



THESIS WRITING GUIDE¹

¹ The present guide is a revision of a previous text written by Professor Guido Di Fraia (Università IULM di Milano) for his students.

ORGANIZATION OF THE JOB

Organizational aspects

Before beginning

In order to begin a thesis, it is necessary to evaluate various factors: the **time** one has, the **commitment** one must or can dedicate, and one's own **personal aspirations**. The thesis is an obligatory step in an academic career, and there are various ways in which one can face it. This experience can simply be considered necessary to obtain a title but lacking any particular value, and thus little value is invested into it (typical behavior for those who want to **finish quickly**): in this case the time needed for one to realize the project and the commitment necessary are reduced, as in personal aspirations as well. Many students, however, decide to face the thesis test as best they can, investing time and energy to realize an elaborate "consistent" that will be evaluated by the commission in the best way possible: those who want to **finish at the podium** will probably take on demanding and original analysis, with relative consequences on the "costs" and "benefits" that can be drawn from a good research project. Between these two antipodes, naturally, lie all the other cases, where commonly the variable of time and other external aspects intervene: work commitments, exams to sit, economic availability, etc.

Where to begin? The student probably already has the answer, at least on a theoretical level. The emotional intensity that a thesis provokes, from the very beginning, can be such as to cause hesitation among even the most rigorous of students. It is perhaps better to specify that there is no one way in which a job should be organized that is valid for all people: one cannot, in fact, disregard one's own habits and personal experience formed following the many exams which brought the student to this point.

Before venturing into the actual creation of a thesis one must be able to answer the following three questions:

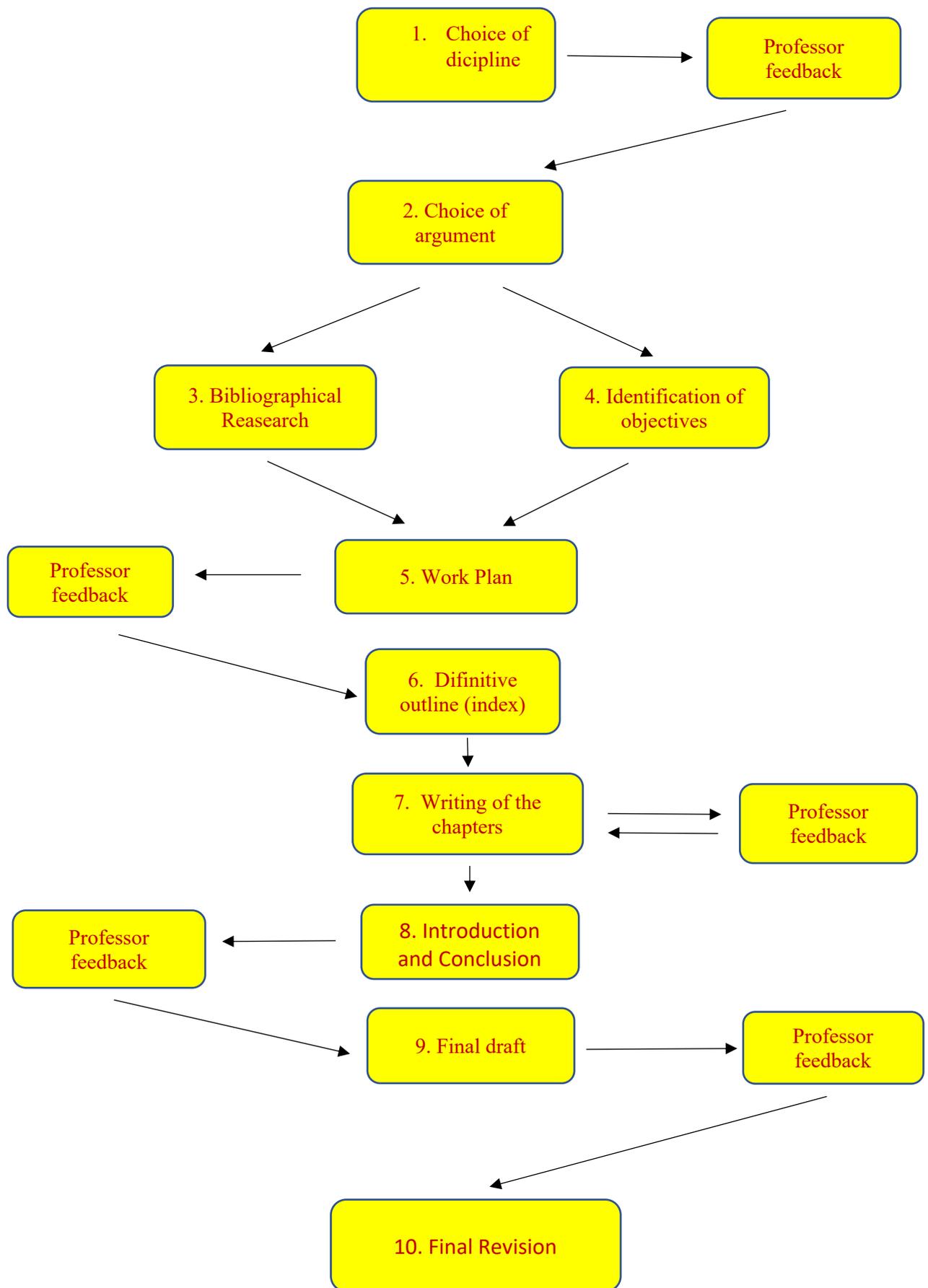
- 1) What has been said about the argument? (documentation)
- 2) From which perspective do you intend to study it? (selection)
- 3) Which questions do you want to establish? (orientation)

Creativity, we have seen, is an important element in writing a thesis; but in order to produce a good thesis one must also follow a well organized and structured work method.

Work Stages

The candidate's path, which concludes with the final discussion, consists of sequential phases but at the same time transversal paths. If it is undeniable that without having pinpointed an argument one cannot proceed to the selection of useful material, it is likewise true that feedback from one's professor is essential in every step of the way.

For example, every interruption or reconsideration in one of the phases following the choice of objective requires revision of the entire project, for which one must reanalyze the bibliography, check the guidelines again and reevaluate relevance to the chosen theme. With the path, written out in the chart below, each student has the freedom to trace his or her own "customized" path, based on the most suitable method for their own personal habits.



Choice of argument

As in all observed paths, even in the case of a thesis, it is necessary to utilize choices that permit the passage from a general argument to a well-focused specific argument, as if passing through a funnel. This is clearly a very delicate phase not only for the initial difficulties that can come about from unclear ideas, but also because other circumstantial factors can sometimes intervene whether the student wants it to or not; for example, in the case of mentor availability or availability of material. It is therefore possible to identify at least “four obvious rules”² (Eco, 2002) to follow in choosing an argument. It is important that:

- 1) The argument complies with the interest of the candidate; that there is material available that can be fully used (texts, articles, texts, articles, conference documentation, etc.);
- 2) That the available sources are “useable” for the candidate; that the methodological framework and work objectives are within range.

By and large it is not always possible to meet all the criteria by the book! The choice of argument also depends on the personal style of the student. It is, in fact, possible to see students divided in categories:

The “athemist”

Teaching-oriented those who chose instruction and, according to this, the argument. It is possible, in fact, to individualize a subject in one’s actual study plan followed with interest (perhaps one in which the student has received good marks) and then clarifying a possible survey area within a subject by seeking advice from the professor regarding argument choice.

The “Monothemists”

Topic-oriented are those who chose an argument, and according to this instruction. The most determined student convinced that he or she wants to develop a specific argument may try consulting multiple professors to individualize the “cut” for their work, or simply evaluate the availability of a potential mentor (above all in terms of timing) as often happens; the **relationship** established with the professor who follows the course of the paper is, in fact, essential to a successful outcome and for the candidate’s serenity. It is even better when a good dose of **determination** and certainty regarding the proposed theme can be used as useful weapons to convince even an uninterested professor.

The “polithemists”

Non-oriented are those subdivided as:

disoriented: confused due to an excessive number of choices.

² U. Eco, *Come si fa una tesi di laurea. Le materie umanistiche*, RCS Libri SpA, Milano, 2002.

disinterested: available for any choice that comes about. If ideas continue to be unclear an available professor can be located to help develop an argument, based upon his or her suggestion, that can at least in part satisfy expectations.

Criteria of choice

Whichever path one chooses it is necessary in any case to evaluate the **modernity of the theme** one intends to develop. A particularly strong theme assures availability for confronted research or study and could represent a stimulant for the research for something that is truly “new”. On the other hand, however, it could partly complicate finding material.

Another element that can help pinpoint an argument is represented by its **relevance**, or rather by general interest attributed to it. The student can intervene on this aspect avoiding certain errors when preparing themselves for material selection and writing. On one hand, it is opportune to focus one’s attention on specific arguments in order to not risk being sloppy, on saying a lot yet nothing. On the other hand, it is important that the chosen theme is both consistent and relevant: arguments that are inadequate, empty or of little interest impoverish the paper. Possible arguments for a thesis, as a matter of fact, are extremely varied and depend on one’s own work, from what they have up to this point developed. At the extremes one can imagine two such situations:

orient the theme of choice on something particularly relevant in an academic environment, but not presentable for the work market;

decide to develop an argument that could represent an excellent business card to get into companies that operate in that sector of interest;

In each case it is best to remember that whatever the theme be, even the most relevant, if confronted in a superficial manner it shall result as empty and of little interest. In facing such a dilemma, it may be better to concentrate oneself on the **involvement** regarding the theme and thesis, a distinguishing element for the outcome that can drive the student to work hard and be determined in their work.

The moment of choosing an argument is particularly delicate and in certain ways arduous. One can encounter two of the most frequent obstacles at this point:

Disorientation

Very often the chosen argument is so vague that it cannot follow the consecutive steps, resulting in a state of disorientation. This results in a variation of commitment and anxiety, which does nothing but lengthen the time of completion. A professor can try and interpret the candidate’s intention or simplify the choices by specifying possible routes of analysis, but the focus of the objective depends entirely on the student and on what they expect from their work.

Delirium of omnipotence

Is a “syndrome” due to excessive personal expectations: one thinks that their thesis must be a paper of great literary or academic value, or that it must touch on all inherent themes regarding the chosen argument. It’s not like this! To write a good paper it is indispensable to define an argument, decide what to say and why.

Examples

An argument like “The effects of the media” is too vague and not feasible, one would need at least three years to write something of the sort, good research funding, consistent bibliographical resources and the desire to create an elaborate work of three-thousand pages. However, even if all these conditions were met it would in any case be difficult to reach the desired goals.

Let’s try another way. Let’s focus directly on “new media” **internet**, inside of which we focus on **Facebook groups**, with special regard to those that focus on **music**. To narrow down the field even further we select **Italian Facebook groups** that deal with **rock music** and have been around for at least **three years**. Now this seems to be going in the right direction.

Bibliographical research

Once the argument has been identified it is very useful to try and single out an initial bibliography from which to start, and trace cues in order to be able to better define the area of interest. **Provide the most evidence possible** and verify what has already been said on the argument, helping identify that specific aspect to analyze in further detail, on which to concentrate attention, from which one can begin to eliminate the superfluous and work on a selection of material. Above all, when one is particularly confused it could be the mentor professor to suggest preliminary reading in order to begin “digesting” the subject, or providing cues from which to start, as in the example of bibliographies of already discussed theses. Bibliographical research remains, nonetheless, useful for all steps of the job.

Identification of the fact-finding objectives

Analyzing a specific argument does not mean abandoning the overall context that surrounds it: if one can imagine a thesis focused on the analysis of a business case it is obvious that one cannot exclude the general framework of the Italian economic context of the past years. It is good, however, to keep in mind one of the basic principles of writing: **the more you tighten your fact-finding objectives, the better chance you have of producing quality work**. For this reason, identifying the basic objectives one intends on following is one of the first steps to take once the theme has been decided.

The «inspiration» of orientation one must apply to their work could mature from reading the initial bibliography, from surfing the web, from reading an article or from personal interest. On the contrary, one could acquire objectives from the methodology one intends to use for theme analysis is necessary in making a choice that guarantees candidate satisfaction; in this phase the advice of a professor can be essential. The objectives, as previously stated, can be extremely various. For example, the following objectives exist:

- 1) of analysis. Ex. Analysis of the use of new private messaging services
- 2) cognitive. Ex. The effect of music streaming platforms on music consumers
- 3) case study. Ex. The new economy of digital platforms: the Spotify case

What counts is that the objective always represents a particular aspect of a phenomenon, a microcosm to study in further detail.

The work plan

Once the specific argument and the objectives one intends to carry out have been identified it is now the moment to set out a work plan that outlines the argument one wants to make. The work plan is a

simplified “outline” that permits one to identify the areas that need developing and the order of presentation one wants to follow: each highlighted point in the following graph is therefore intended to be a section to expand and not as a chapter in the index.

At this point it will also be necessary to make a further choice: theoretical approach or practical/operative approach? It is evident that such a decision is not completely independent from the choice of argument; it isn't an irrelevant choice either since the time needed to finish and the final result are based on this.

The theoretical approach is based on careful and accurate collection of material on a specific argument, systematically structured. With the practical/operative approach the work is more articulated and includes a brief general analysis of the theme in question in order to contextualize research on the field, a case study or the creation of a real finished product. This last approach doesn't necessarily assure a priori better results than the preceding one. On the contrary, good bibliographical research and a certain practicality can greatly surpass a less structured work and sui generis centered on one case. In either case the student who wants to create a good product must dedicate more time and personal contribution for research and analysis.

It would be a good idea to present an outline of the arguments to the professor right away. The work plan allows for **time** allotment for the various phases of the job and to identify the best sequence to complete the paper. The organization of timing clearly depends on the personal work method of the candidate. In general, it is best that reading the bibliography is carried out in parallel with its arrangement (in the case of a final theoretical/bibliographical test) or with setting down a research plan (in the case of an experimental thesis), which often require other peoples' involvement, contact with some subjects, identification of a sample to analyze, etc.. Most importantly, in the case in which one is carrying out theoretical/biographical thesis it is fundamental to find and study a lot of material. It is important to begin work on organizing immediately to not risk forgetting everything that was studied, of having fragments of unusable information in one's head, of not remembering the source or not being able to identify a logical train of thought that can tie all that was studied together. It is of equal importance to immediately begin to think about the principal themes, conceptual junctions that tie them together, and logistical trains of thought on which an argument may be based.

The **empirical part** of the paper is most certainly the most delicate and subject to possible unexpected events. Gathering information in the field, through empirical research or the study of an actual case requires the participation of other people, whose availability is precious but not always available. To calm those who are more anxious it is best to specify that the criteria with which one evaluates field work is not its scientific representativeness (which would require excessive commitment in terms of money and time), but the path which brings about the result, its originality and relevance to the fact-finding objectives. One shouldn't think, therefore that one must (or can) analyze a thousand cases or carry out hundreds of interviews!

This is also valid when the thesis consists of (as frequently seen in Science of Communications) works involving music, cinema or other. In these cases the majority of the weight is on the creative aspects of the paper, the evident commitment that comes through is in the care of the details and the ability of the candidate to present their final discussion.

In organizing this kind of thesis, it is good to keep in mind that the empirical phase often requires more time than expected because it is subject to many unexpected events.

BIBLIOGRAPHICAL RESEARCH

Introduction

Bibliographical research constantly accompanies the elaboration of a thesis; therefore, it is a transversal activity and requires a greater investment of time compared to theoretical records or implications subject to the thesis. The axiom that states “the end takes first place” has lasted through the centuries because it expresses an irrefutable truth: a goal is an authentic tyrant and requires that everything is systematically deferred and subordinate. This is a reflection at first taken for granted: the discouragement one can encounter when choosing an argument for a thesis can come from the fact that the sources and instruments to use are unknown, while one would like to already have all documentation in hand to be able to write the thesis.

To be armed with sources means to have, in hand, adequate material which also contains the notions that consent the candidate to reach his or her goal in the thesis.

Where to look

The library system of the Università di Siena is most certainly well stocked and contains a digital database available online: <http://www.sba.unisi.it/>

This is the “natural” place of departure to find and consult material of interest. After the initial phase of bibliographical research it will be necessary to amplify the research to sources that can be found elsewhere, in other universities, libraries, institutes, research centers, companies, etc.. A main guide in the criteria for research could be starting from previously suggested material which offers an excellent base from which one can understand “what” to look for. Then going from the bibliographical references in these books, articles or theses one can enlarge the body of sources that could potentially be interesting to explore or push for the need to expand research into other libraries.

Constant contact with a professor can provide useful opportunities to look for and find sources. Professors are most likely able to suggest sources or authors valid to the argument. Their advice should not result in the expectation that these suggestions indicate “what” to study: the ability to create a paper and a discussion at the end of one’s degree also means being able to demonstrate that one has developed a sufficient critical capacity in bibliographical research.

How to select material

A first general inspection of the existing literature is fundamental to get a clear view of the current state of the discipline. It is then necessary to define and examine more in depth the field one intends to investigate. Above all, a “bibliographical” thesis, whose objective is not to follow empirical research or a case study, requires constant reference to a growing number of bibliographical sources, searched out in order to deepen understanding of the thesis.

In general, the number of texts should decrease with ongoing research insomuch as discernment progressively increases with the development of the argument.

Bibliographical sources

Books: with this term we intend monographies, or rather books written by one or more authors on a single subject, publications on which multiple authors have collaborated on one or more perfected subjects, collections of papers or anthologies, divided by relative chapters relative to different studies or in-depth analysis. Among the different books it could also be useful to know the difference between primary or “first-hand” sources, or rather what in its original form was written on a theme, and secondary sources, alleged “critical literature”, which includes what other authors have written with regards to an original source that has been translated and reported, not wholly, in other texts. Such a distinction, anything but trite, can contribute to maintaining one’s eye on the mark for conclusion, the production of a paper of scientific spirit: where possible it is best to utilize primary sources, above all regarding key arguments relative to the thesis;

Magazines: far from the weeklies and periodicals sold at the news agents, with magazines one intends highly specialized periodical publications that collect articles produced over time by intellectuals of specific disciplines. They are sold in university libraries or specialized places, but are also available in newspaper libraries and libraries, which in general have a periodical calendar to which they are signed up, and they have a good archive of previous editions, bound in collections. Whomever carries out research or intends to further analyze an argument should quickly inform him or herself or ask advice from the mentor professor on the validity of the magazines, which will allow for proper assessment and familiarity with the most recent contributions or the most debated issues.

Working paper or unpublished articles, congressional acts, technical reports: are very important documents, even if difficult to obtain. The basic instruments for researching these kinds of articles and reports are both data banks and bibliographical reference contained in other works. One often learns of the existence of a certain, accessible, document through a data bank search, but it is only a summary, or abstract, of the text in question. Referring to one of these publications, however, above all if recent, can be an eye-catcher for one’s thesis.

Degree and doctorate theses: particular note must be given to these studies and publications, even if one must be able to select from among numerous works that lack originality the good papers that emerge carried out in the spirit of science and under the guidance of qualified professors, written by those who knew how to bring their research to fruition. Theses are usually only available in the universities from which they come from.

Online instruments for bibliographical research

Search engines of international articles published in scientific magazines:
<http://www.scholar.google.com>

National library system: <http://opac.sbn.it/opacsbn/opac/iccu/free.jsp>

Università di Siena library system: <http://www.sba.unisi.it/>

Internet bookshops: the main sites for online purchasing: www.amazon.it or www.ibs.it (keeping, however, in mind that using these services has an important environmental impact and an impact on the local economy for bookshops, not to mention the working conditions of Amazon warehouse workers). We advise you purchase and/or order, as much as possible, through your local bookshops.

The bibliography

With the term “Bibliography” we intend both the list of bibliographical material cited in abbreviated form in the text, and the list, more or less complete, of the studies carried out on the subject. Since it is most improbable that the entire existing literary works will be taken into consideration in the thesis it is best to title the list of works consulted as “Bibliographical References”.

The bibliography is usually located in the final pages of the paper. This spatial collocation does not represent the temporal one: as previously stated, the bibliographical reference is one of the first steps to take but it is constantly updated over the course of time. Quality and how complete the bibliography is represent two of the most important factors in evaluating how well a thesis is done: they are infallible spies regarding the seriousness of the method with which the research was conducted and the criteria for its evaluation, the length isn't the only relative point but also consistency, distinctiveness, and details of the bibliographical references.

There are rules on writing a bibliography, even if they aren't universal and each area of discipline often has its own style. An example of these rules is illustrated in the Iso 690 standard, which is international and multi-disciplinary, or rather those given by the American Psychological Association (APA), which published one of the most diffuse style manuals, particularly geared towards the social sciences.

It is therefore necessary to follow the general guidelines, assuring availability and comprehensiveness of the cited texts. An obvious principle of science imposes strict and correct reporting of information and its sources, without inventing, distorting or obscuring the facts.

How to write a bibliography

- 1) the list of bibliographical references must be in **alphabetic order** based on the cited authors' names
- 2) for monographies (books): author, (year). *Book title*. Place of publication: Publisher

Ex. Tuchman, G. (1978). *Making news: A study in the construction of reality*. New York: Free Press.

- 3) For scientific articles published in academic magazines: author, (year). Article title. *Magazine name*, volume(number): beginning and ending page numbers of the article

Ex. Napoli, P. (2014). Automated media: An institutional theory perspective on algorithmic media production and consumption. *Communication Theory*, 24(3): 340-360.

- 4) For book chapters contained in a book of one or more authors:

Ex. Gillespie, T. (2014). The relevance of algorithms. In Gillespie T., Boczkowski P. and Foot K. (by) *Media Technologies*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, pp. 167–194.

- 5) For newspaper articles, periodical magazines, blogs:

Ex. Williams, O. (2016). “British journalism is 94% white and 55% male, survey reveals”. *The Guardian*, 24 March, p. 14.

- 6) For online magazine articles:

Ex. Williams, O. (2016). "British journalism is 94% white and 55% male, survey reveals". *The Guardian*, 24 March. Cfr: <https://www.theguardian.com/media-network/2016/mar/24/british-journalism-diversity-white-female-male-survey> (last access 19 September, 2016).

7) For online videos:

Ex. Springsteen, B. (1984). Born to run. YouTube, 21 October 2016. Cfr.: URL of the video (last access: date of the last access)

8) Wikipedia is not a valid source for university theses. You may use it to expand your own understanding but may not use it in your thesis.

Bibliographical references in the text

While writing when making rather evident **reference** to a concept or consideration **that can be attributed to a specific author or document** it must be formally cited. There are two different ways one can cite an author in a text. One of the following ways must be used from the beginning to the end:

1. A noted cross-reference to the bibliographical reference: a cross-reference made by numerical reference corresponding to its numerical position in the text to the complete bibliographical reference at the foot of the page, which mirrors the method of citation used in the final bibliography (even if it is possible to omit some non-essential "ingredients"):

Ex: Tuchman claims that journalism is the result of selective activity and a reality filter¹

1. Tuchman, G. (1978). *Making news: A study in the construction of reality*. New York: Free Press

In the case that a text has been previously cited, it is a general rule to only indicate the author followed by the abbreviation "cit." and the page number on which the bibliographical reference is located:

Es. Tuchman (1978), op. cit., p. 34.

2. An "author-date" citation: at the end the author and date of publication of the source are indicated in parentheses with a direct cross-reference to the "Bibliographical references" at the end of the chapter or thesis. This second method has the advantage of not having to cite every element of bibliographical reference in the footnotes, and therefore, it reduces the effort of time and space.

Ex: Journalism has always been a kind of construction of reality. (Tuchman, 1978)

If the same reference is cited more than once on a page or in a chapter it is not necessary to repeat the reference in parentheses, it is sufficient to write (*ivi*, year of publication), or (*ibidem*, year of publication). If the information has not been obtained directly from a text, but someone else who cites it, it is nevertheless necessary to cross-reference both the cited author as well as the text from which the citation was taken and the year. In the final bibliography, as previously seen, the cited author and the text from which the citation was taken are cross-referenced.

In order to reference a website or electronic document, elements similar to those used to reference paper documents are used.

The internet is like a library: if one cites an article found online it is not necessary to insert the URL of the site; that would be like writing the address of where a library is located. One must instead follow the following rules: if it is an article published in an online magazine or blog, and the author is known, use the previously mentioned rule for citing a magazine article.

THESIS STRUCTURE

It is usually suggested to present the steps in the following logical order: objectives, reference framework, description of the case/research/product produced, method used, obtained results.

Whichever kind of structure is chosen it is necessary to balance the different parts of the paper, attributing to each one the right weight, which varies based on the subject of the thesis. If it is of the “**bibliographical**” kind, the theoretical part will naturally prevail over the others. Even with this kind of thesis, however, one must ponder on the different papers analyzed. If, however, the thesis regards a **case study** or **research** conducted by the student, the theoretical perspective has to have a role of contextualization and introduction. Naturally avoiding undervaluing this part, which is necessary to give “weight” and value to the actual paper, the “heart” of the thesis is, in these cases, the empirical work, which therefore absolutely must prevail over the others. It is also important to give the right weight to the presentation of the used method. In the vast majority of cases the strong point of a thesis is exactly this and not, as many think, the results reached.

If the thesis consists of the **creation of a product**, the central and main part of the text must be dedicated to presenting it, its objectives and to the ways in which it was created, etc.

OUTLINE for a university thesis:

Introduction – explains the general objectives of the work. This is written last.

Critical analysis of existing literature – review all authors who have taken on the theme of the thesis, even from different disciplines, summarize the main arguments and compare the sources

Theoretical frame for the research – collocates the research to a discipline, a theory of reference, a school of thought

Research question – explain what the objective is of the thesis, what the initial theory will be and what you want to “demonstrate”

Used methodology – in the case of empirical analysis explain how the data was gathered

Presentation of research results

Discussion – analysis of the results, tentative to explain the meaning of the data gathered or the observed phenomenon, try and respond to the original research question

Conclusion – summarize the main results that come about from the research

Connecting the parts

The result of this phase is the subdivision of the text into parts (each one formed by a micro-area) and the first drafting of a (provisional) index of arguments. The ideal situation would be that the structure, content and style of the thesis be clarified through the index. In order to do this one needs to try and understand the logic a reader would expect to find, and to foresee and anticipate possible questions.

Therefore, it is necessary to pay close attention to the collocation's casual links among the different parts, and above all among the different paragraphs. Although the contents can be many and various in a thesis one must avoid abrupt "jumps" from one argument to another in order to not give the impression that one's thesis is nothing but a copy and paste from books and others' thoughts.

The connections must, above all, respect and follow casual and conceptual logic. Since it is often difficult to put together material gathered from different books (above all with the theoretical part) it is recommended to use the organization in the contents present in a monography (either an article, site, etc...) as a model, and then add and amplify with what was found elsewhere.

Writing: formal aspects

It is best to set up the page numbers of the thesis immediately.

Margins: it is suggested to leave a 3 cm margin on the left and a 2.5 cm margin on the right. The difference on the two sides will minimize the effect the binding has on the left-hand side of the paper. If one uses Word to set up the pages, the top and bottom margins will automatically be correct.

Line spacing: the most adept is to choose line spacing of 1.5, or if you prefer, 2.

Style and font: although there are no fixed rules, theses usually use one of the "official" fonts like Times New Roman, Garamond, or Arial, with a font size between 12 and 14, based on the chosen line spacing. It is always best to fill the thesis with content and not empty space!

Bold, underline and italics. Underlining does not have any specific indications. On the contrary, it is best to avoid using bold in the text and to limit its use in titles. Italics, instead, is suggested when one wants to highlight a specific choice of term, and it is mandatory when using any foreign wording.

Notes: one must distinguish between two different kinds of notes: those of the content and those of the bibliographical reference. The latter is addressed in the section regarding bibliographical research. It is important to understand what notes of content are and what their role is. Notes are put in comments, cross references, clarifications, expansions, etc. that if put in the text, would slow it down or make it difficult to read. The information contained in the notes should be marginal and not necessary for reading comprehension, not excessive or very long; the text, in fact, must be able to be read correctly, from all points of view, even without having to refer to the notes.

Even though the notes can be added at the end of the entire work, at the end of each chapter or thesis section, it is recommended that they be added as a footnote at the bottom of each page, on the same page that contains the corresponding numbers noted in the text.

Remember that Word has an automatic note numeration utility.

Citations: this term indicates the part of the text that faithfully quotes an author. One cites when it is considered important to use the original wording of a concept or when paraphrasing would make it lose part of its meaning. It is advisable, however, to not excessively use unnecessary citations or, in any case, use them for pure laziness. Citations must be put in parentheses and followed by the name of the author and year of publication.

Ex: “Citations are pieces taken directly from the text of another writing and copied in the form from which they come from.” (Lesina 1994: 34) or: (Lesina 1994, p. 34).

Bibliographical references: any time that information is given in the thesis that has been taken from a text, article, website or any other source, it is necessary to cite the text not only in the final bibliography but also within the text itself. It is important to refer to the source not only when you cite an author or his or her research, but every time in which you make only reference to a concept that’s not your own. They are reported in parenthesis, with the name of the author, the year of publication and pages of reference, whereas all other information is listed in the final bibliography. If, within a page or chapter, the same source is referred to more than once one does not have to repeat the references in parentheses; the following wording is sufficient: (*ivi*, year of publication), or (*ibidem*, year of publication). In the case that information is not taken directly from a text, but from someone else citing it, the original author and year of publication are cited, nonetheless. Even in the bibliography the original source of information is cited but highlighting that said source is not directly used.

Charts: the number and kinds of charts present in a thesis vary greatly based on the chosen argument and subject. In any case, at the bottom and to the right of each chart, with a font size of 10 or 11, there must be a caption clearly naming the chart with the progressive numeration of the chart relative to the chapter in which it is inserted. For example, if a chart is the first to appear in chapter 3, the chart shall be named: 3.1, and so on.

Components of the paper

(In writing order):

Index: is the first part to write, even if it may be modified over the course of writing the paper. All components of the thesis are listed in the index, subdivided in

- I - Partitions;
- 1. Chapters;
- 1.1 Paragraphs;
- 1.1.1 Subparagraphs.

It is recommended to use Roman numerals to divide the parts, and Arab numerals for all other components of the text. Although there are no limits for the length of an index, it is best to have it articulated in such a way as to facilitate reader research of the arguments without being too detailed.

Title Page: fortunately, the University establishes the characters and structure of the title page. An example can be requested from the Student Office.

Body of the text: is the central part of the work. It is recommended to choose a graphic division of the body in chapters so that the chapter titles are the same size and style, just as the paragraphs and subparagraphs.

Introduction: most likely the introduction and conclusion are the first parts of the thesis to be read. For this reason, it is important to give a clear idea in few pages as to the content, structure and value of one's thesis. Contrary to what the term suggests, it would be useful to write an introduction only once the entire text has been written. Only once finished writing is it truly possible to get an overall vision of the whole work, and then be able to correctly introduce it. The introduction must essentially contain a foreword that provides a contextual framework of the argument and must very clearly lay out the objectives of the paper and method used. It is also possible to put the reasons one chose a particular argument in the introduction if it enhances comprehension of the work.

Conclusions: this part must instead contain the results reached and final considerations. If the introduction and conclusion are well written a reader can get a rather clear idea of the entire work. It is suggested to structure these parts in such a way as to pose questions in the introduction, and in the conclusion briefly answer said questions. In the case of an experimental thesis, the critical considerations of the work (expressing one's own personal point of view) should be written in the conclusion as well as the method used.

Dedications: it is possible to dedicate a thesis to someone dear. It is recommended, however, to avoid being excessively sentimental.

Thanks: at the end of the text, after the bibliography, it is usual to dedicate a page (maximum two) for thanks. One needs to avoid being excessively sentimental and can thank whomever they wish in an informal manner (if it is excessively informal one can limit the thanks in a personal copy). The pages of the index, dedications and thanks are not numbered.

Revision and printing

In addition to the contemporary revision that is undertaken while writing, it would be opportune to do a revision at the end of each chapter and yet again before printing the thesis. Have the most adept person also read the paper, because often someone else can note weak points difficult to see firsthand. In this case, however, it is fundamental to know how to accept criticism, keeping in mind that there are not points of view: if a reader finds a paragraph or passage unclear it is useless to explain it or retort. A text is written to be read; if it is not perfectly comprehensible it needs to be modified. If, further, the reader goes back in the text or lingers in a spot, it is very probable that that part of the text needs to be improved. A well written text, in fact, should be read without having to re-read any part.

During the revision phase one should always tend towards reduction. This, in fact, is the moment to definitively select the contents and give the text its final form. A good "writer" is he or she who can explain the content with the fewest words possible. Therefore, being as concise as possible is a necessity unless the reduction becomes a disadvantage for the content.