

Guidelines for M.A. Exam Capstone Requirement: Purpose, Steps and Time Frame

Purpose of the Exam

Objectives include:

- Demonstrating comprehensive understanding of the field.
 - Synthesizing and applying theoretical and critical frameworks.
 - Showcasing ability to write at a professional, publishable level.
 - Preparing for doctoral work or professional practice.
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Exam Format Options

In-Person Written Exam

- Administered on a single day (3 hours).
- Responses are composed on the word document on a designated computer in a designated computer lab.

Followed by an Oral Defense Examination

- Typically, 60 minutes.
 - Students respond to questions created by their committee based on reading lists, course papers, and course topics.
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Year 1, Semester 2

As the student secures a defense chair and committee, the student should express their wish to fulfill the capstone requirement through the exam option.

If approved, the

Exam Committee,

- Approves a reading list based on the student's coursework
- Develops and reviews exam questions
- One member will proctor the exam
- Evaluates written responses

The exam will be scheduled two weeks prior to the defense (in the last semester of coursework).

Three hours are allotted for the exam.

All committee members will receive copies of the exam responses.

Evaluation Criteria

The committee will determine whether the responses constitute a **pass**, **conditional pass**, or **fail**. Determination is based on clarity and depth of argumentation for the following:

- Mastery of subject matter
 - Engagement with secondary sources
 - Organization and writing quality
 - Originality and critical insight
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Possible Outcomes:

- **Pass**
- **Conditional Pass**
 - Requires follow-up oral clarification during the defense
- **Fail**
 - 1 retake possible at the convenience of the committee
 - If the retake occurs beyond the current semester, the student is required to register for a one-hour matriculation credit in the semester of the retake at a cost of 1 tuition hour plus fees.