STUDENT GUIDELINES
FOR COMPLETING THE GRADUATE SCHOOL OF ARTS AND SCIENCE
M.A. THESIS AND ADVANCED CERTIFICATE PAPER IN MUSEUM STUDIES

1. Overview
A final research paper is a core requirement of both graduate degree programs in Museum Studies. It has two basic components. First, all students must complete the Museum Studies Research Seminar (MSMS-GA.3991). Second, all students must submit an Advanced Certificate Paper or an M.A. Thesis. The Advanced Certificate Paper is a 30-page assignment submitted at the end of the Research Seminar. The M.A. Thesis is a 50-page research paper that begins in the Research Seminar, but is completed under the guidance of an advisor in the subsequent semester.

<table>
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<th>To satisfy this requirement each student must:</th>
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<tr>
<td>Complete the Research Seminar</td>
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<td>Advanced Certificate students submit: 30-page (8,000-10,000 words) Advanced Certificate Paper</td>
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<td>M.A. students submit: 50-page (12,000-13,000 words) M.A. Thesis.</td>
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2. Registration
All students wishing to begin the Research Seminar must register for course MSMS-GA.3991. After the completion of the Research Seminar, it is not necessary for M.A. students to register for another specific course while writing the M.A. thesis, if the required 32 points of course work have been completed. All candidates must maintain active student status until their degree is awarded, which means either registering for a course (if they have less than 32 points completed) or maintaining Matriculation and paying the matriculation fees.

3. M.A. Thesis Timetable
Typically, students begin the Research Seminar in their third semester. M.A. students then use the fourth semester to complete the Thesis, handing in the Advisor-approved Final Thesis about one month prior to graduation. All students have one calendar year to complete the M.A. Thesis, starting from the first day of the term in which the Research Seminar is taken. It is the responsibility of each student to arrange time to work with their Thesis advisor, to revise the Thesis per the requirements of the Advisor and Second Reader, and to submit the final Thesis by the deadline.

<table>
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<tr>
<th>To Graduate</th>
<th>Begin Research Seminar</th>
<th>First submission of MA Thesis*</th>
<th>Final submission of Thesis, with all revisions included</th>
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<tr>
<td>May 2020</td>
<td>September 2019</td>
<td>March 2, 2020</td>
<td>April 15, 2020</td>
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<td>January 2021</td>
<td>September 2019</td>
<td>October 15, 2020</td>
<td>December 1, 2020</td>
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<td>May 2021</td>
<td>September 2020</td>
<td>March 2, 2021</td>
<td>April 16, 2021</td>
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* Individual faculty advisors of M.A. Thesis may require earlier deadlines.

There is a 5-year time limit for completion of the M.A. degree and a 3-year time limit for completion of the Advanced Certificate. Those who have problems in meeting this limit may request an extension, stating their need and reasons in writing.

4. Maintenance of Matriculation
Students who have completed enough points for the degree but continue working on their M.A. thesis are required to register for maintenance of matriculation (course MAINT-GA.4747.001) each Fall and Spring semester until the degree is granted and pay matriculation fees. This counts as time to degree. Students who have completed course work may maintain matriculation up to the specified time limit of their degrees.

5. Grades
The M.A. Thesis is graded on a pass/fail basis only. Exemplary theses will be selected for distinction.
6. M.A. Thesis Frequently Asked Questions:

- **How Long is the Research Paper?**
  The Advanced Certificate Paper is 8,000-10,000 words. The M.A. Thesis is 12,000-13,000 words, excluding footnotes and bibliography.

- **Why Write a Research Paper?**
  The research paper is designed to evaluate a candidate’s ability to conduct independent research in a focused and scholarly manner, and to demonstrate an expertise on a subject germane to the theory and practice of museums.

- **Who Writes a Research Paper?**
  All degree candidates regardless of prior graduate work must complete this requirement.

- **How Do I Pick a Topic?**
  You should pick a topic that allows you to develop your interests and expertise in a specific aspect of Museum Studies. Often, the research topic germinates in the writing of a seminar paper or through experiences in the internship, but this is not essential. Students will work on developing a topic in the Research Seminar.

- **What is a Research Proposal?**
  The research proposal consists of an abstract, annotated bibliography and outline, each of which are developed in the Research Seminar as the starting point for writing a Final Seminar Paper. This paper will serve as the first stage towards the Thesis.

- **When Should I Begin Writing?**
  A 20-page paper constitutes the final assignment of the Research Seminar. It is likely, however, that this draft will differ considerably from the next draft that you develop under the guidance of your advisor. Nonetheless, by the end of the Research Seminar all students will have drafted a significant piece of writing.

- **How Long Will It Take to Finish?**
  Most students take two semesters to complete the M.A. thesis, allowing them to complete the M.A. degree in the spring semester that follows their Research Seminar. Some students choose to use the additional time of the summer break, and obtain a Sept. degree.

- **Are There Formatting Guidelines?**
  Yes. A sample copy of a thesis cover page is below. References and formatting should follow guidelines presented in the Turabian’s *A Manual for Writers of Research Papers, Theses and Dissertations* (8th edition, 2013). All theses should be typed and double-spaced with 1” margins, using a font size similar to Times 12pt. The M.A. Thesis should follow a standard format as follows:

  Title Page
  Abstract

- **What Should Be in First Submission of My M.A. Thesis?**
  The first version of the thesis is paginated, and fully formatted, with title page, abstract, table of contents, body of text, illustrations, and references (see above). It is 12,000-13,000 words, plus bibliography and footnotes. Illustrations, graphs, and charts may be inserted in the text.

- **How Will My M.A. Thesis Be Evaluated?**
  Your thesis will be read by your advisor and a second reader. Your advisor will contact you to let you know if your thesis has been accepted. Although some advisors may choose to write final comments, the thesis is evaluated on a pass/fail basis. Advisors and second readers are required only to sign the title page of the completed thesis and MA Thesis approval forms.

- **How Do I Submit the Final Version of My M.A. Thesis?**
  Submit by e-mail the final version of your thesis in Microsoft Word and PDF format to your advisor, along with a hard copy if requested. You will be told by your advisor if any changes are required for your thesis to be approved. Once you have been informed that your thesis has been approved by both your advisor and the second reader, submit it in PDF format to the Museum Studies Program Administrator (museum.studies@nyu.edu) for graduation processing and for the department files.

- **How Should I Format My Title Page?**
  Title pages should follow this format:

  DILEMNAS OF LINCOLN MEMORIAL

  Thesis Submitted in Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of Master of Arts

  MARIA BENDER
  Program in Museum Studies
  Graduate School of Arts and Science
  New York University
  May 2017