis by around mid-April for students finishing in the spring, or mid-November for students finishing in the fall. Students should make a reasonable attempt to revise as the supervisor suggests. In the process, you need to demonstrate that you faced, identified, and surmounted a problem in research or the creative process.

The thesis is worth a passing grade (D or better) when both the supervisor and second reader agree. Only those that meet the highest standards for honors work should receive an A.

If the thesis does not meet these requirements, the supervisor may assign an incomplete and allow the student to finish by a date convenient to the supervisor and second reader. Otherwise, it will be assigned an F. Students are entitled to an opportunity to fail.

The grade for the first semester of the two-semester thesis course should be based on the amount of research completed and the quality of the outline, which is due at the end of the first semester. For a creative thesis, the grade should be based on your complete first draft. Talk with your adviser early in the first semester about how much work he or she expects from you and when is is expected.

The grade assigned by your supervisor and second reader accounts for 75% of your final grade in the thesis course. The other 25% is based on meeting required deadlines, participation in the Thesis Seminar meetings and Thesis Symposium. Grading for this portion of the course is explained in the course syllabus as distributed in the first Thesis Seminar meeting each semester.
**FINAL GRADES AND UNFINISHED THESES**

All students must participate in the Plan II Thesis Symposium and will be graded on their presentations. Presentations are graded on the pass/fail basis, and those who fail will be given the opportunity to give a make-up presentation. The Director of Plan II therefore reserves the right to alter a final thesis grade on the basis of the student’s performance at the thesis symposium.

Students who submit the final bound copy after the deadlines assume the risk that their grades may not be posted in time for final grades or graduation.

Plan II strongly discourages incompletes, but we understand that sometimes students bite off more than they can chew in a semester. If you do not finish, or your thesis is judged unacceptable, you cannot graduate until the thesis is completed and approved.

If you do take an incomplete, you must agree on a new schedule with your supervisor. Tell the Academic Adviser what this schedule will be and when you plan to graduate. It is your responsibility to keep up with the deadlines set by the student division of Liberal Arts for students with incompletes and to keep in touch with your degree evaluator.

Be especially conscientious if you want to finish and graduate during the summer, since faculty members are often not on campus. Make sure that your supervisor and second reader have the time to work with you in completing the thesis and that there will be someone in the Plan II office to read and check your completed thesis in time for you to be certified for graduation. Check your email for deadlines.

**SPECIAL HONORS IN PLAN II**

Students who are seeking to graduate with “Special Honors in Plan II” must take and pass an oral exam covering the topics addressed in their theses. Special Honors in Plan II are conferred upon students whose work on the senior thesis is considered truly outstanding by both the supervisor and second reader. Hard work does not necessarily merit Special Honors, nor does the student’s own evaluation of the exceptional nature of his/her thesis; the decision to schedule a Special Honors oral exam must come from the thesis supervisor, in consultation with Plan II.

To be eligible for Special Honors, the student must complete TC 660H with a grade of “A” in both semesters, and must pass the oral exam. One-semester theses are not eligible. (Note: if the student’s final semester grades could conceivably raise the cumulative average to or above 3.5, then the student may
take the oral exam. “Special Honors” would then be contingent upon the final grade point average.) If you would like to be considered for Special Honors, speak with the Academic Adviser who will contact your thesis supervisor. Once the supervisor, second reader, and Plan II have approved, you may schedule an oral exam. The professors’ decisions are final.

Typically, the oral examination is a 60 to 90 minute oral defense. The oral exam is a meeting in which you discuss your thesis with both your readers. This is your last chance to get their feedback and is an opportunity for you to teach them something. Though informal, this is a special occasion marking the completion of your project. Your readers will ask you questions, and you may have questions for them. If your answers make it clear that you could not have written the thesis, or if your responses put your thesis in such a new light that your readers now think it should be re-written, you could fail the oral exam; however, this rarely happens.

A committee consisting of the thesis supervisor and the second reader administers the oral exam. It is the student’s responsibility to furnish the committee with a copy of the finished thesis in ample time for them to read it thoroughly before the exam.

The Special Honors form can be found on the Plan II website, and should be signed by the thesis supervisor and second reader at the time of the oral exam.

**MODEL THESIS**

Especially distinguished theses will be considered for model theses when nominated by the professor. Nominations should be sent to the Plan II Associate Director. Model thesis selections are made every spring semester. Those selected by the Associate Director will be recognized at the Plan II commencement ceremony and on the Plan II website.
Thesis Symposium

THE RUN DOWN

The purpose is to engage your audience on your subject. At the Thesis Symposium, your main goal is feedback. The better you engage your audience, the more willingly they will enter the discussion. And the more eager they are, the better feedback they will give you. Hooray, mission accomplished! In addition to feedback, the symposium is useful, because preparing a short speech will help you select the points that you most want to make prominent in your written thesis and you may hear questions that are new to you, that you want to answer in your written thesis. You may also come away with useful suggestions. So don’t dread the symposium!

CONTENT

Emphasize your main point or question that you think needs an answer—the main question that leads your research. After that, your main points concern either your method for exploring the question or your preliminary answer. Because it is difficult to make a number of points effectively even in a long lecture, try to limit yourself and stick to the highlights of your thesis.

For creative theses, your approach will be different, although you may still have points to make in order to interest your audience in the kind of work you are doing. You may decide to read from a story or set of poems, to show art slides, or even to introduce a short performance of a script. Those approaches are all acceptable.

PREPARATION

We recommend preparing an outline for your speech. Then, form a study group as you would for physics, and practice on each other or for chance comers. It’s best not to practice alone, because you cannot get used eyes staring at you.
In most cases, your presentation will better if you do not read. Good speakers give the impression of spontaneity. They don’t read, because reading rarely engages an audience. But having a written text or an outline can give you confidence, and you can refer to it if you feel lost. There is an exception for creative writers. Poets and fiction writers are expected to give readings.

Your presentation will probably be better if not memorized. You need to be prepared to make changes as you go, to adapt to earlier speakers, to adjust to the audience, and so on. It will feel more natural, and your audience will enjoy it more. And you need to be able to go on if your memory fails. However, this is not to say you should not run through your presentation a number of times.

**NUTS AND BOLTS OF YOUR PRESENTATION**

**Content:** Appeal to interests the audience already has. Tailor your content to their knowledge level. Bring out the most important point. (To do this, you need to know what that is.)

**Structure:** Narrative is engaging. When in doubt, tell a story to convey your message.

**Style:** Look them in the eye, be real, and speak clearly. Slow down. End each sentence with a strong and confident inflection (avoid the rising tone that indicates a question).

Pay attention to whether or not they are following you. If they you see eyes glazing over, go back and catch them. If they are slow to follow you, say less than you had planned. (That’s why you need to have framed your essential points, so you can jump to them.)

**Audience Turn-Offs:**

Do not look at the floor or the ceiling or out the window.

Don’t speak too fast or at too low a volume.

Don’t overload your audience with information.

Don’t read from a prepared text or from slides on the screen. (Chances are, they can read the slides without your help.)
Don’t worry about stage fright. This is not about you. You are not performing. Focus on your audience and connecting them to your message. Keep their needs in mind. What do they need in order to understand you well enough to give you feedback?

Make eye contact with one member of the audience and make believe you are talking to that one person. After a while, move on to someone in another part of the room. Remember to breathe. Stand in a confident posture. Try not to shift too much.

**VISUALS**

Power Point is great if used for its purpose, which is the visual representation of information. It destroys the purpose of your presentation if it is misused. Power point is an especially effective tool for presenting data, charts, and graphs. Your purpose is to engage the audience, so you need to be making contact with them. They should be looking at you, and not at the screen. You should be looking at them, and not at your laptop. Therefore, in general, Power Point is discouraged.

For an eight-minute talk, we recommend a limit of FOUR slides for most purposes. It takes about two minutes to connect an audience to the content of each slide. For a lecture on art, however, you will need more slides, so there are exceptions to this advice. But do remember not to overload your audience or distract them from you.

Bulleted outlines can be helpful if very brief when used on slides. If you are analyzing a short text, put it on a slide. If you are presenting a logical or mathematical argument, put that on a slide.

Do not write your entire presentation on the slides. NEVER EVER TURN YOUR BACK TO THE AUDIENCE SO YOU CAN READ YOUR SLIDES. At most, give the screen a quick glance to be sure it is the right one. Remember, dealing with power point can slow your down.
FRAMING YOUR PRESENTATION

Framing helps you stay on target, even if you are interrupted or lose your way. To frame your speech, work out what are your key points, so you can share them with your audience.

You have about 30 seconds to capture their interest before they tune out, daydream, think about sex, etc. Before that happens you need to have brought out your main point.

Frames help set up a context and meaning for the audience. Frames establish focus and help manage the exchanged/dialogue with the audience.

The structure outlined below was developed by Margaret Keys and Steven Tomlinson for Executive Briefings. However, it is also useful for making your symposium presentation.

**Executive Briefing Frame/The First Two Minutes**

**Context:** Present a clear picture of what’s going on.

**Diagnosis of Key Issue:** What question are you trying to answer? Why is it important?

**Specific Proposed Solution/Approach:** What specific steps must be taken to find the answer to your question?

**Definition of Success/Deliverable:** How will you know when you have completed your project?

**The Ask/Purpose:** The purpose of your talk and your project. What do you need to move forward?

8 minutes total

2 minutes to frame

5 minutes for Information, Dialogue and Questions

1/2 minute to close
Submitting the Thesis

PRESENTATION

Your thesis will represent many hours of hard work. It should be neatly printed on good quality paper and well bound. Use chapter headings if you can and provide a table of contents with page numbers for the start of each chapter or section.

BINDING

Your thesis should be bound. Please look at the copies on display in the office. All theses are required to have your name, thesis title, and the current year on the spine, so the spine should be “closed.” There is no one way to put titles on the spine; just make them neat and long-lasting.

Make at least four copies of the final thesis. One copy is for the supervisor, one for you to keep, and one is reviewed by the Plan II associate director and eventually placed on display in the Plan II office. Many students also give the second reader a copy. Keep in mind that commercial copy shops are very busy at the end of a semester.

THESIS APPROVAL AND ARCHIVING

Your thesis will be reviewed by the Plan II Associate Director before it is accepted. It will then be on public display in the Plan II office for three years. An electronic (.pdf) copy of your final thesis should be submitted via the Blackboard Thesis Seminar group. This will allow for permanent, online storage of your thesis for others to easily search and access.

A thesis is considered a public document and will not be kept confidential unless advance arrangements have been made with the Director.
Requirements for Submission of Final Draft to the Plan II Office

REQUIRED PAGES FOR ALL THESES (SEE APPENDIX 3 FOR FORMAT):

1. A proper title page, which includes the signatures of the supervisor and second reader; see sample in this manual.

2. A one to two-page abstract briefly summarizing the thesis should follow the title page; see the model in this manual. The abstract should be bound in the thesis after the title page and before the table of contents. When the thesis is completed, we would like a separate copy of the abstract (apart from the thesis) submitted to our office so that we may file all of the abstracts together.

3. A brief biography should be the last page of the thesis; see the model in this manual.

4. Your thesis should be bound so that the spine is closed. Copy shops provide what is called “fast back” binding. Your name, the title of the thesis and the current year should be on the spine of the bound thesis. Check the thesis library in the Plan II office for different methods of doing this. Whatever method you use, make sure it is neat and durable.
Appendix 1: Summary of Requirements

If you do not think that you should be held to any of these requirements, appeal in writing to the associate director for an exception before you register for the thesis course.

**Thesis symposium:** You may not submit a thesis for Plan II until you have participated in a thesis symposium.

**Thesis length:** Thesis length may vary with the nature of the thesis, but the basic guideline is approximately 15,000 words for two-semester theses. To measure the length of your thesis, simply run a word count on your computer.

**Format:** Your thesis should be typed or laser-printed, double-spaced, with one-inch margins.

A conclusion or afterward is required for most theses.

**Citations** should follow a consistent style. The style you choose will depend on the subject of your thesis. The most common are the MLA style, used for English and the humanities; the APA style, used in the social sciences; and endnotes or footnotes, often used in history and whenever your citations are so long as to distract from your text. This will be the case if they contain substantive material along with references to sources. If you are unsure which style to use, speak with your adviser or the associate director.

Direct quotations should be indicated as such and their authors properly cited. When quoting a passage of more than three lines, present the quotation without quotation marks, indented, single-spaced, and in block form.

**A list of works cited** is required for most theses. As with citations, formats for bibliographies may vary depending on your topic and discipline. Consistency is the fundamental requirement.

Pages should be numbered.

**Chapter/section** headings should be used to organize the thesis.

**A table of contents** is strongly recommended.
Appendix 2: Frequently Referenced Style Manuals

The following are some standard style manuals:


SEX ROLE ATTITUDES IN ELEMENTARY SCHOOL CHILDREN IN TAIWAN AND THE UNITED STATES

Doris Fu-ping Chang

TC 660H
Plan II Honors Program
The University or Texas at Austin

May 1, 2008

Diane L. Schallert, Ph.D.
Department of Educational Psychology
Supervising Professor

Wen-Hua Teng, Ph.D.
Department of Oriental and African Languages and Literature
Second Reader
This is a sample abstract. The abstract should appear in the thesis in the following format after the title page and before the table of contents. A loose—not bound—copy of the abstract should be submitted in addition to the abstract bound in the thesis.

ABSTRACT

Author: Gail Levine
Title: School Finance Reform in Texas
Supervising Professor: Dean Mark G. Yudof, L.L.B.

The Texas Supreme Court’s unanimous decision in October 1989 to hold the current system of public elementary and secondary education funding unconstitutional has thrust the issue of school finance to the top of the state’s agenda in its emergency legislative sessions this spring. Equality, however, is not the only issue under discussion. Twin goals are driving the Texas education reform movement—the desires for equality and for quality. The Court demands substantial equality, the Legislature desires a decent level of quality and the tension between the two will shape Texas’s new school finance act. How can the twin goals be best reconciled in a single legislative act? This is the question this paper seeks to answer.

The first task is to understand which principle of educational equality the Court demands—“outcome” equality or one of three types of “input” equality: minimum revenue equality, total revenue equality, or access equality. The second task is to discover how to improve educational quality. Third, I will examine how closely each of the Legislature’s bills from the first 1990 special session meets the twin goals of equality and quality. Finally, I will propose my own ideal bill.
This is a sample biography. This should be the last page of the thesis.

Gail F. Levine was born in New Jersey on July 1, 1968, and moved with her family to Dallas, Texas in 1979. She enrolled in the Plan II Honors program at the University of Texas at Austin in 1986 and studied history in her junior year at University College, London. In college, she edited the University’s political journal, POLIS magazine, and wrote editorials for the *Daily Texan*. She graduated Phi Beta Kappa in 1990 and plans to attend Harvard Law School in the fall. Ms. Levine will intern at the White House’s Office of National Service in Washington, D.C., this summer.