

# Guidelines for Applied Thesis

Below is a suggested list of chapters for the applied thesis, with a description of the core contents for each chapter. Students can organize their chapters differently if it makes sense for their project and they have the approval of their advisor; however, they should include all of the contents listed for the chapters below.

## 1. Overview of Applied Thesis Project

This chapter provides a contextual overview of the applied thesis project. It should include:

- An overview of the theoretical dimensions of the project
  - An introduction to the theoretical perspectives taken in the thesis research (described in more detail in the Literature Review chapter)
  - How theory was linked to practice in the execution of the project
- An overview of the applied dimensions of the project
  - A description of the client and the environment in which the thesis research took place.
  - A description of the challenge or problem the client was facing that the thesis was designed to address, and what kinds of deliverables the student agreed to provide to the client at the outset of the project
  - How the student made the connection with the client, and a summary of the relationship with the client over the course of the project
  - Significant changes in the project that occurred along the way (e.g. alteration in research questions, shift to different client contact person)
  - A short overview of the deliverables provided to the client (described in more detail in the Research Findings and Deliverables chapter)
  - How the client reacted to the deliverables (if applicable), and any changes the client organization implemented as a result of the thesis project

## 2. Literature Review

In this chapter, the student describes the theoretical and topical perspectives that informed the thesis project. Typically, this will include several related subject areas and disciplines. It should include some variety of applied anthropology. The student's committee can help identify relevant bodies of work. A good literature review clearly states 1) how the thesis is building on prior literature, and 2) how the thesis contributes to existing literature and moves it forward.

## 3. Project Design

A description of the stages or major activities of the applied thesis project. These stages will commonly include methods of data collection, analysis, and preparation of deliverables. However, each project is different, so types of stages may vary considerably. A timeline is often useful.

Each stage of the project should be described in detail. For instance, a data collection stage should identify what methods and tools were used (participant observation, in-depth interviews, surveys, secondary data analysis, etc.), and what population was examined.

The student should be as specific as possible, for instance specifying how many interviews were conducted; how many hours were spent doing participant observation; and describe the demographic breakdown of the participants. The student should also explain how each stage of the project contributed to the outcome of the applied thesis.

#### **4. Research Findings and Deliverables**

In this chapter, the student describes the research findings (insights, models, frameworks) that resulted from the project, and how those findings formed the basis for client deliverables.

The research findings should be supported by evidence in the form of ethnographic thick description. This is an opportunity for the student to display skill in ethnographic narrative writing, a core competence for anthropologists.

The chapter should also describe the deliverables given to the client. For instance, the deliverables could have included a written report, a verbal presentation, a set of design prototypes, a manual, and/or program recommendations.

#### **5. Discussion and Personal Reflection on Applied Thesis Project**

A description of what the student learned from the experience. This should include how the student's training in anthropology shaped the project design and execution of the applied thesis project. What did anthropology add to the outcome? What made this an applied anthropology project?

#### **References**

Include only those references cited in the applied thesis. Format them according to the Chicago Manual of Style, which is the official style guide of the American Anthropological Association.

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#### **Formatting the Applied Thesis**

The guidelines for master's theses provided by the Toulouse Graduate School must be followed. The manual is available here: <http://www.tsgs.unt.edu/academics/thesis-and-dissertations/manual>.

Following these guidelines is time-taking, so do not leave the task of formatting until the end. The easiest option for you is to review the manual *before* you start the thesis, and to format the thesis correctly from the very beginning of the writing process.

If you have any questions, you can contact Jill Kleister at [jill.kleister@unt.edu](mailto:jill.kleister@unt.edu).

#### **Submitting the Applied Thesis**

It is essential to work with your Chair early in the semester to set some deadlines for completing your thesis. You need to get the first draft of your thesis to the entire committee in a timeframe such that they all have plenty of time for reading the entire

manuscript, providing detailed feedback to you, time to make your changes, and for a second round of reviews, feedback and changes, if needed. Please be respectful of the committee's review time needs, and don't ask them to review your thesis the week before it is due.

**Deadline: The department guideline is that the Chair should see the fairly complete thesis draft at least 6 weeks before the TGS deadline for submission; the rest of the committee should see it 4 weeks before the deadline.**

After your committee has approved the thesis, you will submit it to the UNT Toulouse Graduate School through an online tool called Vireo. See the Toulouse Graduate School website for instructions.

Be aware that there is one person who edits all theses and dissertations at UNT, Jill Kleister. Her title is Graduate Reader. She will send you requests for edits, but she tends to get delayed, so you may be editing the thesis after you graduate.