



## **THESES / ADVISING**

**Here you can find some general information if you consider writing your final thesis with Prof. Dr. Astrid M. Fellner:**

### **1) Choosing a topic for your final thesis**

Before you come see me...

- think of a topic that you would like to work on.
- If you have a topic that you would like to work on, please check the MLA-Bibliography and write up a bibliography with the most relevant secondary sources. Bring this list with you, so that I can see that you have already concerned yourself with this topic. In selecting a topic, make sure your topic is not too broad. If you see that there is already a lot of secondary material available on a specific topic, you have to reconsider your topic and limit the focus.
- If possible, write up a couple of ideas that you would like to pursue in your thesis.

### **2) Come to my office hours**

The best way to get in touch with me is to contact Frau Lau and schedule an appointment ([amerikanistik@mx.uni-saarland.de](mailto:amerikanistik@mx.uni-saarland.de)). Please think of a topic before you come see me (see above). I can only help you if you have already familiarized yourself with your topic. Let's say you want to work on Chicano literature, please don't come to my office and tell me that you want to work on Chicano literature, but come prepared with some specific primary works (which you have read and about which we can then talk).

### **3) Research proposal**

After you have talked to me and I have approved of your topic, you have to put your ideas into more concrete terms. The best way to do this is to write a research proposal. A research proposal is a written outline which helps you think out the precise topic of your research project.



Your outline should contain the following parts:

- **Topic of your project (tentative title)**

- **Research question (a thesis statement):** State your question/s that your research should answer. A research question should look like:

“This MA thesis analyzes .....” or “The following thesis will show that ...” or “In my thesis, I will analyze/show/investigate how/in what ways.....” This research question is the “topic sentence” of your whole project.

For tips for writing such a thesis statement, check:  
<http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/545/01/>

- **Description of your project:** Describe what you will do to answer your research question/s. This section also includes a preliminary structure.

- **Time Plan:** Decide when you want to be finished and when you want to submit your final version and then work your way backwards from there.

- **Bibliography:** Make a list of texts that you plan to consult at this stage of your project (this bibliography will hopefully be longer than your initial bibliography) This research proposal should be about 2 pages long. It should be your very first zero-draft of your “Stex thesis” or “MA thesis.” At the same time, however, remember that this research proposal is only a tool and not an iron-straitjacket that cannot be changed.

#### 4) Research Colloquium (Examenskolloquium)

This research colloquium offers you a forum for a presentation of your work-in-progress. In this class you can ask questions and exchange ideas with your peers.

#### 5) Writing your thesis

What does your thesis have to look like?

Your thesis needs an introduction, individual chapters, a conclusion, and a bibliography. Please also hand in a German summary of your thesis (in an e-mail).

Format: Please make sure you follow the MLA stylesheet. Please see the short version of the MLA stylesheet on this website.