

## SMU DOCTOR OF LIBERAL STUDIES

### THESIS CONTRACT

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**Overview:** The DLS doctoral thesis is different from a traditional Ph.D. dissertation due in part to its broad interdisciplinary nature. However, it should reflect the same academic standards set by a traditional Ph.D. dissertation in a disciplinary field and be of publishable quality (see the DLS Student Handbook and Thesis Guidelines for details). The page length is expected to be a minimum of 200 double-spaced pages. Topics/Issues must be discussed and approved by the Faculty/Program Chair and/or Program Director. The doctoral thesis represents the creative synthesis and critical interpretation of primary sources and secondary materials.

DLS students have a maximum of three years and a minimum of nine consecutive credit hours (term to term) to complete the entire doctoral thesis process including the identification of a faculty director/advisor, the submission of the thesis abstract/proposal, thesis research and writing and the ultimate submission of the final thesis and its defense.

**NOTE:** If the thesis is not completed after nine hours of thesis work, students will continue to enroll in subsequent three hour sections of thesis study to maintain access to the faculty advisor and thesis director.

Once the thesis proposal/abstract has been developed and prepared in consultation with the Faculty/Program Chair and Faculty/Thesis Director/Advisor, defended and approved by the other two faculty members of the committee (one of whom may be the GLS Faculty Chair), and by the DLS Director, each DLS student **must submit this contract before enrolling in each section of the thesis writing and research.** Each member of the student's committee should sign and approve this contract before submitting it to the DLS Director for final approval and course registration.

This contract represents the agreement about expectations for each stage/section of thesis research and writing and must be completed prior to enrollment each term.

The first section (3 hour course) of the DLS Thesis will be dedicated to deepening the foundational reading that significantly expands the student's grasp on his/her primary area of focus and central research question. For this first section of the thesis, the student and thesis director will craft and agree upon a plan that dictates how the entire research project will unfold. In general, no formal thesis writing occurs at this stage of thesis development.

Subsequent sections (3 hour courses) of the DLS thesis will require this contract as the research develops. The formal writing of the thesis may commence when the thesis director is satisfied with the research development and progress.

***All sections of thesis research and writing will receive a grade of INCOMPLETE until the final thesis is completed, defended and assigned a final grade.***

**DLS THESIS CONTRACT**

*Please complete the following form, secure the appropriate signatures and return to the DLS office for review.*

Student Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date of Contract Submission: \_\_\_\_\_

SMU Student ID Number: \_\_\_\_\_

Student Cell Phone #: \_\_\_\_\_

Email address: \_\_\_\_\_

Thesis Director: \_\_\_\_\_

Thesis Advisor: \_\_\_\_\_

Number of Credit Hours Expected: 3 \_\_\_\_\_

Semester of Study: \_\_\_\_\_

Date to be Completed: \_\_\_\_\_

Topic or Title of Thesis Research: \_\_\_\_\_

Research Description/Agenda/Plan:

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**Writing Description/Agenda/Plan (IF APPROPRIATE FOR STUDENT’S SPECIFIC THESIS STAGE):**

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**FINAL WRITTEN THESIS PAGE LENGTH IS A MINIMUM OF 200 PAGES (per DLS Thesis Guidelines/DLS Student Handbook)**

**RESEARCH/READING LIST (REQUIRED):**

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**Meeting Schedule:** (Thesis Director/Advisor and Student should plan to meet on a regular basis. Please describe the meeting structure below for the entire length of the term)

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**Progress Reports:** Thesis Director and Thesis Advisor will provide the student with written and verbal assessments at appropriate stages of the thesis development to guide the student's progress.

Evaluation Rubric is available in the **DLS Thesis Guidelines** and **DLS Student Handbook**

Student's Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Thesis Director's Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Thesis Advisor's Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

**Department Approvals:**

Approved       Not Approved

DLS Director: \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Approved       Not Approved

Simmons Dean/Faculty Chair: \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

**Revisions Required:**