



Universidad
de Alcalá

TEACHING GUIDE

MASTER'S THESIS

Master in North American Studies

Academic year 2024/2025.

TEACHING GUIDE

:	Master's thesis
Code:	202342
Degree in which it is taught:	Master in North American Studies
Department and Area of Knowledge:	Filología Moderna. Filología Inglesa
Character:	Mandatory
ECTS credits:	12
Year and term:	Academic year 2024-25
Faculty:	All MANAS instructors and teachers of the Instituto Franklin and of the Department of English Philology (UCM)
Tutoring Schedule:	To be agreed with the thesis advisor
Language of instruction:	English

1.a PRESENTATION

El Trabajo Fin de Máster (TFM) tiene como objetivo que el estudiante demuestre las competencias adquiridas como el conocimiento y la capacidad de aplicación de las herramientas de análisis desarrolladas a lo largo del programa de estudio MANAS. Esta materia pretende iniciar a los estudiantes de MANAS en la investigación sobre los Estudios Norteamericanos desde la perspectiva particular que ellos mismos elijan, Es el epítome del programa, sirviendo a los discentes como iniciación en el mundo de la investigación sobre los EE.UU. Las aproximaciones son casi ilimitadas dado el carácter interdisciplinar y multidisciplinar del Máster. Cada alumno desarrolla su proyecto a partir de si propia iniciativa, dirigido por un investigador / profesor del Instituto Franklin o de la Facultad de Filología (UCM). La Comisión de Coordinación de Máster tendrá la responsabilidad de la asignación definitiva de los correspondientes tutores. El trabajo se redactará, expondrá y defenderá oralmente en inglés, con el fin de comprobar la capacidad expositiva del estudiante.

1.b PRESENTATION (in English)

The objective of the Master's Thesis is for the student to demonstrate and apply the competences, knowledge, and analytic skills acquired and developed throughout the program. This module intends to initiate students to academic research in North American Studies

through the investigation of a topic chosen by the student; as such it is the perfect summary of the Master's program. Given the multidisciplinary nature of the degree, the possible topics are almost limitless. Each student will develop their project under their own initiative but under the supervision of a researcher/ professor of the Instituto Franklin or the Department of Philology (UCM). The degree's Coordination Committee will be responsible for the final assignment of the corresponding tutors. The dissertation will be written, presented, and defended orally before a panel of three experts, in order to check the student's expository ability.

2. COMPETENCES and LEARNING OUTCOMES

- Basic and general competences:

CG1.- Students will enhance their knowledge of the disciplines related to American Studies.

CG2.- Students will be able to apply the acquired knowledge to deal with theoretical and methodological questions related to the academic areas present in the different itineraries of the Master.

CG3.- Students will be able to learn in a continuous and autonomous way, developing new approaches and methodologies in North American Studies.

CG4.- Students will be able to incorporate the latest research in the area of their project.

CG5.- Students will be able to increase the needed skills for conducting a research project.

CB6.- Students will exhibit good command of basic knowledge in the topic and will be able to produce original ways to apply ideas and methods.

CB7.- Students will be able to select and apply existing methodologies to explore new or wider contexts.

CB8.- Students will be capable of communicating their research outcome and the knowledge and justification that sustain their work both to an audience of specialists and to a wider public in a clear and rigorous manner.

- Specific competences:

CE1.- Students will be able to question the validity of assertions about the idiosyncrasy of American culture.

CE2 - Students will be able to discern specific milestones of North American culture, history, and society, both diachronically and synchronically.

CE3.- Students will be able to conduct research with an appropriate structure, clear writing, solid argumentation, and adherence to all citation and source referencing standards typical of this type of work while assimilating theories or opinions presented in other studies on the topic.

CE4.- Students will have the ability to interpret and evaluate all types of current American texts (press, advertising, reports, communications, texts of a scientific

or economic nature, ideological, historical, literary, etc.), uncovering their ideology, objectives, and function.

CE5.- Students will be able to make interdisciplinary and multidisciplinary approaches to American cultural constructs, regardless of their nature.

CE6.- Students will review the topic's state of the art, select theories and methodologies learned in MANAS and apply them in the development of the thesis.

Learning outcomes:

After the writing and defense of the Master's Thesis, the student will have achieved the following learning outcomes:

-The student will be able to synthesize the state of the art of a given problem in the field of American Studies, and to critically analyze its implications by understanding complex phenomena through the reading of related literature.

-The Master's Thesis serves as the student's initiation into research in the field of American Studies. By selecting and closely examining primary and secondary materials related to their chosen topic of study, the student will have gained the ability to construct their own well-supported argument and to situate it within the existing critical literature.

-The student will be able to write academic texts at a proficient level and to communicate their findings and research results in a professional, clear, and argumentative way, both at the oral and the written level.

Important notice: Students will be assigned a topic and a tutor once they are enrolled in the pending credits to complete the Master's program, including the thesis credits. The oral defense will only be celebrated when the student has passed all the Master's credits. The Master's thesis is an individual project and as such must be carried out in its entirety. The thesis must be written in English following the academic conventions of citation and will be presented and defended in English.

3. CONTENTS

Each student will be assigned one or more advisors who will supervise the research project leading towards the dissertation. The thesis advisor will help the student to define the topic, understand the specificities of the Master's Thesis, guide during the process, and to check that the plan is carried out according to the fixed objectives and the deadlines given.

The Coordination Committee will be in charge of assigning a tutor/ tutors for the research topics presented by the students for each academic year. The Committee will keep in mind the student's preferences for a specific topic and the teaching duties of

potential tutors. Students must submit a request to the coordinator of the university where they are enrolled prior to the final allocation of a tutor.

Before submitting the thesis, it is compulsory to upload it to Turnit-in and obtain the report of originality. The student must send that report to their thesis advisor, who will then complete their confidential report. Access to the Turnit-in program will be granted by the thesis advisor or the coordinator. Students are encouraged to ask for that access with plenty of time ahead of the due dates.

The thesis advisor must send their report (Document 5, “Informe de valoración del tutor”), the model is available online) with e–signature to the coordinator. This is a confidential document that should never be given to the student. The student must send a pdf version of the thesis to the coordinator of the university where you are registered (if you are registered with Alcalá, Luisa Juárez, if you are registered with Complutense, Laura de la Parra).

The final version of the thesis must use the right cover (Document 3, “Portada”) and include the declaration of originality (Document 4, “Declaración de no plagio”). Also, for students enrolled in Alcalá, they must send separately the granting of permission to upload their TFM to the UAH library catalogue (Documento 6, “Autorización para inclusión del TFM en el E-BUAH”). In addition, a PDF version of the final project must be sent by email to BOTH coordinators, regardless of what university you are registered with.

5. ASSESSMENT: Procedures, assessment and marking criteria

The Master’s thesis is assessed by a board of three experts in the field of North American Studies, who should be appointed by the Coordination Committee from the professors in the Instituto Franklin and the Department of English Philology (UCM).

The thesis will be written in English and its defence will be conducted in that language too.

A board of three examiners or examining committee formed by professors teaching in the master’s program or drawn from departments connected to the program will judge the submitted thesis. One professor will produce a confidential written report and two professors will be onsite. The thesis will be assessed based on its degree of originality, the presentation of the objectives, the analysis and methodology proposed, the evaluation of its content and conclusions, and the adequacy of the bibliography used. The committee will comment on your work and will ask you questions. The final result will be a numeric grade given by the three members of the examining committee jointly.

Each academic year has three different dates for the thesis defense:

- July (regular date);
- September (regular date);
- February (this is an extraordinary date and requires registering and paying fees again).

If the thesis is defended in July/September: February is the deadline to send both coordinators the student's proposal of topic and advisor.

If the thesis is defended in February: late November is the deadline to communicate your topic and potential advisor to both coordinators.

The students must download from the Instituto web and fill in for submission the following:

- Document 1 ("Propuesta de título y coordinador", available online) stating the title of your master's thesis, an abstract, and five keywords

- Document 2 ("Aceptación de tutorización del Trabajo de Fin de Master", available online), signed by you and your advisor (available online)

These documents will be sent to both coordinators, Alcalá, Luisa Juárez, and Complutense, Laura de la Parra). The coordinators will have to approve both the student's choice of topic and their choice of advisor.

The final project or thesis consists of 60 pages (minimum) - 80 pages (maximum), typed in Times New Roman size 12 for the main text, Times New Roman size 10 for the footnotes/endnotes, Line spacing: 1,5, and Margins: 2,5 (top and bottom), 2,5 (left and right. Appendixes (if necessary) do not count towards the minimum or maximum number of pages.

For references and citations, students must follow one of these style sheets:

- MLA (MLA Handbook, 8th ed., 2016)

- Chicago (Chicago Manual of Style, 6 th ed., 2010)

The structure for the master's thesis should follow this order:

1. Cover page (Document 3, "Portada", available online),
2. Academic integrity statement (Document 4, "Declaración de no plagio", available online), signed by you,
3. Table of contents,
4. Abstract + 5 keywords,
5. Introduction / objectives,
6. Methodology / theoretical framework,
7. Main text,
8. Conclusion/s,
9. List of references / works cited,
10. Appendixes (only if necessary).

The act of the thesis defense happens as follows:

The student will have 15 minutes to present their project, explain their research as a process, and summarize their findings. Then, the student will take questions from the professors on the examining board. The final grade is a combination of both the student's written thesis and their performance during the defense.

The entire assessment process will be based on the continuous assessment of the student, in such a way as to guarantee the acquisition of both the contents and the competences of the subject. The assessment is in accordance with the UAH learning assessment regulations.¹

¹ UAH Learning Assessment Regulation (30 September 2021). <https://www.uah.es/export/sites/uah/es/conoce-la-uah/organizacion-y-gobierno/.galleries/Galeria-Secretaria-General/Normativa-Evaluacion-Aprendizajes.pdf>