

Savannah College of Art and Design

Graduate Thesis Guidelines

Animation

Revised January 2023

I. Forming the Thesis Committee

A. Formation Schedule

1. The student should plan to seek out members for their thesis committee during the quarter in which they will complete their candidacy review.

B. Thesis Committee Requirements

1. The committee is made up of a chair and two other members
2. The chair must be a SCAD faculty member in the student's discipline, preferably full-time, and should hold a terminal degree in that field; the other two members may be SCAD faculty or SCAD faculty and an external member.
3. Any external committee member should possess the necessary level of expertise and credentials to serve on a thesis committee and may not be related to the student in any way.
4. Thesis chairs must review a CV or résumé for any external committee members before approving their committee service.
5. It is discouraged to have SCAD staff on your thesis committee, but if approved by both the thesis chair and departmental chair, the thesis application package must include written permission from both the staff member's immediate supervisor and Human Resources to serve on the thesis committee.

C. Roles of Committee Members

1. Student Responsibilities – i.e. *The student will* _____.
 - i read and be familiar with the program requirements outlined in this document.
 - ii conduct original research and produce scholarship novel to the field of study.
 - iii regularly contact faculty regarding the thesis.
 - iv revise thesis based on committee feedback.
 - v meet all deadlines set by their department and graduate advising.
2. Committee Chair Responsibilities – i.e. *The committee chair will* _____.
 - i read and be familiar with the program requirements outlined in this document.
 - ii ensure adherence to departmental and professional standards.
 - iii coordinate any required event(s) (e.g., presentation, exhibition, defense).
 - iv mediate issues that arise with the committee.
 - v submit the final grade to the registrar's office.
 - vi maintain regular contact with each student enrolled in THES 799.
3. Committee Member Responsibilities – i.e. *The committee member will* _____.
 - i read and be familiar with the program requirements outlined in this document.
 - ii provide timely feedback and support during all phases of thesis development and completion.
 - iii regularly meet with thesis students and remain available for scheduled committee events.
 - iv maintain regular contact with committee members regarding thesis progress.
 - v provide a verifiable signature upon the successful completion of the thesis.

II. Thesis Application (required for registration in ANIM 790 Animation M.F.A. Thesis Completion)

A. Prerequisites for Thesis Application

1. Student must have first passed the review for candidacy.
2. Student must have a minimum cumulative and major GPA of at least 3.0 overall.
3. A completed registration application package must be submitted to the Registration Application assignment found within the THES 007 course in Blackboard, by the final day of the quarter prior to the intended quarter of enrollment.
4. The registration application package includes three components: a signed registration application; the thesis proposal; and a timeline for completion.
5. Thesis due dates contained within the timeline will be established by the thesis committee.

B. Thesis Application Process

1. Go to the Course Registration module found within the THES 007 course in Blackboard.
2. Review the instructions provided within the Registration Assignment. If you have any questions regarding your application, please contact your graduate success adviser.
3. Submit the required documents prior to the submission deadline (i.e., by 11:59pm of the final day of the quarter).
4. Check for emails regarding any required corrections you need to make to the submitted documents.

III. Thesis Components

A. Defining a thesis

A thesis should be a mature, resolved body of work that demonstrates advanced professional competence through mastery of the technical, creative and aesthetic elements of the discipline. M.F.A. body of work may be visual, written, or a combination of the two. Written component may be a stand-alone scholarly research paper, or the research, ideation and concept development supporting and contextualizing the visual component (e.g., process book, artist statement, project documents, and preproduction and production materials)

All students in the Animation MFA program will concentrate their time on the development of a body of studio work that demonstrates advanced professional competence through mastery of the technical, creative, and aesthetic elements of their animation focus. The visual section of the thesis will be defended by a written component contextualizing and documenting the research of their work. In consultation with their thesis committee, students select one of the following types of written documents to produce, keeping in mind their career goals and their body of work.

B. Students may choose ONE of the following two options:

1. Scholarly paper that focuses on the student's research and connects it to their body of visual work. The scholarly paper is an excellent option for those pursuing an academic career. The paper should have a minimum of 5000-8225 words (20-30 double-spaced pages, no max pages) and include:
 - a. an introduction with thesis statement
 - b. a contextual review (literature review including the work of relevant visual artists)
 - c. a discussion of methodology used to produce the visual component of the thesis
 - d. discussion and analysis of studio work
 - e. conclusion
 - f. an annotated bibliography of at least 30 sources
 - g. an appendix of images of the resolved work that comprises the thesis visual component.
2. Professional animation book that documents the ideation for and development of the visual body of work. This is a standard type of document in the animation field. This book should include a minimum of 3500 words of text to accompany a curated selection of the following:
 - a. images that defend the student's mastery over the visual component
 - b. images of relevant diagrams, mind maps, drawings, and/or concept and visual development studies
 - c. images of the student's pivotal work that led to the thesis body of work
 - d. information related to the student's research and influences
 - e. Additionally, the animation book must include an annotated bibliography of at least 20 sources.
 - f. One printed copy of the professional animation book must be provided to the animation department chair.

C. Studio Component

1. The studio/visual component will be open to the following options depending on the area of concentration: Animation, Technical Direction, Modeling, Visual Development and Lighting and Texturing. These options can be narrative or non-narrative in structure.
2. The studio/visual component should evidence a synthesis of conceptual ideas, visual imagination, theoretical knowledge and practical skill acquired through a combination of course work and personal study.
3. The specification of the studio components such as number of pieces, length of films, organization of materials, etc. will be determined by the nature of the project as well as the expectations set by the student and thesis committee members.
4. Students who are working on narrative-based projects are highly recommended to limit the screen duration of their film to prioritize completion.
5. The project title should be appropriate to the visual component content and distinct from the thesis title.

IV. Thesis Defense

Defense/presentation/exhibition of the thesis will be determined by the nature of the project as well as the expectations set by the student and thesis committee members.

V. Departmental Thesis Guidelines

- A. End of week 8: approval of thesis paper by thesis committee.
- B. End of week 9: approval of visual component by thesis committee.
- C. End of week 9: signature page signed by all thesis committee members. Approved thesis paper submitted via the THES 007 course.

VI. Sources and Citations

- A. The animation department uses the most current iteration of Chicago/Turabian for all of its theses.
- B. Any source used in the text—books, journals, websites, first-person observations, classroom observations, email correspondence, surveys, interviews, and case studies— must be cited
- C. All images—static or moving—must be properly cited to include information about the image itself and how that image was accessed (either from a print, electronic, or other multimedia source). If the image belongs to the author, it must still be cited properly and include the author's name, title of the work, date, media, and dimensions.
- D. Audio files and transcripts must be properly cited.

V. Thesis Formatting

- A. [Formatting Instructions](#) can be found within the corresponding section of your THES 007 course found in Blackboard. The formatting outlined within these pages linked above contain institutional formatting requirements that all graduate theses must adhere to. Please ensure that your thesis is formatted correctly before submitting it to the committee for signatures.

VI. Thesis Submission

- A. Students must submit the thesis document (text and static graphics), signed signature page, and studio component (if applicable) to Thesis Submission module within the THES 007 course found in Blackboard. All digital signatures must be verifiable, meaning they must contain the Adobe watermark. Please see additional information provided within the Thesis Submission module.
- B. All files submitted to THES 007 must be PDFs (text and graphics) and should not exceed 75 MB.

- C. File names should adhere to the following convention (replacing *file title* as appropriate):
L.name F.name *file title*_department_quarter year

Smith Jane_Signature Page_ANIM_Fall 2022.pdf

Smith Jane_Studio Component_ANIM_Fall 2022.pdf

Smith Jane_Using Advanced Color Separation Techniques_ANIM_Fall 2022.pdf

- D. Students in ANIM, FILM, ITGM, MOME, PHOT, SNDS, VSFX or other programs whose studio component(s) include very large electronic files may need to submit their studio components via OneDrive. If the studio component file you submitted within THES 007 is not viewable, please see the additional submission instructions provided within the Thesis Submission module.
- E. Further submission instructions can be found within the Thesis Submission module of the THES 007 course found in Blackboard. All electronic submissions must be submitted through this course, meaning no email submissions will be accepted.

VII. Graduate Student Continuous Enrollment Policy

- A. Graduate students must maintain continuous enrollment until graduation by completing at least one program fulfillment course in two separate quarters during each 12-month period of enrollment until completion of all degree requirements or until the student withdraws by written notification to the office of the registrar. Students who attempt but do not complete all requirements of the thesis course(s) receive an incomplete and are automatically enrolled in THES 799 Continuing Thesis. Continuing thesis provides one additional quarter of support and resources for students to complete their thesis requirements at no additional charge. As part of THES 799 Continuing Thesis, students must meet with their graduate success adviser during the first week of classes to establish a Thesis Completion Plan, specifying how students will successfully complete all remaining thesis requirements by the end of the quarter. At the end of one quarter of THES 799, if students still fail to complete their thesis requirements, their incomplete for the thesis course will automatically change to an F unless they follow the university's temporary grade of incomplete policy and request an extension of their incomplete status for an additional five weeks. View information regarding the university's [temporary grade of incomplete policy](#).

VIII. 5-Year Deadline

- A. Students have a maximum of five years to complete their graduate degree, including SLS and intensive courses, if assigned, as well as final project and thesis.
- B. If, for any reason, students do not complete their program within the five-year period, they must apply for re-admission under the then current program of study.