

**BA THESES IN ENGLISH AND AMERICAN LITERATURE  
AT THE DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH  
FACULTY OF ARTS, UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH BOHEMIA**

For general guidelines concerning the submission of the thesis proposal, the submission of the thesis, and the format of the thesis, see the Dean's Decree 12/2018.

The Department of English issues the following guidelines concerning the contents and the form of theses in English and American literature.

**Topic**

- The topic of the thesis is chosen by the student based on consultations with the future supervisor of the thesis. The topic and the choice of the supervisor are approved by the Head of the Department after the thesis proposal (zadání) is submitted.
- The topic has to be clear, specific, and narrow in scope.
- The thesis focuses on the analysis and interpretation of one aspect of a particular work of literature.
- The thesis should deal with one work by one author (two works at the most). In certain justified cases more works and/or authors can be discussed (a work means a novel, a play, a book of short stories, a poetry collection, etc.).
- The thesis has to deal with a work by a major representative of British or American literature written in the periods covered by the BA Exam reading list (i.e. the Middle Ages to the 1970s in the case of British literature and from the beginning of the 19<sup>th</sup> century to the 1970s in the case of American literature).
- The thesis should not contain long passages of factual information (biographical, bibliographical, historiographical, etc.) resembling encyclopedia entries. All factual passages should be clearly related to the interpretation offered by the thesis.
- The thesis should not contain retellings of the plot of the work/s discussed.

**Length**

- The minimum length of a BA thesis is 40 pages (72,000 characters including spaces) of main text, not including front matter (title page, declaration, acknowledgments, contents page, abstract, etc.), back matter (bibliography, etc.), or quoted material.

**Language**

- The thesis should be in English or Czech.
- The standard of language use is part of the assessment.

## Use of sources

- Primary sources
  - The student must use a printed book edition of the primary text interpreted in the thesis (electronic editions of the primary literary work are not acceptable).
  - Regardless of the language of the thesis, the interpretation must be based on the English original of the work, not a Czech translation.
- Secondary sources
  - The student must prove his or her ability to work with secondary sources in the thesis.
  - Only scholarly works on high professional level can be used as secondary sources.
  - The student's handling of secondary sources is based on the relevance and quality of the sources used, the student's ability to make a clear connection between the source and the student's own interpretation, and the student's understanding of the sources used.
  - It is assumed that the student knows the quoted source in its entirety (i.e. does not know only the quotation used in the thesis) Knowledge of secondary materials can be one of the areas of examination at the defense.

## Plagiarism

- It is essential to clearly mark all the quotations and refer to the source at the end of the quotation. If you paraphrase someone else's idea, it must be clear from the text that it is a paraphrase, not your original idea, and again, the source must be referred to immediately after the paraphrase. Failing to refer to your sources can be a serious problem: in the case of plagiarism, the thesis will not be accepted for defense and other sanctions may follow.

## Citations and bibliography

- Theses written in English should follow the most recent edition of the MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers (for a summary of the MLA Style guidelines see the Purdue University OWL web site).
- Theses written in Czech should follow the norm ISO 690.

**Credit (zápočet)** for the BA thesis seminar is granted by the thesis supervisor. To obtain the first credit (at the end of the winter term of the 3<sup>rd</sup> year) it is necessary to submit an entire chapter of the thesis. To obtain the second credit (at the end of the summer term of the 3<sup>rd</sup> year), it is necessary to submit the entire thesis to the supervisor.

The student has to see the supervisor for consultations on the thesis. The supervisor will set deadlines for the submission of the individual chapters and/or the whole thesis, as well as the dates for consultations. The student must meet the deadlines. The supervisor can set other credit requirements.

## **Defense**

The defense usually has the following format:

- The student briefly introduces the topic of his/her thesis, the chosen method and the conclusions reached.
- The supervisor and the reader summarize their reports.
- The student responds to the supervisor's and reader's commentaries and criticism.
- In the following discussion, in which all members of the defense board participate, the student answers questions concerning mainly:
  - the handling of the topic
  - the broader context of the topic (insufficient knowledge of the context may result in failure at the defense)
  - the secondary sources used in writing the thesis.

The defense is in the language of the thesis.