



GUIDELINES FOR THE PREPARATION OF THE THESIS

For the students of the course of “International Relations” Class LM-52

I. PREFACE: THE ESSENTIAL STARTING POINTS

A dissertation is an original research paper in the form of a written paper, divided into 3 to 5 chapters (depending on the structure and type of dissertation), which will be discussed in front of a committee.

Depending on the type of thesis chosen or complexity of the analysis, there will be differentiated scores attributable to the Graduate Committee.

In order to track your graduation score, we suggest seeing your “weighted average” when you have completed all the exams, and by doing the calculation:

$$\text{“Weighted average”} \times 110 / 30$$

you will find your **initial graduation score**. For instance:

- Weighted Average: 27,11

- **Initial graduation score: 27,11 X 110 = 2982,1 / 30 = 99,4 ≈ 99**

For further specifications regarding the various degree programs, the student is advised to read the documents contained in the following departmental website:

<https://www.unimc.it/en/enrolment/university-student-career/graduations>

It is important that the student also take care of the formal aspects related to the assignment and the thesis application. Regarding the timeline and documents to be submitted, the student is encouraged to consult the website: <http://spocri.unimc.it/it/didattica/offerta-didattica/esami-di-laurea>



II. PREREQUISITES TO EFFECTIVELY START THESIS WORK

Prerequisite No. 1

Writing a thesis is a task that requires specific skills. First and foremost, good knowledge of the English language: avoiding spelling and/or grammatical errors is very important. For this reason, we advise those with doubts to consult a good English grammar (high school textbooks are fine) and ALWAYS have a vocabulary handy.

The student can ask the teacher for some additional advice on the style of the thesis and ways to avoid mistakes in writing the paper.

Prerequisite No. 2

The second prerequisite is the ability to structure the work logically: as a rule, one proceeds from the general to the particular.

Each thesis must, however, have the following structure:

- 1. Table of Contents**
- 2. Introduction:** here one must clearly and concisely anticipate the main topic of the paper, the reasons why one has chosen it, what one proposes to demonstrate, the sources used (books, journal articles, Internet sites, possible archival research and/or interviews) the characteristics and possible limitations of these sources; the contribution one thinks one can make in terms of broadening one's knowledge on the chosen topic.
- 3. The core of the thesis** in which the main theme of the research is discussed, and which should in turn be divided into several chapters.
- 4. Conclusions:** based on the conceptual premises (point 2) and the analysis developed in the body of the thesis (point 3), some final conclusions are drawn that summarize the key points of the discussion. Conclusions should be written in a mirror manner to the introduction, resuming the main topic of the paper, reasons for the choice, sources used, and results achieved, with possible limitations and openings to new avenues of research and reflection.
- 5. Possible Appendix** in which to include copies of the most significant documents used for the thesis. Remember that a good thesis can also include appendices containing reproductions of significant documents used for the thesis and/or iconographic materials deemed useful to reinforce the validity of claims made in the body of the text and to enhance your research activity.

Prerequisite No. 3

In writing the thesis, the following are absolutely forbidden:





1. **"Copy-pasting"** (from Internet sites or other sources on the Web), with the exception of sources with webography or bibliographical references. However, it should be stressed that quotations should be used only in cases where it is not possible otherwise to elaborate the text in one's own words.
2. Presentations of **others' reflections/theoretical perspectives/hypotheses without bibliographical references** to the works consulted.
3. **Verbatim** (word-for-word) transcriptions of parts of works without bibliographical references.

Copying parts of works and not citing the source are ethically improper practices and liable to criminal sanction: see Art. 1 Law no. 475/1925; with integration of the Criminal Cassation (2012, f. 7-8, 2680): "integrates the crime punished by Art. 1 l. no. 475/25 the conduct of a person who submits a dissertation, allegedly of a compilation nature but, in fact, containing the mere graphic transposition of another paper by a different author with some corrections and the addition of minimal new elements, without any content resulting from personal elaboration or, in any case, critical evaluation of the source used."

III. THE ORGANIZATION OF THE THESIS WORK

The student is urged, even before starting to write the actual thesis, to set up his or her thesis work in the following way:

- (a) once the topic has been chosen and its importance emphasized, frame it in a specific field of study (e.g.: social deviance studies, etc.)
- (b) one searches for what can be considered the main bibliography of reference, starting from the general context on the topic and then proceeding through readings aimed at delving deeper into the specific topic
- (c) a possible gap in this literature is identified
- (d) the objectives of the work are defined (and possible hypotheses are formulated)
- (e) methods through which to achieve the objectives are identified.

In the actual writing of the thesis, the order just given is followed (points (a) to (e)) and three more are added:

- (f) you present your results
- (g) you frame and discuss the results obtained within the literature on the topic
- (h) conclusions are written (possibly indicating the limitations of the work and future prospects).



The choice of topic, its importance, and the analysis of the scientific literature on the topic

1. The choice of topic

First, it is necessary to identify a topic that has the following characteristics:

- (a) is in line with the course of study and the chosen subject;
- (b) is relevant to the related field of study and especially interesting to you;
- (c) the research methodology is within your reach (as well as the time required to carry out the research);
- (d) bibliographic material and primary sources are available.

CAUTION: For example, if you decide to do a thesis on the representation of immigrant workers in the South African press, perhaps you would meet the first three requirements but not the fourth. Check with your thesis advisor to carefully consider whether you are able to meet all four of the above characteristics and conditions. Students often find it difficult to develop their thesis well if they do not carefully consider the fourth condition, thinking that the first three are more than enough to do an adequate thesis. In addition, the student must be able to read the main sources on the topic and, therefore, know the language(s) of reference for the chosen topic (e.g., if the student's chosen topic concerns a country other than Italy, it is necessary to know its language or have adequate language skills to access the literature needed for the research work).

Ask yourself what your thesis will bring back to the thinking on the subject and how you can prove your ideas on the subject. You must now look for evidence of what you have so far only guessed at.

In essence, the object of study must be clear and circumstantial and oriented toward the analysis of an **EMERGING PROBLEM** or **PHENOMENON**, a **CRITICAL REVIEW OF THEORIES/CONCEPTS**, or the proposal of new interpretive models of past events.

2. The search for material

When using materials published on the Internet, always remember to check the reliability of the source: who is writing? An enthusiast, a journalist, an amateur researcher, a scholar, a lecturer? Is it reliable? What documentation does he/she use? Are their claims substantiated? Always note URL and day you consult them; you will need them for the final bibliography.



A key exercise that is recommended in the course of bibliographic work for the dissertation is to systematically make index cards (paper or digital) of the material you read. These are short notes in which, in addition to the basic bibliographical information, the following should be highlighted:

- (a) author's central thesis
- (b) sources used
- (c) consistency or inconsistency of the argumentation
- (d) relevance to the general debate and the topic you cover
- (e) concepts, ideas, statements that you think are particularly relevant to your research
- (f) any additional personal comments about the text in question.

These notes will be necessary for you to figure out which primary and secondary sources will be useful in writing each chapter.

3. Rearranging the material

Once you have accomplished the first stage of research you will find yourself with a lot of material to rearrange. Once this is finished, you will actually realize how much there is written on the subject. When tackling a dissertation, you must also be aware that the bibliography on the subject has limitations and that not every topic you may be interested in has hundreds of pages written on it. Perhaps the topic you have chosen is too niche or avant-garde, perhaps you have not researched enough, perhaps you need to broaden the scope of your investigation and place your topic in a broader theoretical area than expected. Remember that changing along the way is part of the game.

A question for the thesis student regarding knowledge gaps in the literature he or she has found: did the literature review highlight the absence of specific studies that are worthy of further investigation?

Knowledge gaps can be of various kinds:

- Theoretical (hypotheses)
- Related to general empirical knowledge (e.g., there are no empirical studies on the phenomenon analyzed in Italy)
- Relative to specific empirical knowledge (e.g., empirical studies on the phenomenon analyzed are present in Italy, but they do not refer to territory X or region Y or organization Z) (in the latter case, it is important for the thesis student to reflect, together with the thesis supervisor, on whether the knowledge he brings with his analysis is important or is merely notional).





Remember that the goal of the thesis work is to fill these gaps and test hypotheses and/or empirical knowledge.

It is through the above steps that you can develop a **SEARCH QUESTION** with reference to the object of study. It is essential to define precisely what you want to investigate. The research question guides the study you will undertake during the writing of your thesis and guides your choice of research method. Typically, a single question is formulated that is logically connected to the object of study, neutral (we do not ask what is right or wrong), purposeful, and does not have to lead to a definitive answer (we do not have to solve the problem or arrive at an unambiguous definition of a phenomenon but add new elements that can help lead to such conclusions).

From the main question, sub-questions or hypotheses are developed. *Example:*

Subject: Widespread use of new synthetic drugs among young people

Research question: What factors affect the spread of new synthetic drugs among young people?

Hypothesis/sub-question:

Can the Internet facilitate the spread of information and availability of new synthetic substances?

Does the spread of new synthetic substances (e.g., spice) predominantly affect more young people?

What control policies/prevention activities are most effective in curbing the sale and consumption of new synthetic substances?

Methodology: research method and techniques must be consistent and effective with respect to research object/question-hypothesis. Multiple methodological tools can be used related to the chosen topic and, most importantly, to the discipline within which the thesis work is carried out. According to the chosen approach, other explanatory material will be provided.

Once the analysis procedure is described, proceed to Results: description of qualitative and/or quantitative results.

Conclusions/Discussion: three or four main results are taken up and an attempt is made to interpret them, comparing them, where possible, with the results of similar research: the results of my research are in line with those arrived at by X and Y for English and French, respectively. The main limitation of my work is related to the small size of the corpus and it's not being diachronic but limited to a single year. In order to increase the validity of the results to which I have arrived/arrived, it would be desirable to expand the corpus in a temporal sense as well.

IV. GENERAL TEXT FORMATTING SETTINGS.

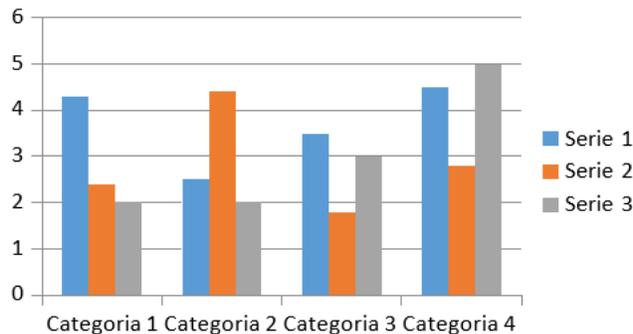


1. Font: Times New Roman in the following sizes:
Text: 12.
Escaped citations and notes: 10.
Number exponent notes: 10.
2. Page margin settings: margin sizes - left: 3.5 cm (for thesis binding); right: 2.5 cm; top: 2.5 cm; bottom: 2.5 cm.
3. Line spacing: 1.5.
4. Italics within the text of the thesis should be used only for foreign words and titles of works (articles, essays, films, plays, or volumes whatever).
5. **Quotations** should be in quotation marks (« »); even short sentences of complete meaning are considered quotations. When a quotation exceeds three lines it should be detached from the text, again in quotation marks, and should be separated with a blank line before and after the quotation, single line spacing, with the smallest font body (body 10). Each citation, at the end, **after the quotation marks are closed**, has a progressive number **in exponent**, which refers to a footnote placed at the bottom of the page, also in body 10, indicated by the same number. The text of the quotation must indent two centimetres to both the right and left Ex:

« If there are citations longer than three lines they should be formatted like this. If there are citations longer than three lines they should be formatted like this. If there are citations longer than three lines they should be formatted like this. If there are citations longer than three lines they should be formatted like this.¹»
6. Double superscripts may be used for single words that are particularly significant of authors or scholars. Simple superscripts (') may serve to give special meaning to a term employed by the writer.
7. If deemed necessary, **notes may be inserted into the text**. A note is usually inserted when one wants to elaborate or specify a topic that does not find space in the text. Again, insertion should be done not manually, but by selecting "Insert Footnote" from the "References" section located on the top bar of Word.
8. Again, in square brackets with three dots [...] jumps of words or periods within quotations should be marked.

9. It is good to always introduce quotations, explaining who it is that is speaking (e.g. - "as the well-known scholar stated, ...").
10. **Tables, Figures and Graphs**, if any, should be numbered in sequential order and have a brief caption describing their contents. The insertion of numbering and captioning can be done by placing the mouse over the Chart (Table or Figure), right-clicking and selecting "Insert Caption." The title of the chart should be entered above the chart, while the source from which the chart is taken should be entered below the chart. The source of the graph can generally be of two types: either a data processing done by the author of the thesis himself or a quote from a book/text studied.

Chart 1: Product categories sold in the three reference years.



Source: author's elaboration from ...; author cited

11. The thesis table of contents should be placed at the beginning of the thesis and should have the following format:



TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION

p. x

CHAPTER 1 – TITLE OF THE CHAPTER

p. xx

1.1 xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx

p. xx

1.2 xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx

p. xx

1.3 xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx

p. xx

1.4 xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx

p. xx

CHAPTER 2 – TITLE OF THE CHAPTER

p. xx

1.1 xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx

p. xx

1.2 xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx

p. xx

1.3 xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx

p. xx





1.4 xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx

p. xx

CHAPTER 3 – TITLE OF THE CHAPTER

p. xx

1.1 xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx

p. xx

1.2 xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx

p. xx

1.3 xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx

p. xx

1.4 xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx

p. xx

CONCLUSIONS

p. xx

APPENDIX

p. xx

BIBLIOGRAPHY

p. xx

CAUTION: The table of contents can be written manually by the student. However, please note that packages such as Word-Office or Libre Office also allow for automated compilation of the table of contents, which can be useful to the student and possibly be chosen. The student can refer to the department's website, on the same web page as this guide, for a tutorial on this aspect.

12. The general structure of the chapters should be as follows.





CHAPTER 1 (OR CHAPTER 1)

TITLE OF THE CHAPTER

1.1 Title of the paragraph

XXX. XXXX.

The paragraphs following the initial one always require an indent of 1.25 as in this paragraph.

1.2 Title of the paragraph

XXX. XXXX.

13. There is a standard format regarding the title page of the thesis as well. Look at the next page of this document where the format used in the Department for this purpose is given.



**DEPARTMENT OF POLITICAL SCIENCE,
COMMUNICATION, AND INTERNATIONAL
RELATIONS**

DEGREE COURSE XXX IN

SCIENCES XXX

CLASS LM-52

GRADUATION THESIS IN

XXX

TITLE

**XXXX XXXX XXXX.XXXXXXXXXX
XXXXXXXXXX**

Relator

Prof. *XXX*

Graduate Student

XXX

ACADEMICAL YEAR 20XX/20XX



V. HOW TO REPORT BIBLIOGRAPHIC CITATIONS

Since there are different citation styles, related to the scientific community in which you work (e.g., the community of psychologists, economists, historians, jurists ...), it is advisable to consult your lecturer before adopting a citation style.

The main rule of bibliographic citation, however, is consistency: once a citation system is chosen, it should be maintained from beginning to end.

Two tutorials, prepared for students who cannot attend CASB's "Bibliorienta" Courses on two of the main bibliographic citation systems, are available on the Unimc Libraries Portal:

1) the traditional or standard method, still widely adopted in the legal or literary sphere: <http://biblioteche.unimc.it/it/servizi/corsi-sulla-ricerca-bibliography/tutorials/Le-guides-of-Bibliorienta-The-Bibliographic-Citation.pdf>.

2) the "author-dated short citation" or APA Style method, which originated in the field of psychology, but later spread to the field of social sciences and massmediology as well: <http://biblioteche.unimc.it/it/servizi/corsi-on-bibliographical/tutorial/Le-guide-of-Bibliorienta-APA-Style.pdf>.

The essential difference between the two methods consists in:

1) different succession in the order of elements within the bibliographic record and punctuation dividing the various "fields" (author, title, date, place of publication, and publisher name).

2) Presence or absence of footnotes, which allow the sources cited to be recalled from time to time. Examples of citation according to the two methods.

1) Numerical or standard style: Giuseppe Ferri, " *Partecipazione agli utili*," in. *Enciclopedia del diritto*, vol. XXXII, Milan, Giuffrè, 1982, pp. 14-21.

2) APA Style (short citation or author-date method): Ferri, G. (1982). *Partecipazione agli utili*. In *Enciclopedia del diritto* (vol. XXXII, pp. 14-21). Milan: Giuffrè.

In this style citation notes are absent. The previous example would be cited within the text only in this way (Giugni, 1997). Those who would like to delve deeper into which work this is, should go to the bibliography at the end of the thesis.

For more examples of bibliographical citations, see the tutorials mentioned above.

VI. BIBLIOGRAPHICAL RESEARCH

The lecturer may provide some bibliographical starting points or point out possible reference sources/magazines for the subject of the thesis, but the general bibliography must be constructed by the undergraduate student.



Attendance at the course organized by CASB on a regular basis on bibliographic research and use of databases is strongly recommended. Please consult the CASB website for the organization and schedules of the course itself.

Different tools exist for conducting bibliographic research prior to writing a thesis:

1. Library catalogs

To find documentary material, the first thing to do is to search the local OPAC (or electronic catalog): <https://opac.unimc.it/SebinaOpac/Opac>.

If the material you are looking for is not here, do a new search in the OPAC of the SBN (Servizio Bibliotecario Nazionale, at <http://opac.sbn.it/opacsbn/opac/iccu/free.jsp> to see if any other library in Italy has it and possibly request it for interlibrary loan through the appropriate CASB office;

2. Electronic periodical databases and aggregators

In order to be able to download articles or texts in digital format, consulting remotely (even from one's home) the databases and electronic periodicals available to the University of Macerata, it is a priority to register with the IANUS Proxy service. Access to electronic resources is, in fact, reserved only for users of the academic community in possession of the institutional DSA account (enrolled students, faculty and technical administrative staff). To register, follow the instructions at <http://biblioteche.unimc.it/it/servizi/servizi-proxy-e-tatoo/proxy-ianus>

3. Search engines, distinguished into generalist and specialized

The generalists, including Google, are of little use for university-level bibliographic research for two essential reasons:

- 1) they cannot access many resources found in the so-called "invisible, submerged or deep Web" (deep Web), which includes data from OPACs (for reasons of computer protocols) or large bibliographic databases (in this case for commercial reasons).
- 2) There is no authority to verify the accuracy and quality of the circulating information of the so-called "free Web."

Specialized search engines can be used, but taking into account their limitations. Among them:

(a) **Google Books** or **Google Book Search**, the Italian interface of Google Books. This is a large virtual library, where it is possible to consult the text of volumes in full online or download it in PDF, but only if they are not protected by copyright or to view, depending on the agreement made with the publisher that holds the rights to exploit the work, only small portions of the text, such as previews, cover, index.

(b) **Google Scholar**, a search engine that uses keywords to locate free online texts of so-called academic literature, such as peer-reviewed articles in the process of being published (preprints), dissertations and doctoral theses, books, abstracts, reviews, and technical reports from all areas of scientific research. Limitations found: lack of authority control for authors' names (in fact, you get



a flood of results due to the fact that the author's name is registered with only the initial, which aggravates cases of homonym of authors).

- Open Access journals:

(see List of Open Access Journals at http://oad.simmons.edu/oadwiki/Main_Page)

- Open Access journals in <http://www.openedition.org/catalogue-journals?page=catalogue&lang=en>

- Disciplinary open access repositories, such as, for example, PsyArXiv < <https://psyarXiv.com/> > or SocArXiv Papers < <https://osf.io/preprints/socarXiv/> >.