



INSTITUTE FOR THE  
PSYCHOLOGICAL SCIENCES

# **MSP Thesis Handbook**

**2022-2023**

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## **1. Introduction**

This MSP prePhD Thesis Handbook is intended to provide a detailed guide for successfully completing all thesis requirements. It is incumbent upon students to familiarize themselves with the process and procedures required, as outlined throughout the Handbook. As such, a thorough review of the Handbook, both as they start the thesis process with PSY 620(1) and during each subsequent term in PSY 620, will ensure that they are aware of the requirements. *Please note that the Thesis Handbook is updated each academic year to ensure compliance with accreditation standards and best practices in thesis projects.*

### **1.2 Entry Requirements for prePhD Concentration**

Writing a research thesis is an academically challenging endeavor and is not a good fit for all students. Planning and implementing the research project takes a considerable amount of time and ability to work independently to succeed. Students must meet minimum academic requirements for entering the prePhD concentration:

- A minimum grade of A- for PSY 550 and
- A minimum grade of A- for PSY 560 (if applicable)
- A minimum cumulative GPA of 3.5 across the first two terms
- A faculty recommendation based on a small portfolio of writing samples (final gratitude research paper from PSY 550 and the Capstone Introduction from PSY 560, if applicable)

Students must maintain a minimum cumulative GPA of 3.25 in order to remain in the prePhD concentration.

Students who do not finish PSY 620(1) with at least a B+ grade will not be able to continue in the pre-PhD Concentration. Students wishing to enter the prePhD concentration need to apply to the concentration by the end of PSY 550 with filling out an application form provided by the registrar's office as well as a small portfolio of writing samples submitted to the Program Director.

## **2. The Thesis Process**

As part of the prePhD concentration in the MSP, students are required to complete a thesis: an original written work that demonstrates the ability to plan and implement a research project. The project, though psychological in outlook, should be informed by the Catholic Christian Meta-Model of the Person. The purpose of the thesis is to demonstrate a student's ability to carry out independent research, closely related to the student's general academic and career objectives, that contributes to the mission of Divine Mercy University and to the advancement of psychological knowledge.

The thesis is separate from the Capstone Project which students write in the MSP. However, students can build on their work from the Capstone project and pursue one aspect of the project in depth through their thesis.

The primary training objectives of the thesis include acquiring a specialized area of knowledge, developing skills in the critical evaluation of psychological literature, and learning how to apply concepts of research methodology and design as well as statistical reasoning to a research question. Thus, the thesis provides students with the opportunity to do an independent piece of research and scholarship. This scholarly project demonstrates students' ability to:

- Articulate a clearly operationalized research question or set of questions,
- Critically evaluate and synthesize the relevant theoretical and empirical literature across a range of studies,
- Analyze collected data in light of the organizing question(s) and the prevailing knowledge in the area chosen for study, and
- Write a scholarly thesis based on literature and investigation with the end goal of submission for publication or presentation at a professional conference.

By becoming competent users of the psychological literature, psychological research methodology, and statistical reasoning, students ground their work or ministry in the current scientific foundations of psychology. In addition, they acquire the requisite tools to keep abreast of the evolving body of scientific and professional knowledge and, thereby, keep their work up-to-date throughout their professional careers.

Students should begin the process of choosing an area of interest as early as possible in their graduate career. They will need to choose their topic in the first term of PSY 620. Starting this process early (before enrolling in PSY 620 for the first time) maximizes the time available for considering and specifying a researchable topic. When choosing a topic, students should take into consideration their background and interests, accessibility of research materials, relevance to DMU's integrative mission, and the timeline of graduate training.

Excellence is required in the conceptualization, development, implementation, and writing of the thesis research project. Because one of the distinctive characteristics of DMU is its commitment to the Catholic view of the human person, each thesis should reflect this view, either through the selection of the area of research or through integration of the truths of faith and science. This does not mean that theses need to be on religious topics or couched in religious language. Because all truth is God's truth, theses in any area framed within a Catholic understanding of the person can further DMU's mission.

Proper ethical behavior in the conduct of research, as outlined in the American Psychological Association's (APA) most recent [Ethical Principles and Code of Conduct](#), is required. See also Sales & Folkman (2000).

### **2.1a Thesis Advisor Assignment**

Students who enroll in the prePhD concentration of the Masters in Psychology will be assigned a thesis advisor at the beginning of the first thesis course PSY 620(1). The thesis Advisor will work with the

student throughout the process of planning, implementing, and writing up the findings of the research project.

### 2.1b Progression and Timing for Thesis Project

Students in the prePhD concentration will be enrolled in the thesis course PSY 620 for six consecutive terms, parallel to the other courses taken. Students enrolled in the 26-month track of the MSP typically begin the thesis process parallel to the third course in the program PHT 508. Students in the 16-month track are enrolled in the first thesis course parallel to PSY 560 (second course). Each term of PSY 620 has specific assignments and milestones associated with it. Passing these milestones is essential for progressing in the program.

- PSY 620(1) - Define research area and focus; research questions
- PSY 620(2) - Thesis proposal preparation, ethics in research, proposal defense
- PSY 620(3) - IRB submission and approval
- PSY 620(4) - Data collection - creating the dataset
- PSY 620 (5) - Writing results
- PSY 620(6) - Finishing and defending the project
- PSY 620 (7) - Finishing project and revisions as needed

### 2.1c Registrar Requirements

1) Designation of Thesis Advisor for the student's Academic Record (and if this changes at any time, the change approval form).

**Note:** Each student will receive an individual and permanent PSY 620 Canvas Course when the Advisor Form is received by the Registrar. This individual PSY 620 Canvas Course will close only when the thesis is finalized. It is where the thesis components will be submitted.

**Note:** The student will also be added every term to the thesis advisor's PSY 620 section. This is where each term's Final Grade will be submitted to the Registrar.

2) The PSY 620 Final Grade from the Advisor at the end of each term entered in Canvas & submitted to the Registrar.

3) Students will receive their final grade in PSY 620 (6) after the defense of their thesis.

### 2.2 Thesis Credit (6 credits total) - PSY 620(1) - PSY 620(6)

During the term in which students begin their research project, they must enroll in the thesis course (PSY 620 - Scientific Thesis - Psychological Research and Writing). Students must continue to register for PSY 620 during each subsequent term (a minimum of six times) until completion of

their thesis project. PSY 620 is essentially an independent study directed by the thesis Advisor. A minimum of 6 credit hours of PSY 620 must be accumulated prior to graduation.

### 2.3 Approval Process for Thesis Proposal

The goal for students in the prePhD concentration is to present and defend their thesis proposal in week seven or eight of the second thesis course, PSY 620 (2).

#### 2.3.a Steps Leading up the Thesis Proposal Defense

1. The student will initially submit a short topic description (250-300 words) in week 3 of PSY 620(1) which will serve as the guide for the first meeting with the thesis Advisor.
2. The student will meet with the thesis Advisor during week 4 of PSY 620(1) and narrow down and finalize the topic choice for the thesis.
3. By week 8 of PSY 620(1) students, in consultation with their Advisor, will develop and submit:
  - a. A draft of the introduction of the project with justification (300-500 words),
  - b. Initial literature review (1200-1500 words),
  - c. Reference list of at least 30-35 resources in APA format, and
  - d. First draft of research questions.
4. By the end of week 3 of PSY 620(2) students will submit a proposal of the methods for their study, incorporating feedback on the literature review from PSY 620(1). The research proposal will include:
  - a. Revised introduction from PSY 620(1),
  - b. Revised literature review from PSY 620(1),
  - c. Clearly stated research questions/hypotheses (minimum of two) from PSY 620(1),
  - d. Methods section (750-1000):
    - i. Anticipated sample description,
    - ii. Measures/instruments that will be used,
    - iii. Procedures - how will data be collected,
    - iv. How get in touch with participants,
    - v. How to send out questions (survey...),
  - e. Brief analytic plan (250-300 words), and
  - f. Anticipated results/conclusion (100-150).
- 5) Students will meet with their Advisor during week 4 of PSY 620(2) to discuss needed revisions before the proposal defense.
- 6) At the proposal defense during the last two weeks of PSY 620(2), the student will make a 20-25 minute oral presentation of the proposal to the committee (thesis Advisor plus one additional faculty member, and one integration expert). This includes an overview of the proposal and a defense of both the appropriateness of the topic and of the means of addressing it. After the student responds to questions from

the committee, the committee will indicate changes, additions, deletions, or other modifications, and decide on the manner in which these changes will be formalized. The question and discussion portion of the proposal should take approximately 35-45 minutes. The individual committee members complete a *Thesis Proposal Rating* form (see Appendix B) for the purposes of grading the proposal, both content and presentation, as an indication of progress through the program.

- 7) The decision concerning the proposal, which may be “Approval,” “Approval with Minor Revisions,” “Approval with Major Revisions,” or “Unacceptable,” must be the unanimous decision of the committee. Students receiving a vote of “Approval with Major Revisions” will be asked to retake PSY 620(2), which will likely add to their time in the prePhD concentration and MSP program. Students receiving an “unacceptable” in their proposal defense may be asked to consider another concentration to finish the program. The members of the committee will fill out the proposal defense form.

The approval of a proposal signifies the following: (a) the proposal contains the outline of a clear focused literature review germane to the thesis; (b) the committee approves of the scope of the literature review, the topic to be studied, and the rationale behind the proposal, pending the suggested revisions; (c) the committee judges that there is a clear set of objectives and sufficient detail concerning planned research methods, data collection strategies, and of data analyses (statistical or otherwise) for the committee to have an unambiguous understanding of the planned procedures; and (d) the proposal’s integrative component is reasonable in scope and adequately representative of the mission of DMU.

Such approval constitutes a contract between the committee and the student, to the extent that the committee cannot, during the thesis defense, raise *de novo* areas of literature to be reviewed, methodological approaches to be employed, or data to be gathered. However, it is possible that findings presented in the oral defense may require revised or completed data analysis or comparison to other recent findings in the discussion section on the same or a related topic.

### **2.3.b The Proposal Document**

Ideally, the thesis proposal consists of (a) much of the introduction and method sections of the final thesis, or, in the case of a literature review or theoretical thesis, a description of the body of literature to be examined, or theoretical area to be addressed; (b) when applicable, planned data analyses; and (c) a description of of the anticipated results and conclusions. This is presented in a document that includes:

- 1) *Title page.*
- 2) *Abstract:* that summarizes the proposed project and its anticipated findings.



- 3) *Introduction*: introduces the project and defends the importance of the topic.
- 4) *Literature review*: demonstrates a knowledge of the range of relevant literature and concludes with the project's theses, hypotheses, and/or research questions.
- 5) *Method*: the exact nature of the method section, in both the proposal and the final document, will vary depending upon the type of thesis project chosen (as discussed below). In brief, for a literature review or theoretical thesis, the method section presents the content areas and representative literature to be treated, as well as a defense of the need for a literature review in this area. In the case of an empirical research project, it must contain the proposed methodology for gathering data and the anticipated analyses for testing the hypotheses.
- 5) *Conclusion*: anticipated findings with anticipated tables/figures for data presentation.

In format, the entire proposal document must conform completely to the current *Publication Manual* of the APA (at this writing, the 7th edition, APA, 2019). Another website guide to the current *Publication Manual* of the APA is [here](#). The length of the initial proposal will vary depending upon the specific project, but as a guideline, a minimum of 10-12 double spaced content pages (excluding title page, abstract, references, and tables/figures) is the length commonly needed to provide sufficient information to substantiate thesis proposals. In general, empirical thesis proposals are typically longer than those which are strictly theoretical. This is to ensure that the committee has sufficient detail regarding the methods, or ethical considerations, to approve the proposed study. Although books may be considered primary sources, the document should also include substantive peer-reviewed articles pulling from the relevant psychological literature.

#### **2.4 Role of the Thesis Committee**

The Advisor works closely with the student throughout the thesis process. The other thesis committee members are most active at two points: 1) the thesis proposal meeting and 2) the thesis defense meeting. Other involvement of the committee members is at the discretion of the members and the Chair.

The Advisor may provide brief progress reports to committee members with specific competencies, as arranged in advance. Additional full thesis committee meetings are necessary only when unforeseen substantial changes must be made to the approved proposal, e.g., when difficulties prevent access to crucial resources. Resultant substantive changes to the proposal require unanimous approval of the full committee.

Although particular committee members' expertise may occasion consultation with them

during thesis research and writing, the thesis is produced primarily by the student in consultation with the thesis Advisor. Consultation with other committee members is determined by the nature of the topic, the composition of the committee, and the committee members' preferences. The student should seek the guidance and consent of the thesis Advisor prior to consulting with other committee members, unless arrangements have been previously made.

### **2.5 Implementing the Project - PSY 620(3) - PSY 620(4)**

Each term of PSY 620 has at least 2-3 assignments related to the research process that will be graded by the thesis Advisor. Students wishing to collect data will need to submit an application to the university's Institutional Review Board (IRB) and receive IRB approval before being able to collect data. While awaiting IRB approval, students will begin to prepare their data collection tools (e.g., SurveyMonkey). After receiving approval from the IRB, students will begin their data collection.

Data collection is planned for PSY 620(4) after the submission and approval of the IRB in PSY 620(3). Students will want to plan ahead for the data collection process as much as possible to assure access to a possible sample and permission from individuals or leaders of organizations from which students wish to collect data.

#### **2.5.a Data Collection Process**

Due to the fact that the MSP is a fully online program, students are unlikely to be in the same physical location as their Advisor. Thus, students in the MSP prePhD concentration who desire to collect primary data will utilize online data collection programs (e.g. Survey Monkey), virtual interviews, or virtual focus groups for qualitative data collection in which the thesis Advisor is able to be present for some of the interviews or focus groups and oversee the data collection process.

#### **2.5.b Thesis Writing Process**

It is of the nature of the process that the thesis will require several drafts. The writing/revision process with the thesis Advisor is based on the assignments of each term of PSY 620 and continuous feedback from the Advisor for the student. Various sections of the final draft, or even an entire interim draft, may be submitted to one or more committee members. However, the final thesis document should be submitted to the full committee only when the student and Advisor believe that the thesis is the final form. No individual sections of the thesis should be submitted for the defense. The student should consider the document submitted to the committee to be a final, complete, and defensible draft. Nonetheless, additional work will likely be required after the defense.

## 2.6 Presentation and Defense of Final Thesis

The final defense cannot be scheduled until the advisor approves the final draft. The defense should be scheduled through the Advisor, who informs the Department Chair and the Director of Research Training (DRT) of the candidate's name, the title of the thesis, and the date of the oral defense no less than 15 business days before the desired defense date. The form to be used is *Approval of Thesis Defense*, included in Appendix, which must be filed prior to the approval of a defense.

The MSP program will issue a formal announcement of the thesis defense, to be published within DMU's Global Campus, and in other locations as appropriate. A copy of the final draft, a PDF document unless otherwise permitted by the committee member(s), must be given to each member no fewer than 15 business days prior to the defense date. (Business days are defined as days on which DMU is open for business.)

The defense must be scheduled to accommodate the schedules of all thesis committee members. The candidate (student) and committee must be present at the defense. The defense may not be scheduled between semesters or when the university is closed. Traditionally, a thesis defense has been considered a public event. Other students of the DMU Global Campus will be made aware of the defense date and will have the option to attend the defense via Zoom.

The Advisor will open the meeting by reviewing procedures to be followed and presenting the student. There may follow a brief period during which committee members discuss any immediate concerns they may have. When the student and audience (if any) return to the room, the examination process begins with a presentation of the thesis work by the student, followed by a period of questioning. The appropriateness of the use of visual aids, media, and/or handouts as part of this presentation is a matter to be decided between the student and the Advisor. The primary concern here is that the student should demonstrate mastery to the entire committee; visual aids should not be of a form such that someone unfamiliar with the thesis could present the overview. If there is an audience present, only the committee members may ask questions of the student. If time permits, other DMU faculty may, at the Advisor's discretion, also ask questions.

At the conclusion of the examination, the student and others present are then asked to leave the Zoom room while the thesis committee deliberates. After deliberations, a vote is taken, and the student is then asked to log back into the Zoom room and privately informed of the decision of the committee. A unanimous vote of committee members is required for passage.

The following are expectations for the oral defense:

- 1) The student is expected to present for 30-40 minutes and to demonstrate command of the subject matter of the thesis. As applicable, the student should be able to answer procedural questions concerning data collection or statistical analysis procedures (or those used in primary references discussed in the literature review). The question and answer portion of the defense should take approximately 20-30 minutes, with another 5-10 minutes for committee deliberations and final remarks.
- 2) Students must be able to evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of their own work and to project logical extensions of that work, without overextending its implications or importance to areas not reasonable within its scope. In other words, a student should be prepared to answer a question with, “That is outside the scope of this study” or “I don’t know,” when that response is appropriate.
- 3) The student should be prepared to summarize how the thesis supports the integrative mission of DMU.

The thesis committee judges whether the student satisfactorily performs the requirements of the thesis defense. Decisions of the committee may be:

- Approved: The student has completely satisfied the committee, and no changes are required to the thesis (this is uncommon);
- Approved with minor revision: The student has satisfied the committee, but stipulated changes must be made to the thesis before final submission for binding, or
- Approved with major revisions: the committee is not satisfied with some significant aspect of the thesis. Students who receive the “Approved with major revisions” will likely need to retake PSY 620(6).
- Disapproval: The committee does not approve of the final thesis or the presentation of the thesis. The student will need to work on major revisions, retake PSY 620 (6), and schedule another defense at the end of this period.

All thesis committee members will complete the *Thesis Defense Rating Form*. The committee members may entrust the Advisor to check for mandated changes before final submission of the thesis, or they may require that the student circulate the final draft to the committee before signature. The completed signature page (completed through SignNow), with all committee members’ and the MSP Program Director’s signatures, must accompany the final thesis submitted as a PDF and may not be submitted separately; (see below for information on the Library submission process.) Students who have their thesis approved with revision do not need to repeat their oral defense, but they will likely need to retake PSY 620(6) until the required changes have been completed and approved by the Advisor. The thesis cover sheet will not be signed by the Advisor until the completed thesis with all revisions have been submitted.

**\*Please note that the final approved thesis must be submitted to the Librarian no later than April 1 if intending to walk in the May graduation ceremony.**

The thesis will be submitted to the ProQuest Dissertation and Theses database where it will be available for public access through download.

## **2.7 Dissemination**

In keeping with the mission of DMU, it is expected that the broader profession will be made aware of the thesis's significant findings, through either presentation at professional conferences or publication. The specifics of this process are at the discretion of the Advisor.

## **3. Thesis Research Options**

### **3.1 General Overview**

Writing a thesis provides a unique opportunity for students to think deeply about a topic of particular interest. Students opting for a thesis as part of the MSP studies often come with a strong interest in a certain topic area and desire to engage deeply with the topic of interest. Considering this desire of many students, there are some general principles to keep in mind:

- 1) A primary consideration for thesis research is “doability.” There are severe constraints on time and resources. Although immersion in a particular content area can often produce visions of “the” study that will open up a new area of inquiry or resolve longstanding questions, the fact that it must be accomplished in about a year while simultaneously managing graduate studies, employment demands, and life events should give one pause. It is true that, for those with an interest in research of whatever form, the thesis often marks the seminal project of their graduate studies; it is also true that later reflection often reveals how little one actually knew at this stage.
- 2) Novelty has a peculiar attraction for many graduate students. Indeed, the hallmark of the thesis is demonstrating the ability to make a novel contribution to the field. But novelty adds additional layers of effort to the thesis that sometimes, as in the case of attempting to develop a new paper-and-pencil measure of some construct, can be a poor use of resources. In the latter case, pretesting and the necessary related psychometric analyses are time-consuming. It is always most efficient to employ existing measures and procedures in novel settings, or perhaps rigorously demonstrate the inadequacy of existing measures and then suggest revisions in the discussion section. Attention to well-defined but under-examined portions of a larger issue is perhaps the most “doable” thesis.

Once a topic has been chosen, it is crucial to be prepared to be immersed in it. Extensive background reading in areas both directly and tangentially related to the topic is required. All bases should be covered or shown to be irrelevant, e.g., “not within the scope of the present study.” The bottom line is, the student should be able to walk into their oral defense with the attitude “There are people who know more about this topic than I do, but none of them (with the possible exception of my Advisor) are in this room right now.” *Please note: A student may **not** choose a topic where there is a lack of literature or research.*

The following sections provide descriptions of each of the thesis research options available to MSP prePhD students: Theoretical or Empirical.

**Note:** Regardless of the type of thesis in which the student is interested, all students should read the section on literature reviews, because all theses begin with a literature review of greater or lesser length.

### [3.2 Choosing the Area of Study](#)

Notes on getting started: For many students, they may start with a relatively vague idea or sense of direction for their topic. Topic ideas can come from numerous sources of inspiration, such as class topics, TED talks, chapters in textbooks, or subjects from conferences. One way to help narrow the focus is to conduct a preliminary literature search on the general topic. From there, a student can get a sense for the scope and depth of the topic. Sometimes, it can be difficult to find relevant literature. In those situations, a couple of things can help.

First, consider what keywords or search terms are being used. There may be synonyms that are more frequently used than others, or there may be a lack of consensus on the operationalization of the terms or definitions. Looking across terms or keywords may provide a richer set of literature from which to pull ideas or to learn about what perspectives or connections are missing from the larger body of knowledge. Second, once foundational articles are identified, if a student needs additional literature, it can be helpful to look back historically, by researching what articles or literature the sources being used cited. It can also be informative to look forward, by looking at the articles written after the sources being cited and seeing who cited the same articles the student is reviewing. By approaching the literature through this network, a student is far more likely to develop a solid understanding of the field and the topic of interest.

For theoretical theses, students may find that a particular perspective or theory has been neglected or is lacking depth, and the novelty lies within establishing that new perspective. For empirical theses, the same is true, but students may also find that particular variables have not been studied, or the methodology was limited. Reading articles’ “future directions” sections (or even published theses’ final chapters) may provide an excellent starting point for consideration.

### 3.3 Theoretical Theses

In general literature reviews and theoretical papers are getting harder to publish in the current academic climate. Publishable theoretical papers tend to be systematic reviews or meta-analyses which are likely to prove too expansive and cumbersome for the time frame allotted for the thesis project in the MSP prePhD concentration. If the goal is publication as one final outcome of the thesis project, engaging in primary research will likely be preferable. Further information on theoretical theses can be found in Appendix A.

### 3.4 Empirical Theses

The empirical thesis is an empirical study of a topic relevant to the theory or practice of psychology using quantitative, qualitative, or mixed methods research techniques. It seeks to make a scholarly contribution to the field of psychology using either original data collected during the research process or preexisting archival data. The research may be an original study or a replication and extension of a previously published study that adds to the existing literature. Most students in the prePhD concentration are likely to choose an empirical thesis option with the end goal of presenting at a conference or publishing in a peer-reviewed journal.

All empirical theses, regardless of methodology must include the following:

- 1) The problem addressed by the research, or the current gap in our knowledge,
- 2) A focused review of the literature concluding with the need for the research, as well as rationale of the particular approach taken by the student and hypotheses regarding the expected relationships of the variables under study,
- 3) A detailed description of the methods employed,
- 4) A detailed description of the analyses and their results, and
- 5) Discussion of their implications.
- 6) Overview of the study limitations, explanation of why the limitations are relevant and important to attend to (e.g., missing data), and a future directions or considerations section, where the student provides recommendations for

subsequent research.

*Because empirical research involves the gathering of data, it also requires the approval of the Institutional Review Board (IRB) as discussed below.*

### **3.4a Quantitative Primary Research**

A quantitative thesis traditionally involves the design of a research study that seeks to determine the effect of some situational or dispositional variable on some attitude, behavior, or individual difference variable, or the degree of relations among a variety of such variables. This might involve: (a) the use of established measures on new populations or in new combinations; (b) testing the effectiveness of an existing procedure, or a comparison of the relative effectiveness of a set of procedures; (c) evaluating the effectiveness (e.g., pre/post) of some existing program; (d) examining the influence of some set of stimuli on individual differences, variables, or later behavior (an “experiment”), or any of a variety of other approaches.

Students may use experimental, quasi-experimental, correlational, or factor analytic designs. Please note that any study involving data from humans requires IRB review. Due to the virtual nature of the MSP program and the fact that supervisors are in most cases not in the same physical location as their students, data collection should be only through online survey methods (e.g. SurveyMonkey) or virtual interviews in which the thesis Advisor could be present for at least some of the interviews.

### **3.4b Quantitative Secondary Research**

Another option is secondary analysis of data (e.g., archival data). There now exists a large quantity of data sets available for public use. These are often government-funded or -designed surveys with nationally representative samples, often longitudinal. These are data already collected, coded, cleaned, and entered into a particular software analysis format (e.g., SPSS). The methodology is often of very high quality, higher than that to which the student would otherwise have access. There are also recurring national surveys (e.g., Monitoring the Future, the General Social Survey, and others such as the American Religion Data Archive) that examine nationally representative samples.

The disadvantage of such an approach is that the researcher is “looking over someone else’s shoulder.” The data most frequently will not have been collected to address the specific interests of the secondary analysis, and so the latter will have to construct measures and indices on data that are in the data set. This often requires some ingenuity and some of the same skills involved in designing a new measure.

The bottom line for the quantitative thesis is the analysis of data. It is up to the researcher to decide how his or her interests (both conceptual and practical) are best served. The process



of conducting a quantitative research project will not be considered in great detail here, in as much as the “empirical study” or “experiment” is something of a “default option.”

The majority of the material covered in a research design class addresses quantitative research; some texts in that area give little or no treatment, or certainly far less extensive treatment, of the other theses types considered here. Even the APA *Publication Manual* presumes that the article being written is a report of quantitative research, and treats all other varieties as “special cases.” Thus, rather than abbreviate or repeat the far more detailed information contained in those sources (most notably chapters 1 and 2 of the *Publication Manual*), the student is referred to them for the details of quantitative research.

### 3.4c Qualitative Analysis

A thesis using qualitative approaches presents another option for inquiry. Students conducting a qualitative research project should pose a research question that has psychological relevance and originality while grounding the chosen methodology epistemologically. Qualitative analyses should move beyond mere description and use a model to represent findings conceptually. Students need to use a recognized method of data analysis appropriate to the question posed and data collected, whether it is inductive (such as interpretative phenomenological analysis, grounded theory), discursive (such as conversation analysis, or free association narrative interviewing), or structured (such as framework analysis, repertory grids, etc.). Students using sophisticated methods of data analysis such as discourse analysis will need to obtain additional instruction or training in the use of these methods and related software. In this type of research, students need to collect qualitative data following a recognized method of data collection (such as individual interviews, diary techniques, repertory grids, focus groups, etc.). In a qualitative research project, the amount of data should fit the method of analysis such that a small set would be appropriate for in-depth analyses (such as conversation analysis techniques), whereas more data would be required for attributional analysis, such as content or thematic analysis. A qualitative thesis relies primarily on direct observations and/or recordings and transcripts of interactions with other individuals. It may also include archival data or historical records. Unlike quantitative data, which is predominantly numerical and descriptive or predictive in nature, qualitative data taps into individuals’ lived experiences and can offer a different lens for understanding the *how* and *why* of a person or group’s behaviors, cognitions, and emotions.

*Qualitative data* may be collected from existing sources (archival or public records) or collected by the student via direct observations, participant self-reporting or recordings (e.g., logs, diaries, etc.), interviews, or focus groups.

*Qualitative perspectives* may take an inductive approach, where the data guide or direct subsequent theory development, or a deductive approach, where data have been collected and are being used to further evaluate or support an existing theory or framework. These two approaches may also be combined.

*Qualitative methodologies* encompass a number of approaches, but the ones most commonly used for psychological theses include: 1) content or thematic analysis, where you examine and/or code the data for patterns or trends; 2) narrative or phenomenological analysis, where the focus is on understanding the lived experience of the individual, and what the area of study means for them personally; and 3) grounded theory or action research, which can include elements of the first two but often focuses on a “feedback loop,” where the individuals who are involved (sometimes referred to as *stakeholders* in action research), help to ground or contextualize the researcher’s interpretations.

### **3.4d Mixed-Methods**

A mixed-methods approach to a thesis includes empirical elements from both quantitative and qualitative research methodologies for the thesis.

The format will more closely follow that of a quantitative thesis; however, additional details or sections will be required in the methodology, results, and discussion chapters of the thesis.

The strength of a mixed-methodology approach is that it entails the more objective data of the quantitative approach and offers the additional nuance and potential insight gained from a qualitative approach.

## **4.0 Institutional Review Board Approval**

In the case of empirical thesis, when the thesis committee has approved the proposal, and prior to the collection of *any* data associated with the thesis (including pretests), the student completes an application to the DMU Institutional Review Board (IRB). This is required if any portion of the thesis involves gathering data involving human beings or animals, or consulting records that would otherwise be considered confidential. *No previously unpublished data collected prior to IRB approval may be used in any form (including “pretest” or “exploratory analysis”) in the thesis, unless it is archival data as collected independent of the thesis.*

The function of the IRB is to provide additional ethical review of the methodology of the study. The IRB approval process involves:

- 1) Submission of an application for approval, including complete documentation of informed consent procedures, detailed description of all procedures involving the participants (human or animal) and complete description of all debriefing procedures.
- 2) Initial review of the application by the chair of the IRB in order to determine whether the procedures are of “minimal risk” and thereby are entitled to “expedited review” or whether they should be submitted to a full review by the IRB. Time must be allotted for full review, and students should acquaint themselves with the timelines of that process.

- 3) If the data are collected at, or in collaboration with, another institution, review by that institution's IRB may be required, at that institution's discretion.
- 4) When the thesis project is completed, the final IRB form noting the project completion, and date of completion, must be submitted to the IRB via the IRB Canvas course, under the original and approved application submission file(s).

The forms to be submitted for IRB approval are included in the IRB handbook. Further information concerning the function and requirements of the IRB can be obtained from the IRB Chair.

## **5.0 Writing the Empirical Proposal and Thesis**

The proposal for an empirical thesis should include the following elements:

1. A presentation of the central problem(s) and major questions and general hypotheses to be addressed in the thesis.;
2. A thorough review of the major critical areas of literature that are relevant to the central questions, hypotheses, and methodology;
3. A succinct critique of the methodologies, quality, and adequacy of each major area of literature that is reviewed;
4. Specific, operationalized hypotheses that will be tested empirically;
5. A Methods section that fully describes all the methodology, procedures, and instruments needed to collect and analyze the data necessary to test the hypotheses; and
6. A full reference list of all literature reviewed in the thesis.

The final empirical thesis project will include the above components, but will also consist of 1) a Results section following the Methods section and 2) a Discussion section, which may also include conclusions, a description of any limitations of the study, and considerations for future research directions. The conclusion, study limitations, and future directions may also be a separate section or chapter depending on length.

### **5.1 Common grammatical errors to avoid**

Certain grammatical errors have become so commonplace that they are sometimes accepted as correct. The formality of empirical research, however, calls for precise usage. At least six such errors occur so frequently in scholarly reports that it may be worthwhile listing them here, to minimize editing by the student's committee:

1. Data is plural; datum is the singular (e.g., "The data speak for themselves," or "Few data are available.>").
2. Due, except in rare expressions like "due north," is an adjective, not an adverb. For

example, “Elevation of the mean was due to a single outlier,” but not “Due to a single outlier, the mean was inflated.”

3. “Had... be” is a mythical construction. For example, “Future investigators should be careful,” not “Future investigators had better be careful.”
4. “Utilize” should only be used when an instrument or other psychometric tool is being used for purposes other than its stated intent or purpose. The word “use” should be used for commonly accepted applications. For example, we “used SPSS” for statistical analysis, we did not “utilize SPSS.” Similarly, “the Beck Depression Inventory was utilized to evaluate participants on...” is incorrect, unless it was used to screen for something other than depression.
5. “While” should only be used to indicate a time lapse. If the word “although” can be substituted, the word “while” is not appropriate.
6. “Efficacious” versus “effective”: unless you are employing strict laboratory-controlled (e.g., ideal conditions) randomized treatment trials with a control vs. treatment group design, you should avoid using the word “efficacious.” “Effective” is a more appropriate word choice for most social science (e.g., psychology) studies.

## **5.2 Planning and Writing the Literature Review**

This is composed of:

*Focused preliminary review of the literature.* Each of the major concepts that have been examined in the body of literature should be reviewed as they relate to the specific topic under study.

*Specification of terms.* Terms should be specified as they will be used in your literature review. These should not be dictionary definitions but an indication of how you have delimited the topic. For example, child abuse needs to be defined to specify whether or not it includes abuse suffered by adults as children or by children; whether or not it includes physical, verbal, and/or sexual abuse; which types of sexual events are included and excluded; whether all combinations of gender of victims and perpetrator will be addressed, etc. Note that if an acronym is to be used for a particular term, once it is introduced, it must be used throughout the remainder of the document; the author cannot shift back and forth between the acronym and the full term. Thus, it is best to ensure that the term will be used with some frequency before introducing an acronym. If a term is used that may be more familiar to many readers by its acronym (e.g., UNESCO), it is appropriate to present the term and then its acronym, even if it will not be used later.

*Critical review.* This involves noting potential weaknesses, contradictions, gaps, publication biases, etc. in the literature.

## 5.2.a Crafting the Literature

There are five main topics:

- 1) Selecting a topic
- 2) Delimiting your topic
- 3) Reading the articles
- 4) Critiquing the articles
- 5) Writing the review

This process appears straightforward, but caution is advised in several areas.

*Selecting a topic.* By choosing a well-defined area of research and ensuring the articles are available, the review process will be easier in the long run. The topic should be well-defined, adequately researched, and of current interest.

*Delimiting your topic.* Because a literature review requires thorough coverage of the topic, it is inappropriate to select a broad area such as “religion and mental health” that has literally thousands of articles on it. The literature review should touch on all aspects of the proposed study (i.e., all variables proposed for the study should be addressed to some extent in the literature review)

*Adequately researched.* Choosing an area that is well-defined and well-researched simplifies the task. At least 30 articles should be available for the review. If a student wishes to plan an empirical study in a less well developed field, it is important to explore related concepts that have led to the formulation of the research question.

*Reading the articles.* A good understanding of the literature is essential for a well-written literature review, and understanding the literature requires reading, rereading, and digesting complex ideas. A careful reading will reveal subtle (and sometimes not-so-subtle) differences in theoretical outlook.

Evaluation is prior to writing a good review.

Understanding is prior to evaluation.

Familiarity with the literature is prior to understanding.

Thorough reading is prior to familiarity. This takes time.

It should also be noted that the author should only cite articles that have actually been read, unless they are cited in passing or are only available from a secondary source.

It is strongly recommended that you have on hand a copy of every source that you read for your thesis. Happily, this is no longer restricted to “hard copies,” that is, photocopies of paper journals. A very wide variety of materials, including theses, are available for download in the form of PDF files. Thus, a majority of important recent sources may be available for free and in a format relatively easy to store.

*Writing the text.* The primary criteria for good scientific writing are accuracy and clarity. Organize the manuscript so that it tells a coherent story.

A literature review begins with some theme or point of view that will be emphasized throughout. Although no two reviews look exactly the same, they tend to be organized in the following format:

- 1) The research question is introduced with an explanation of why it is worth examining. A generally useful approach is a “funnel” model, to start broadly and progressively narrow the topic under consideration, arriving at the specific line of research to be discussed. Avoid sudden jumps in logic that tend to lose the reader.
- 2) Present an overview of the paper’s structure and content. For example, if there is a major controversy in the literature, briefly describe it by presenting the research that has appeared on the question in chronological order. Beyond that, avoid making meta-comments about the flow of the narrative. The process of writing should be invisible to the reader. Don’t say, “Now that the three theories of emotion have been discussed, the next section will review the empirical work on each of them...” Instead, move directly from discussion of the theories in the review of the evidence with a simple transition sentence such as, “Each of these three theories has been tested empirically. Thus the psychoanalytic account of affect has received support in studies that...” Any other guideposts needed can be supplied by using informational headings.

Write simply, using declarative sentences. Use the phrase, “The existing literature indicates” rather than, “A fair summary of the general trend of most of the research in this area would seem to indicate that...” Always use fewer words rather than more once you have made your meaning clear. Do not use the subjunctive case (“may,” “tends to,” “possibly”) if your understanding of the literature allows more straightforward conclusions. At the same time, avoid over-generalizations. The statement, “There is no research in this area” is probably false unless you were writing about the effects of the terror attacks of 9/11/2001 on 9/12/2001. “An extensive literature search failed to uncover” lets the reader know that at least you tried.

- 1) Use of the first person in professional writing is becoming more acceptable. While it is still somewhat novel in reports of quantitative research, the use of

the third person (especially in reference to oneself) has begun to be considered stilted or pompous. Pay heed to the tone and style of the literature you read, in this and other matters, as a guide to your own writing. It is often considered best practice to avoid the use of first person or third person, and write in a style that is fact-based. For example, instead of saying “the author finds” or “I found,” write “the data demonstrates.”

- 2) Describe studies in detail, enough detail to highlight the characteristics of the sources that are relevant to the review. At the same time, avoid over-detailed recounting of samples and procedures unless that is directly related to the topic. Replications or extensions can be noted as such, their novel aspects described, and then their results noted: “Researcher and Researcher (2010) attempted to replicate this research with adults, but obtained the reverse findings.”
- 3) Compare and evaluate the sources. Making comparisons is essential; descriptions alone are not very illuminating. Compare research assumptions, research theories tested, hypotheses, research designs (e.g., measures, sample sizes, particular characteristics), results, and subsequent interpretations. Frequently, a table displaying relevant study characteristics, and their corresponding findings, can be enlightening for both reader and author, manifesting otherwise invisible patterns. Without evaluation and novel insight, the literature review has not made a contribution to scholarship, which is a primary reason for embarking on a thesis.
- 4) Discuss the implications of studies and the trends observed across them. This includes judgment of the studies and indication of what further research should be undertaken. All assertions must be well-supported by evidence. Nearly all reviews of the literature produce surprises for their authors. It is important to avoid justifying personal opinions by citing works out of context. It is even more important to present all relevant views on controversial subjects fairly, with clear representation of alternative arguments. To do otherwise, in addition to being poor scholarship, may precipitate a particularly difficult thesis defense.
- 5) Consider carefully how prominent the integrative aspect of your paper should be. The nearness of your topic to those directly addressed in the Catholic Christian Meta-Model of the Person is a good guideline. A discussion of “the image of the person in self-help diet books, 1990-2010” would obviously invite considerable integrative analysis; “choice of religiousness measures appropriate for assessment of Catholic couples in therapy,” perhaps less so.
- 6) End with a clearly stated research question(s) that is unanswered along with suggestions for the kinds of research that would help to answer the question(s).

In fact, suggesting further research is probably the most common way of ending a review. But here, too, prudence is important. Don't bewail the absence of nationally representative longitudinal mixed-method research (i.e., "the perfect study") on your topic, unless some particularly germane question in the area could be addressed by an as-yet unemployed approach.

## **6.0 Mechanics of the Document**

The thesis document is comprised of three parts: the preliminary pages, the body, and the appendices. Thesis length may vary but should be between 5500 and 6000 words (25-30 pages including title page, abstract, body, references, tables, figures). The thesis must include peer-reviewed sources and a minimum of two unique references per content page.

### **6.1 Preliminary Pages**

The preliminary pages include the following in the order given:

*Front Flyer:* This is a blank page that serves as a protection for the body of the document, as is found in bound books. It has no page number.

*Approval Sheet (also known as the Signature page).* This is a form indicating that the Chair, committee members, and Director of the MSP Program find that the manuscript satisfies the thesis requirement for the master's degree. It includes the title of the thesis, the student's name, and places for the prescribed signatures (see "Front Pages," Appendix B). Please note that this page is not counted or numbered.

*Title Page.* The title page includes elements enabling the rapid identification of the subject, author, date completed, and university supervising the study. The title itself should concisely reflect the main research or theoretical issues investigated. Avoid phrases such as "An empirical investigation of the effect of selected..." Be brief. "Depression as an Effect of Failing Thesis Oral Defense" is preferable to "The Effect of Failure to Pass Oral Defense of a Masters Thesis on Beck Depression Inventory Scores in a Selected Group of Graduate Students Attending a Professional School of Clinical Psychology."

The title page is counted as page 1, and it is here that the APA style running head first appears. Please do not include the pagination on the title page; pagination should start on the second page, as page number 2. Do not include the phrase "running head" in the header, as this is a master's thesis and not a manuscript submitted for publication. The first line of the title should begin two inches from the top of the page. The date should be that of the successful defense of the thesis. All of the remaining preliminary pages are included in the order indicated below.



*Dedication Page* (optional). This page provides the student with an opportunity to give special tribute to persons, organizations, or others who provided encouragement during the student's academic career. If such a page is used, the word "Dedication" should be centered without punctuation two inches from the top of the page. The text of the dedication should begin on the fourth line below.

If the student chooses to include a dedication page, it is best that it not exceed a single page. Lengthy dedication pages read like overlong acceptance speeches at award ceremonies, and are to be avoided for the same reason.

Dedications are not private, and as part of a professional body of work, should reflect not only the message you wish to communicate in dedication, but also the message about your professionalism to future employers, or employees, clients, etc.

*Acknowledgement Page* (optional). An acknowledgement page in which the student expresses recognition of and appreciation for any special assistance is optional but is customarily included. The acknowledgements page is obligatory if special permission has been granted to use published or unpublished material. If such a page is used, the word "Acknowledgements" should be centered without punctuation two inches from the top of the page. The text of the acknowledgements should begin on the fourth line below. Some of the text that might otherwise inappropriately lengthen a dedication page might be appropriately placed here. On the other hand, acknowledgement pages that include members of the extended family, pets, infant children, etc., begin to look maudlin starting a month after the thesis has been permanently deposited. Opinions on these topics differ; the student is cautioned to use discretion.

*Table of Contents*. This page's heading should be centered without punctuation two inches from the top of the page. The listings begin at the left margin four spaces below the heading, and are double-spaced. The table of contents lists all material following the contents page. The titles of parts or sections must be listed and worded exactly as they appear in the body of the manuscript. The page number for each part is listed flush against the right margin and below the heading "page." Word processing programs have options to fill in tabs with periods (as in this *Handbook*) so that process should not be problematic.

*List of Tables*. If there are tables in the thesis, they should be listed here, giving their full title and corresponding page number, formatted in the same manner as the Table of Contents. Note that in a break with strict APA format, each table should be placed in text, after its first mention. Each table should be on a separate page.

*List of Figures*. If there are figures in the thesis, they should be listed here, giving their full title and corresponding page number, formatted in the same manner as the Table of Contents. As with tables, each figure should be placed on a separate page, in the text, after its first

mention.

*Abstract.* This page is required in all theses. The abstract summarizes the thesis as a whole. Common elements include a statement regarding the project’s purpose, a brief description of the project’s methodology, and the results. Note that it contains more information, both in terms of length and topics covered, than in a standard article abstract, reflecting the fact that it is a primary source of information about archived theses.

The abstract should be a succinct account of the contents of the thesis that allows readers to decide whether the full contents would be of interest to them. Descriptions of methods and methodologies, along with major findings, are more important than the fact that the “ramifications of the findings obtained are discussed in terms of applications in clinical settings.” Presume your reader has some acquaintance with your topic. (Why else would they be reading a thesis?) Give enough information so that a reader could determine whether they wanted to read this particular thesis rather than another on the same topic. Diagrams and equations are not included in the abstract.

The abstract should begin with the word “Abstract” centered two inches below the top of the page. This is followed by the following items, all centered: the title (in capital letters), student’s name, name of the institution, date of defense, and the name of the Chair. The text of the abstract is not indented, and like the entire body of the document, is double-spaced.

*Keywords.* After the abstract, starting a new indented line, the word “Keywords:” should appear, capitalized, italicized, and followed by a colon. There should follow an alphabetized list of 6 to 8 terms that describe the areas that the thesis addresses. These are “natural language” terms, topics familiar to the student and other researchers. List the terms that you think are relevant to your thesis. Nonetheless, it might be best to use more professional terms when relevant, e.g., “adolescents” instead of “teenagers.”

## **6.2 Body of the Manuscript**

Aside from the exceptions noted in this handbook, e.g., the placement of tables and figures in the text, the body of the thesis manuscript is to be composed in strict compliance with the current *Publication Manual* of the APA, at this writing, the seventh edition (APA, 2019). Thus, there are no “chapters” in the thesis; new sections (aside from the reference list) do not begin on new pages; everything, block quotes and references included, is double spaced; and footnotes are placed at the end of the document, not the bottom of the page.

There are a few exceptions to this compliance, which are as follows:

- 1) There is no abstract in the body of the document; the abstract prepared for the preliminary pages serves that function.
- 2) Tables and figures, rather than appearing at the end of the document, appear in the body of the document, immediately after the page of the text in which they are

first mentioned. They should not be included directly in the text but each should be on a separate page. Titles of tables and figures appear on the same page as the table or figure, and not on a separate page.

- 3) There are no “author notes” since this function is amply served in other portions of the document.

### **6.3 References and General APA Guidelines**

Scholarly work at Divine Mercy University (DMU), at both the Institute for the Psychological Sciences (IPS) and the School of Counseling (SOC), closely conforms to the *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association*, 7th ed. (American Psychological Association [APA], 2019). Although there is a section that addresses how to cite classical and religious sources in general terms (APA, 2019, p. 264), questions arise concerning style variations related to classical works (e.g., Plato and Aristotle), religious texts (e.g., the Bible), and magisterial references (e.g., the Second Vatican Council). This guide offers determinations and guidance for some common queries that arise when citing classical and religious sources. It does not, however, replace the APA *Publication Manual* for the vast majority of style questions.

To access APA guidelines, please visit <https://apastyle.apa.org>. Alternatively, you may decide to order the official publication manual.

#### **6.3.a Required Elements**

- “Running head” is omitted on page 1. Simply write the heading.
- The title should be bolded.
- Include an extra space between title and byline

#### **6.3.b Font Options:**

- 12 pt Times New Roman
- 11 pt Calibri
- 11 pt Arial
- 10 pt Lucida Sans Unicode
- 11 pt Georgia
- 10 pt Computer Modern

### 6.3.c Punctuation

- Use only a single space after a period (as opposed to double spacing).

### 6.3.d In-Text Citations

- For a work with one or two authors, include the author name(s) in every citation.
- For a work with three or more authors, include the name of only the first author plus “et al.” in every citation (even the first citation).

### 6.3.e Reference Section

- “References” heading is now bolded.
- DOIs/URL:
  - use hyperlink (can be blue/underlined or normal text)
  - e.g. use: <https://doi.org/1234xxx> (do NOT use “Retrieved from:” or “doi:” --this is no longer acceptable)
- Journal Articles
  - include issue number
  - can list up to 20 authors in a reference if needed
  - articles without DOI are cited in the same manner as printed works
- Books
  - no longer need publisher location (compared to previous APA guidelines)

## 6.4 Citing Religious and Classical Works

### 6.4.a Acronyms

Acronyms are established with their first reference by listing the acronym in parentheses following the full name. This also applies to magisterial documents. For example:

- First in-text citation for the Catechism: (Catechism of the Catholic Church [CCC], 2000, §1872)
- Subsequent citations: (CCC, 2000, §1873)
- First reference for the Code of Canon Law: (Codex Iuris Canonici [CIC], 2012, can. 528, §1)
- Subsequent reference: (CIC, 2012, can. 528, §1)

### 6.4.b Capitalization

Use capitalization in a consistent way, following these examples:

God the Father, the Virgin Mary, the Bible, the Greek gods, Moses, Buddha, Zeus, fall, creation, incarnation (and divine pronouns: he, his).

In-Text Citations without Standard Abbreviations or Page Numbers:

When Church documents have numbered paragraphs, use them over page numbers.

For example:

(Benedict XVI, 2009, §3)

When the source does not provide page or paragraph numbers, include information that will help readers find the passage being cited. If the paragraphs are not numbered and the document includes headings, provide the appropriate heading and specify the paragraph under that heading. Note that in some electronic sources, like web pages, people can use the “Find” function in their browser to locate any passages you cite.

When possible, use standard abbreviations.

<b>APA Citation Abbreviations</b>			
<i>Book Part</i>	<i>Abbreviation</i>	<i>Book Part</i>	<i>Abbreviation</i>
Paragraph(s)	§ or §§	No Date	n.d.
Edition	ed.	Page(s)	p. or pp.
Revised Edition	Rev. ed.	Volume(s)	Vol. or Vols.
Second Edition	2nd ed.	Number(s)	No. or Nos.
Editor(s)	Ed. or Eds.	Part	Pt.
Translator(s)	Trans.	Supplement	Suppl.

#### **6.4.c General Rules**

APA does not, strictly speaking, require putting major classical works, such as ancient Greek and Roman texts or classical religious texts, in the reference list; the in-text citation can stand on its own. For example:

(Plato, trans. 1961)

However, there can be confusion in this case, since the one date would refer to the whole collection of Plato’s dialogues. Therefore, it is clearer to give the full reference. Furthermore, when the original date of composition or publication is readily available, use it.

(Plato, ca. 380 BC/1961)

When quoting verbatim from a translated work, identify the actual edition as a normal reference entry would.

Plato. (1961). *Meno* (R. S. Bluck, Trans.). Cambridge University Press. (Original work composed ca. 380 BC)

In certain classical works, the parts (e.g., books, chapters, verses, lines, cantos) are numbered systematically across all editions, so use these numbers instead of page numbers when referring to specific parts of your source. Further information is found in the *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association* (2019), 8.13, p. 264.

#### **6.4.d Reprinted Classical Work**

For in-text citations, provide the author, the year the work was written, and the year of your source (the year the new edition, translation, or revision was published).

Example:

(Aquinas, 1273/1981)

For entries in the reference list, provide the author and the year the work was rewritten/translated/edited. Example:

Aquinas, T. (1981). *Summa theologiae* (English Dominican Province, Trans.). Christian Classics. (Original work composed 1273)

#### **6.4.e Ancient Work, Date Not Known**

If the original publication date is not known, cite like other references, but provide the circa abbreviation (ca.) with “original work composed/published.” Example:

Plato. (1961). *Meno* (R. S. Bluck, Trans.). Cambridge University Press. (Original work composed ca. 380 BC)

(See “In-Text Citations without Standard Abbreviations or Page Numbers” section of this document for more information.)

#### **6.4.f Bible**

When quoting or paraphrasing specific excerpts from the Bible, include the relevant titles of the book or letter and the numbers of chapters and verses. The version of the Bible needs to be mentioned only in the first citation, unless a different version is later used. For example:

*First reference:*

(Mt. 5:8, [Revised Standard Version, Second Catholic Edition], Rm. 8:28, Acts 2:1–4).

*Subsequent reference:*

“Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven” (Mt. 5:3).

When a particular translation is quoted, it is always helpful (although not required by APA style) to identify the version of the Bible in the reference list. For example:

Bible. (2010). *Revised Standard Version. Second Catholic Edition*. Ignatius Press.

At DMU, using *The Revised Standard Version, Second Catholic Edition (RSV-SCE)* or *The New American Bible, Revised Edition (NABRE)* is recommended.

Use the following list for abbreviations of the books or letters of the Bible:

Gen. Genesis	Obad. Obadiah	Ex. Exodus
Jon. Jonah	Lev. Leviticus	Mic. Micah
Num. Numbers	Nahum Nahum	Deut. Deuteronomy
Hab. Habakkuk	Josh. Joshua	Zeph. Zephaniah
Judg. Judges	Hag. Haggai	Ruth Ruth
Zech. Zechariah	1 Sam. 1 Samuel	Mal. Malachi
2 Sam. 2 Samuel	1 Kings 1 Kings	Mt. Matthew
2 Kings 2 Kings	Mk. Mark	1 Chr. 1 Chronicles
Lk. Luke	2 Chr. 2 Chronicles	Jn. John
Ezra Ezra	Acts Acts	Neh. Nehemiah
Rom. Romans	Tob. Tobit	1 Cor. 1 Corinthians
Jdt. Judith	2 Cor. 2 Corinthians	Esth. Esther
Gal. Galatians	1 Macc. 1 Maccabees	Eph. Ephesians
2 Macc. 2 Maccabees	Phil. Philippians	Job Job
Col. Colossians	Ps. Psalms	1 Thess. 1 Thessalonians
Prov. Proverbs	2 Thess. 2 Thessalonians	Eccl. Ecclesiastes
1 Tim. 1 Timothy	Song. Song of Solomon	2 Tim. 2 Timothy
Wis. Wisdom	Titus Titus	Sir. Sirach Philem.
Philemon	Isa. Isaiah	Heb. Hebrews
Jer. Jeremiah	Jas. James	Lam. Lamentations
1 Pet. 1 Peter	Bar. Baruch	2 Pet. 2 Peter
Ezek. Ezekiel	1 Jn. 1 John	Dan. Daniel
2 Jn. 2 John	Hos. Hosea	3 Jn. 3 John
Joel. Joel	Jude Jude	Am. Amos
Rev. Revelation		

#### [6.4.g Aristotle](#)

In text, when quoting a particular passage in Aristotle:

(Aristotle, ca. 350 BC/1941, 1337b33)

[which refers to Aristotle’s *Politics*, Bk VII, Ch. 3, Bekker number 1337b33]

In text, general citation, no quotation used:

(Aristotle, ca. 350 BC/1941, VII.3)

[which refers to Aristotle’s *Politics*, Book VII, Chapter 3]

Reference list:

Aristotle. (1941). *Politics*. In R. McKeon (Ed.), *The basic works of Aristotle* (pp. 1127–1316). Random House. (Original work composed ca. 350 BC)

#### 6.4.h St. Augustine

In text, when quoting a particular passage in St. Augustine:

(Augustine, 397–401/2007, XII.12.29)

[which refers to: Book XII, Chapter 12, Section 29]

In text, general citation, no quotation used:

Augustine (397–401/2007, XII.12.29).

[which refers to: Book XII, Chapter 12, Section 29]

Reference list:

Augustine. (2007). *Confessions* (2nd ed.) (M. P. Foley, Ed., & F. J. Sheed, Trans). Hackett. (Original work composed 397–401)

#### 6.4.i Thomas Aquinas and Summa Theologiae

The title of Aquinas’s work is *Summa theologiae* (“Summary of Theology”), but it is sometimes titled *Summa theologica*. If you are not making reference to a translation with “*Theologica*” in the title, use *Summa theologiae*.

The specific way the *Summa* is cited varies depending upon where it has been found. The *Summa* will be cited with the source it came from (edited book or website). Here are references for two common ways to access *Summa theologiae*:

In text, particular quotation:

(Aquinas, 1273/1981, I-II, 23.2 ad 2)

[which refers to the 1981 translation of Aquinas’ *Summary of Theology*

(*Summa theologiae*), first part of the second part, question 23, article 2, second response]



In text, general citation, no quotation used:

(Aquinas, 1273/1981)

[which simply refers to Aquinas' *Summary of Theology (Summa theologiae)*]

Reference list, print source:

Aquinas, T. (1981). *Summa theologiae* (English Dominican Province, Trans.).  
Christian Classics. (Original work composed 1273)

Reference list, online source:

Aquinas, T. (2017). *Summa theologiae* (English Dominican Province,  
Trans.). <http://www.newadvent.org/summa/>. (Original work  
composed 1273)

### 6.5 Other Ancient Texts

When there are standard conventions for quoting other ancient, patristic, or medieval texts, use them when citing or quoting a passage.

When there are no standard conventions for citing an ancient text, use page numbers and include the translation in the reference list.

### 6.6 Magisterial References

Citations for magisterial references also vary depending upon where the documents were found. Just like many of the other religious works used at DMU, magisterial references are typically found as a published book or on a website and follow the same rules as all other APA references. They typically follow this format:

In text:

(Benedict XVI, 2006, §1).

In a passage in a text:

According to Benedict XVI (2006), the different sources of knowledge form “a single rationality with its various aspects” (§1).

*[To access paragraph (§) symbol, go to “Insert” tab, “Symbol,” “More Symbols,” Select “Latin-1 Supplement” in the Subset drop down box, Select § symbol in the third row down. (These instructions cover most versions of Microsoft Word.)]*

Reference list, online source:

Author. (Date). Short Latin title italicized and only the first letter capitalized with

exception of Proper Nouns: Capitalize the first word after a colon or semicolon [Type of document, English translation of title in brackets, set roman, sentence-style capitalization]. [Website link].

[NB: The title is found in the document heading on the Vatican website.]

John Paul II. (1998). *Fides et ratio* [Encyclical, On the relationship between faith and reason]. w2.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/encyclicals/documents/hf\_jp-ii\_enc\_140919\_98\_fides-et-ratio.html

Reference list, print source:

Author. (Date). Short Latin title italicized and only the first letter capitalized with exception of Proper Nouns: Capitalize the first word after a colon or semicolon. [Type of document, English translation of title in brackets, set roman, sentence-style capitalization]. Name of Publisher.

John Paul II. (1998). *Fides et ratio* [Encyclical, On the relationship between faith and reason]. Libreria Editrice Vaticana.

Example from the Second Vatican Council:

Vatican II, Council. (1965). *Gaudium et spes* [Pastoral constitution on the Church in the modern world]. Libreria Editrice Vaticana.

### 6.7 Other Tips for Writing Magisterial References:

If the Vatican has published the book, the publisher would typically be:

- Libreria Editrice Vaticana.

Note: APA 7th edition no longer requires the inclusion of publisher location as in past editions.

When making reference to a work by a pope, do not put “Pope” in front of the name.

Use only the name and numerals as needed:

- Benedict XVI
- Francis
- John Paul II

If the document was written before the individual became pope, use his previous name.

- Jorge Mario Bergoglio: Bergoglio, J. M.
- Joseph Ratzinger: Ratzinger, J.
- Karol Józef Wojtyła: Wojtyła, K. J.

If the document was written after the individual became pope, use his papal name.

- Francis
- Benedict XVI

- John Paul II

In text example:

One of the most often quoted texts of the Second Vatican Council (1965) is: “Only in the mystery of the incarnate Word does the mystery of man take on light” (§22).

Reference list example:

Vatican II, Council. (1965). *Gaudium et spes* [Pastoral constitution on the Church in the modern world]. Libreria Editrice Vaticana.

### 6.8 Encyclicals and Church Documents Often Cited

Benedict XVI. (2005). *Deus caritas est* [Encyclical, God is love]. Libreria Editrice Vaticana.

Benedict XVI. (2006, September 12). *Faith, reason and the university: Memories and reflections* [The Regensburg address]. [w2.vatican.va/content/benedict-xvi/en/speeches/2006/september/documents/hf\\_ben-xvi\\_spe\\_20060912\\_university-regensburg.html](http://w2.vatican.va/content/benedict-xvi/en/speeches/2006/september/documents/hf_ben-xvi_spe_20060912_university-regensburg.html)

Benedict XVI. (2007). *Spe salvi* [Encyclical, On Christian hope that saves]. Libreria Editrice Vaticana.

Francis. (2013). *Lumen fidei* [Encyclical, On faith]. Libreria Editrice Vaticana.

Francis. (2016). *Amoris laetitia* [Apostolic Exhortation, On love in the family]. Libreria Editrice Vaticana.

International Theological Commission. (2002). *Communion and stewardship: Human persons created in the image of God*. Libreria Editrice Vaticana.

International Theological Commission. (2012). *Theology today: Perspectives, principles and criteria*. Libreria Editrice Vaticana.

John Paul II. (1993). *Veritatis splendor* [Encyclical, On the splendor of truth]. Libreria Editrice Vaticana.

John Paul II. (1995). *Evangelium vitae* [Encyclical, The gospel of life]. Libreria

Editrice Vaticana.

John Paul II. (1998). *Fides et ratio* [Encyclical, On the relationship between faith and reason]. Libreria Editrice Vaticana.

John Paul II. (2006). *Man and woman he created them: A theology of the body* (M. Waldstein, Trans.). Pauline Books and Media.

Vatican II, Council. (1965). *Apostolicam actuositatem* [Decree on the apostolate of the laity]. Libreria Editrice Vaticana.

Vatican II, Council. (1965). *Dei verbum* [Dogmatic constitution on divine revelation]. Libreria Editrice Vaticana.

Vatican II, Council. (1965). *Dignitatis humanae* [Declaration on religious freedom on the right of the person and of communities to social and civil freedom in matters religious]. Libreria Editrice Vaticana.

## **7.0 Appendices**

The constraints of APA format that are imposed upon the body of the paper are relaxed in the appendices. Original documents such as informed consent forms, permission letters, instructions read to participants, materials used during the course of the study, etc., may be presented here in their original formats, and may be photo-reduced if such is required to fit in 8 1/2 x 11 inch format. Procedures for other materials, such as audio-visual materials produced in the course of the thesis, will be decided on a case-by-case basis by the DRT and the DMU Library Director.

Among materials appropriate for the appendices are: (a) description of pretest materials and analysis, if any; (b) letters of permission from institutions and individuals; and (c) letters of permission for the inclusion of copyrighted materials in the thesis.

## **8.0 The Final Manuscript**

A thesis is not complete, and the degree will not be officially granted, until a Microsoft Word version has been presented to the DMU Library Director for electronic submission to ProQuest Dissertation and Theses Database. The student must schedule a meeting with the Library Director, either in person or via Zoom, to submit the thesis to the bindery.

**It is the student's responsibility to obtain and submit all forms for the thesis.**

## References

- American Psychological Association. (2019). *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association* (7th ed.).
- Donahue, M. J. (1985). Intrinsic and extrinsic religiousness: Review and meta-analysis. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 48, 400-419.
- Gergen, K. J. (1973). Social psychology as history. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 26, 309-320.
- Hyman, R. (1995). How to critique a published article. *Psychological Bulletin*, 118, 178-182.
- Sales, B. D., & Folkman, S. (2000). Ethics in research with human participants. *American Psychological Association*.

## Appendix A - Theoretical Theses

### 1. Purpose and Method of a Theoretical Theses

According to the APA *Publication Manual*, 7th ed., literature reviews, including theoretical thesis such as research syntheses, are critical evaluations of material that has already been published. By organizing, integrating, and evaluating previously published material, authors of literature reviews consider the progress toward clarifying a problem. In a sense, literature reviews are tutorials, in that the authors:

- Define and clarify the problem.
- Summarize previous investigations in order to inform the reader of the state of research.
- Identify relations, contradiction, gaps, and inconsistencies in the literature; and
- Suggest the next step or steps in solving the problem (APA, 2019, emphasis in original; see also *How to Critique a Published Article*, Hyman, 1995).

In a theoretical thesis, one chooses an area of research, reads the relevant studies, and devises a meaningful way to organize an overview, noting research questions not yet addressed, or trends in findings not yet noted by others. One example of an organizing theme is a conflict or controversy in an area, for example, the validity of a particular assessment instrument or the effectiveness of a therapeutic procedure. Publications presenting all sides of the controversy are discussed, concluding with a critical analysis and recommendations. The latter should include novel insights into the state of the literature and suggestions for further progress. Another approach is to trace the development of a particular concept over time, concluding with a critical analysis of the present state of the question, any issues as yet unaddressed, and suggestions for further analysis.

Thus, a theoretical thesis has three purposes:

- 1) To describe work done on a specific area of research;
- 2) To critically evaluate this work; and
- 3) Present novel appreciations of the research area, up to and including previously unrecognized syntheses.

Both the descriptive and evaluative elements are important parts of the review. Such a review does not simply describe past work without evaluating it (e.g., a book review), nor does it merely discuss recent theories in an area without both describing and evaluating the work done to test them and discussing each theory's advantages and inadequacies. Both sides of

controversies must be presented and evaluated. Through immersion in the most recent literature, it is expected that the student will have become familiar with research in the area, providing a perspective that can advance the state of the research in the area. Indeed, it is not uncommon that thesis literature reviews establish a lifelong intellectual interest.

Even though publishing theoretical works has become quite difficult, APA publishes a journal, *Psychological Bulletin*, whose primary mission is to present articles of precisely this type. Students considering this sort of thesis should consult it for a variety of examples. It is also best to see which areas of literature have (or have not) recently been reviewed as a guide for the selection of their topic. Perhaps the most advantageous situation is to find an area of active research in which a review has been recent enough that the earlier review can be referred to for basic issues, but sufficiently long ago that additional issues and approaches have developed.

## 2. Theory Development thesis

### Purpose of a theory development thesis

Theory development theses should be modeled on articles that appear in the APA journal *Psychological Review*. Such a thesis presents a new or, more likely, improved statement of the conceptual interrelationships among constructs of interest to the psychological community.

In light of the vision and mission of IPS/DMU, it is presumed that theory development theses will be primarily integrative; that is to say, they will either produce a largely novel framework for the consideration of some aspect of the human experience, or demonstrate ways that existing theoretical systems do or do not coincide with the insights of Catholic anthropology, what changes would be entailed in order to integrate that perspective, and the changes in outcome that might be expected to result. Examples would include:

- 1) An extension of a theoretical framework into areas in which it has not previously been applied by applying the insights and ramifications of the Catholic anthropology.
- 2) A statement that subsumes several separate theories into a single, larger framework or that demonstrates previously unacknowledged links between theoretical systems.
- 3) The introduction of an existing conceptual framework from another field (e.g., theology) into psychology, with appropriate modifications and extensions to its new environment.

- 4) Mini-theories that provide novel insights into a particular phenomenon of interest (e.g., PTSD) by integrating concepts and perspectives from a Catholic anthropology.

### **2.1 Steps in Writing a Theory Development thesis**

Theory development thesis should adhere closely to the critical literature review format and consider the following:

- 1) Begin with a literature review and account of the historical development of the conceptual frameworks to which the present work is most closely related. This would include limitations of existing models, unexplained data, apparently contradictory results, etc.;
- 2) Make a detailed presentation of the new theory of analysis;
- 3) Present existing literature demonstrating empirical support for the new approach; and
- 4) Predict findings consistent with the new approach that would differ from existing models (e.g., current theory would predict no relation between X and Y, while this theory predicts X and Y are in fact curvilinearly related).

The new theory could also be supported in additional ways such as (a) application of the new technique or approach (e.g., a treatment modality) to new or existing clinical protocols; or (b) anecdotal or tangential empirical support. The latter is more acceptable than would be the case for a traditional quantitative thesis.

### **3. Final Considerations for a Theoretical Approach for Your Thesis**

Theoretical theses discuss work done in a particular area of research. There are no Method or Results sections. Sections are arranged by relationship rather than chronology.

Published theoretical theses are often referred to as review articles. The emphasis in review articles is on interpretation of how a line of research supports or fails to support one or more theories. Review articles are valuable information sources, not only because they cite every important piece of research in the area surveyed, but also because they compare and evaluate all the key theories in a particular area of research.



Empirical theses include a condensed literature review in their introduction section, the emphasis of which is on the methods and results of one particular area of study rather than an entire body of research.

The introductory literature review in an empirical thesis uses a “funnel” approach to increasingly focus on the particular topic of the thesis, and then a deductive argument in support of the hypotheses to be examined (e.g., here’s the research; here’s the obvious next question; that’s what I am going to do).

## Appendix B - Meta-Analysis

Meta-analysis, as its name implies, performs data analysis at a more general level than standard descriptive or inferential statistics. It uses findings across studies, as opposed to responses drawn from individuals, as the data to be analyzed. After following the procedures of traditional narrative review with respect to selection of topic and relevant literature, the meta-analyst transforms the findings from each study into measures of effect size (e.g.,  $r$  or  $d$ ). The next step is to examine the variance of effects across studies to determine whether the variance observed across studies is greater than that which would be expected from simple sampling variance. If there is evidence of additional variance (note that in fact this is rather uncommon), other carefully suggested, theoretically relevant moderating variables should, for the most part, be chosen and defended prior to performing the analysis, lest choosing a grocery basketful of *post hoc* hypotheses produces significant findings simply by capitalizing on chance. On the other hand, the influence of some study characteristics on findings may only be manifest after the data have been gathered (Donahue, 1985).

To perform a meta-analysis, the student needs to learn the analytical procedures unique to it, such as transforming a variety of inferential statistics into a common effect size measure, and some of the basic issues surrounding the technique as a whole. Sophisticated software has been developed to simplify the effort involved in calculations, so that the student may focus more attention on interpretation.

Meta-analysis shares some of the characteristics of the literature review and those of more traditional empirical research. It differs from a literature review in that conclusions are drawn from and supported by, not narrative analysis or vote counting (e.g., so many positive results, so many negative results) but statistical analysis of variance across studies. It permits examination of the distribution of findings across studies, and even a method for determining the validity of the conclusions drawn by more traditional reviews.

## Appendix C: Sample Pages - Signature Page

COMPETENCY REQUIREMENTS OF PSYCHOLOGISTS ASSESSING DIOCESAN SEMINARY

APPLICANTS FOR THE CATHOLIC CHURCH

A Master's Thesis

Presented to the faculty of

THE INSTITUTE FOR THE PSYCHOLOGICAL SCIENCES

DIVINE MERCY UNIVERSITY

in partial fulfillment of the requirement for the degree of

MASTER OF SCIENCE IN PSYCHOLOGY

by

John Graduate

December 14, 2016

Approved by:

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\_\_\_\_\_, Ph.D., Committee Chair

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\_\_\_\_\_, Ph.D., Committee Member

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\_\_\_\_\_, STD, Committee Member

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Julia Klausli, PhD, MSP- Program Director

## Appendix C: Sample Pages - Title Page

THE SEARCH FOR THE ROOT CAUSES OF THIRD WORLD  
PERSISTENT UNDERDEVELOPMENT IN CONVENTIONAL  
SOCIAL SCIENCE TENETS AND THEORIES

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A MASTER'S THESIS

presented to the faculty of

THE INSTITUTE FOR THE PSYCHOLOGICAL SCIENCES

DIVINE MERCY UNIVERSITY

in partial fulfillment of the requirement for the degree of

MASTER OF SCIENCE IN PSYCHOLOGY

---

By

Samuel Mockingbird

May 21, 2002

Dedication [optional]

*Ad majorem Dei gloriam.*

## Appendix C: Sample Pages - Abstract Page

### Abstract

THE SEARCH FOR THE ROOT CAUSES OF THIRD WORLD PERSISTANT  
UNDERDEVELOPMENT IN CONVENTIONAL SOCIAL SCIENCE TENETS  
AND THEORIES

Samuel Mockingbird

Institute for the Psychological Sciences

Divine Mercy University

May 21, 2001

Committee Chair: James George, Ph.D.

The abstract summarizes the thesis as a whole. Common elements include a statement regarding the project's purpose, a brief description of the project's methodology, and the results. The abstract of a master's thesis or project should scrupulously follow the instructions given here since it will be published in Thesis Abstracts without revision or editing. It should be a succinct account allowing readers to decide whether the full contents would be of interest to them. Diagrams or other illustrated materials and formulas or equations should be avoided in the abstract.

*Keywords:* abstracts, APA style, thesis, formatting