



Guidelines for the Preparation of the Master's Thesis in International History and Politics

April 2021

1. The Master's Thesis (Mémoire de Thèse) is the culmination of the two-year Master's in International History and Politics.
2. The Department of International History and Politics encourages creativity in selecting the topic of the thesis, and expects rigour, methodologically and intellectually, as far as the nature of the research is concerned.
3. Students can build on an existing course paper or on previous research conducted during their studies at the Graduate Institute. The nature of the thesis can be historiographical.
4. The use of primary sources is not compulsory. Students can use them as relevant to their work, and in agreement with their supervisors. The nature of these primary sources varies. They can be written or oral, audio-visual or electronic.
5. As to secondary sources, students are expected to conduct extensive research and thorough readings.
6. Students are encouraged to read and research in different languages. Although English and French are the two formal languages of the Graduate Institute, knowledge and use of other languages is an asset in the research and preparation of the thesis. Students should discuss with their supervisors the inclusion of primary and secondary sources in languages relevant to their research.
7. The outline and specific contents of the thesis vary. Theses should *at minima* include the following components (referred to as 'sections' rather than 'chapters', which is a term specific to monographs): (i) an introduction presenting the issue(s) at hand; (ii) a section on methodology; (iii) a critical review of the relevant literature; (iv) one section or more developing the core argument(s); (v) a concluding section summarising the findings and (vi) a bibliography. Each student discusses the articulation of the sections of her or his thesis with the supervisor.
8. The citation and reference system to be used consistently is the Chicago Manual of Style.

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9. Students agree on the topic of their thesis with a supervisor. Students are free to choose the supervisor from amongst the faculty of the International History and Politics Department or from another department of the Graduate Institute. If the student wants to be supervised by a professor from a department other than the International History and Politics Department, the student must receive the formal authorisation of the International History and Politics Department and the formal authorisation of the Direction of Studies (Direction des Études), and her/his second reader must be from the International History and Politics Department.
10. Students are free to contact an envisioned supervisor as early as they wish, but no later than the end of the second semester from the start of their studies. They should bear in mind that the potential supervisor has to agree to supervise the thesis. A professor is free to decline the supervision request. Students must communicate the tentative title of their thesis by the end of the second semester.
11. Students can start researching their topic as early as they have agreed on a topic with a faculty member. They do not need to wait for the beginning of the third or fourth semester to embark on the work. The Master's Thesis is a time-consuming, demanding and serious endeavour. Time-management is one of the learning skills of this assignment. Clarity and intelligibility are assessed, and contribute to the overall quality of the research.
12. The supervisor selects the second reader. Students can make suggestions of a potential second reader to the supervisor. The second reader can be a professor from the International History and Politics department or from another department of the Graduate Institute. In exceptional cases, the second reader can be a colleague from another university. In that case, the Graduate Institute's Director of Studies (Directeur des Études) must be informed and her/his agreement formally secured.
13. The length of the Master's Thesis is between 15,000 and 25,000 words, excluding notes, annexes and bibliography. Times New Roman 12 point is the preferred font with paragraph spacing set as 1.5.
14. This document does not specify the topics of the theses. Students and supervisors discuss bilaterally, and agree on the theme, chronology, geographical area(s), unit(s) of analysis and comparative nature (if any) of the Master's thesis per the field of International History and Politics.