

Thesis Handbook

Graduate Program on the Environment

Master of Environmental Studies

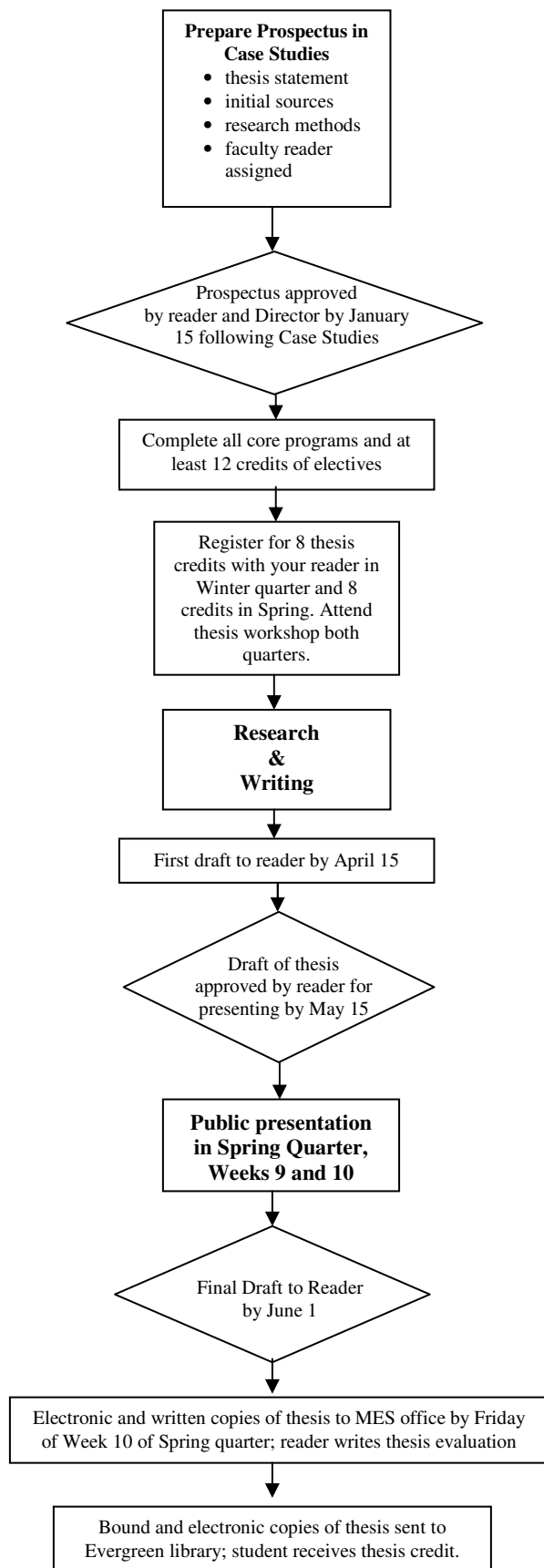
The Evergreen State College

Olympia, Washington

Revised: December 2012

Copies of this handbook are available online at: <http://www.evergreen.edu/mes/thesisresources>

Flowchart of Typical Thesis Process (variations may occur)



Preface: Significance of the Thesis

For most students, the thesis is the largest and most sophisticated writing project ever tackled. It is substantially different from the research papers and essays you have written for your electives and core programs. One of the benefits of writing the thesis is practice at preparation of such documents in a professional and timely manner. A second major benefit is the learning that you will acquire from study and synthesis of the material bearing upon your topic. This document signifies your successful completion of the Master of Environmental Studies degree at Evergreen, and it should serve as an impressive way to document your expertise in the world, particularly the professional world beyond the college.

Completion of a thesis is a research experience. It should also build upon your work as an undergraduate, the core programs, your electives, any internships and individual learning contracts, and your work or volunteer experiences. Your past efforts should inform your thesis by providing critical thinking skills, examples of environmental case studies, and numerous viewpoints from which to think about problems and their solutions.

I. Thesis Basics

Students must finish all four core classes as well as 12 credits of electives before beginning the 16 credit thesis. A major requirement for satisfactory work on the thesis is timely completion. Students are required to present and submit their thesis by the end of spring quarter of the year the thesis was started; thus students must choose a thesis topic that fits into two quarters. Formal thesis work begins during Case Studies where the Thesis Prospectus is completed followed by research for the thesis commencing at the beginning of winter quarter. Writing of the thesis typically starts in winter quarter and continues into spring quarter.

Students may only present once a draft of their thesis has been approved by their thesis reader. A “Request to Present Thesis Research” form must be signed by the thesis reader by May 15 in order for the student to present. See Appendix A for the form. In certain cases, with permission from the student’s reader and Director, a student may extend thesis work through the following Summer quarter or Fall quarter. Approving extended time to complete the thesis is usually linked to the need for spring/summer fieldwork, extended data collection and analysis, etc. Extensions of time to complete the thesis will not be granted in situations where unsatisfactory progress is the primary reasons for the request for an extension. If the student wishes to extend their thesis, a “Request to Extend Thesis Research” form must be signed by both the reader and the Director by May 15. See Appendix B for the form.

Failure to complete on time may result in a report of No Credit, and will require the student to re-enroll in thesis credits the following Winter and Spring quarters to work on a new thesis with an approved thesis reader. Students who are allowed by their reader to continue work on their thesis project after registering for the required 16 thesis credits must take an additional two credits each quarter that involves faculty effort until completion; this includes the quarter in which the thesis is submitted and the final public presentation is made. Thesis credits beyond the required 16 do not count toward the student’s degree.

Your printed thesis is due no later than the Friday of Week 10 of Spring quarter. A *first* draft must be finished by April 15 and a *final* draft must be submitted to your reader by June 1 in order to meet this deadline. Please see the flowchart on page 2 for a visual representation of deadlines.

Registering for Thesis Credits

Students will register for eight credits of thesis directly with their reader in both winter and spring quarters of the year they are working on their thesis. You should register for credits with your thesis reader when you receive an email from the Assistant Director notifying you of the reader's CRN number. Each quarter has a different CRN number.

Thesis Prospectus

By the end of Fall Quarter you must have a well-developed draft of your Prospectus that will serve as the basis for final discussions with your reader. A final, approved prospectus (signed by you, your reader, and the Director) that outlines your thesis research plan is due in the program office by January 15 following Case Studies. If you begin the process with a solid Prospectus, you will increase both the efficiency and quality of your project.

Thesis Workshop

All thesis students are required to attend a thesis workshop led by an MES faculty member. The workshop is typically scheduled for every other Tuesday evening during winter and spring quarters, and provides a structured environment for thesis preparation, research, and writing. The workshop is intended to help you prepare and finish your thesis by the end of spring quarter. It provides a chance to meet regularly with the workshop faculty for advice. Workshop students will present their thesis in week 9 or 10; thesis presentations are scheduled by the faculty in charge of the workshop. Students should also meet with their reader on a regular basis during Winter and Spring quarters. The thesis evaluation by the student's reader includes reference to student attendance and participation in the workshop. There is no CRN for the workshop.

Funding Your Thesis

Students are encouraged to find grants or fellowships to fund their research. There are several resources offered by the program to help you do so. Please see the Research Funding section of our Financial Aid page for more information:

<http://www.evergreen.edu/mes/financial.htm#research>.

II. The Writing Process

Writing Resources

Getting started on the writing of your thesis can be intimidating. Regardless of your level of experience as a writer, the start of your thesis work is an excellent time to review resources on effective writing in general, and thesis writing in particular. There are numerous written materials available to help in this regard. Here are a few that we recommend:

- *Surviving Your Dissertation: A Comprehensive Guide to Content and Process (3rd Edition)*. Kjell Erik Rudestam and Rae R. Newton. 2007. Sage Publications. This book offers very useful advice on the entire process of thesis design and writing.
- *Form and Style (12th Edition)*. Carole Slade. 2003. Houghton Mifflin. Provides guidance in both research and writing, including special sections on theses. Contains information on reference and citation styles, including those styles allowed in MES theses (see the Formatting Requirements section below).

- *The Clockwork Muse: A Practical Guide to Writing Theses, Dissertations, and Books*. Eviatar Zerubavel. 1999. Harvard University Press. This guide is written in a somewhat simplistic style, but it has been helpful to a number of students in planning a detailed, practical writing schedule. It also covers some basic aspects of what to strive for in different drafts and how to electronically manage draft revisions.
- *On Writing Well: The Classic Guide to Writing Nonfiction (25th Anniversary Edition)*. William K. Zinsser. 2001. Harper Resource. This is a general guide to clear, concise, and effective non-fiction writing.
- *A Writer's Reference (5th Edition)*. Diana Hacker. 2001. Bedford/St. Martin's. A good reference for questions related to grammar and style.

Working with Your Reader

Your reader is probably your most valuable resource during the writing process—this person has written a thesis and/or dissertation already and understands what you are experiencing. You should arrange to meet on a regular basis with your reader throughout the thesis project, and especially during the writing process. Early on, you should establish with your reader a procedure for delivering drafts of your thesis. Some readers prefer to receive a chapter at a time, while others want to see an entire draft before they begin reading.

Ask for your reader's advice on both the technical aspects of the research and on the writing, and be open to the advice you receive. If you run into any concerns regarding working with your reader, like lack of responsiveness, please talk to the Director.

Student Support Groups

Many students find that participating in an informal student support group during thesis writing can provide much needed structure and feedback. Such a group might be formed as part of the Thesis Workshop or independently. Other students can be extremely helpful when it comes to proofreading drafts of your thesis, and can provide constructive criticism to improve the final product.

Writing Assistance

Your faculty reader is not a writing instructor, tutor, or copy editor. Please do not expect them to perform any of these functions for you. If you would like outside assistance with your writing, please work with the student writing assistant. Check your email for information about writing assistant hours.

Tips for Effective Thesis Writing

Here are a few tips for the writing phase of your thesis project:

Don't put off the writing. One approach is to write parts of your thesis on a regular schedule. Having short pieces to show to your reader or to other students allows for quick feedback. Also, writing can help you to synthesize what you are learning, and thus can be invaluable even during the research phase of the project.

Plan plenty of time for rewrites. It is likely that your entire thesis will need to be rewritten at least 2 or 3 times in order for the final thesis to be as good as you are capable of making it. Since your faculty reader will need sufficient time to review each draft, this process can easily take two

months unless your first draft is in excellent shape already. Remember that even small revisions in one part of your thesis can require changes in several other portions, which is quite time consuming. Given the fact that you must be approved to present by May 15, your first completed draft should ideally be finished by April 15 or even earlier. You will, of course, need to work out a specific schedule with your reader.

Write for your audience. Your thesis should be understandable to MES faculty and students, and you might also be writing with an outside client in mind. Because of the interdisciplinary nature of environmental studies, we recommend that you avoid the use of jargon specific to one discipline.

III. The Oral Presentation

As a key part of your thesis project, you will have the opportunity to share your results with faculty, staff, and students in a public, oral presentation prior to submitting your completed thesis for binding. The oral thesis presentation is designed to give you practice in presenting your research in a professional manner, and provides you the opportunity to demonstrate your expertise on your thesis topic. It is also a celebration of your great accomplishment in completing the program.

Scheduling Your Presentation

Your presentation will be scheduled with those of the other students in the Thesis Workshop in week 9 and 10 of Spring quarter. Presentations are generally 10-15 minutes in length, with an additional 5 minutes allowed for questions. Because the presentations are scheduled one after the other, time limits are strictly enforced. Thus, presentations must be particularly concise. Students may only present once they have submitted a signed “Request to Present Thesis Research” form (Appendix A) to the faculty leading the Thesis Workshop by May 15. This form indicates that their reader has reviewed a complete first draft of the student’s thesis.

Students who have a signed “Request to Extend Thesis Research” form (Appendix B) to present in either Summer or Fall quarter must work with the director to schedule a presentation time. These students must also have a signed “Request to Present Thesis Research” form (Appendix A) in order to present.

Criteria for Judging Presentations

Individual faculty readers determine the criteria for judging thesis presentations. It is a good idea to check with your reader in advance regarding what criteria will be used to determine if you pass the presentation phase of the thesis project.

Tips for Great Thesis Presentations

Here are some ideas we have compiled to help ensure that your thesis presentation is effective:

Show your enthusiasm. You have worked long and hard on this project. The audience will appreciate this and will be interested if you convey your interest in the work.

Keep within the time limits. The audience and the speaker who follows you (if any) will appreciate this.

Don't try to cover everything in your thesis. It is understood that your thesis document is more extensive than your presentation can be. Cover key components of your work, or pick a particularly interesting section to cover. The question and answer period will give you additional time to cover pieces of your work of specific interest to the audience.

Speak slowly and breathe. You might be tempted to talk fast, but if you can control this urge and slow things down, even pause at key points, your presentation will be more effective.

Practice your presentation. It is imperative to practice with other students or friends who can give you feedback. You'll want to practice staying within the time limits, making eye contact with the audience, and appearing relaxed and confident.

Use high-quality visual aids. The use of electronic presentation software such as PowerPoint is highly recommended. If you use overhead slides, make sure that they are clear and easy to read. Minimize text in slides, use type that is large enough to be seen from the back of the room (at least 30-point font), don't read your slides to the audience, and don't turn away from the audience to stare at the screen. Make sure you know how to operate the audio-visual equipment you will be using.

Give yourself a break. You can do this—after all, you are now an expert on your thesis topic. If you come in well prepared, relaxed, and excited about sharing your work, it will show.

IV. Formatting Requirements

Your finished thesis will become a permanent document at the Evergreen library. These formatting requirements have been designed to make your thesis library-worthy.

References and Citations

Your thesis project will almost invariably build upon the efforts of researchers from other times and places. Thus, it is important to clearly and accurately reference the work of others in your thesis.

Because of the interdisciplinary nature of environmental studies, we offer some flexibility as to the documentation style used in MES theses. For specific information about how to cite references within text and how to list these references at the end of your thesis, you should choose a style, in consultation with your reader, which will most likely be from one of the following style manuals: (1) *Chicago Manual of Style*, (2) *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association*, or (3) *Modern Language Association Handbook for Writers of Research Papers*. These styles are summarized in *Form and Style (12th Edition)*, by Carole Slade (Houghton Mifflin, 2003).

Length

While there are no specific page limits for MES theses, past theses have ranged in length from about 50-375 pages, with the majority in the range of 80-100 pages.

Margins

The final version of your thesis should be formatted with a 1.5" margin on the left to allow for binding. The other margins should be 1". Pages should be numbered (as described later in this section), and the numbers should appear in the lower right corner of the page, 3/4" from the

edges of the page. Sometimes charts and graphs may have to be folded to fit or reduced to a smaller size. If folded, have the fold at least 1/2" from the right edge of the document. The folded sheet should also have at least a 1.5" left margin; if more than a single fold is required, the left-hand fold should be at least 1.5" from the left margin.

Line Spacing and Font

Text must be double-spaced, with indented quotes single-spaced. The font used should be 12-point Times New Roman, with headings no larger than 14 point. Paragraphs should be indented 1/2".

Paper and Printing

The paper used for the final bound copies of your thesis should be of high quality that will be lasting. Recycled paper or tree-free paper is acceptable for MES theses. The use of acid-free paper is highly encouraged.

The thesis copy submitted to the library must be printed on one side of each page. Any additional copies may be double-sided to save paper. If you print on both sides, make sure that the margin nearest the binding (the left margin on one side, and the right margin on the other side of the page) is 1.5 inches. To simplify this, you are free to make both the left and right margins on all pages 1.5 inches.

It is recommended that the final copies of your thesis be printed using a high-quality copy machine, such as those found at a commercial copy center.

Required Pages in the Thesis

To help you with formatting, we have provided a thesis format template and page numbering instructions on the Thesis Resources page: <http://www.evergreen.edu/mes/thesisresources.htm>.

All MES theses should contain the following pages (the pagination system is indicated in parentheses):

Flyleaf Page: (not numbered) A Flyleaf page (blank page) needs to be inserted at the *front* and *back* of each copy of your thesis.

Title Page: (not numbered; counted as page i) This is the first page of your written thesis. It contains the title, the full name of the author, a presentation statement, e.g. "submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Environmental Studies," and the date the thesis was completed. The date should be the month and year of the last week you took thesis credits. A sample Title page is included in Appendix C.

Copyright Page: (not numbered; counted as page ii) Although not required for copyright protection, since your thesis will be available as an electronic document through the Evergreen Library, you are strongly advised to include this page in order to make your copyright protection obvious to all readers. A sample Copyright page is shown in Appendix C.

Approval Page: (not numbered; counted as page iii) Following your title page is the approval/signature page signed and dated by your faculty reader. This page must be signed by your reader before being submitted for binding and before you can graduate. All copies of your

bound thesis must have an approval page with an original signature from your reader. A sample Approval page is shown in the Appendix C.

Abstract: (not numbered; not counted in page numbering) The abstract is a concise summary of your topic, findings and conclusions. The abstract should be no longer than 300 words. The layout for the Abstract page is shown in Appendix C.

Table of Contents: (number first page as iv) The Table of Contents lists the chapter or major section titles by page number. First-level and second-level heads, describing paragraphs or paragraph sections, may be included as well. Following the chapter sections, and also listed by page number, are your references and appendices, if any.

List of Figures: (begins a new page; continue lower case Roman numerals) This list includes figure numbers, figure captions, and page numbers. Figures include photographs, drawings, maps, graphs, and charts—in other words, all illustrations except for tables.

List of Tables: (continue lower case Roman numerals) This list includes table numbers, table captions, and page numbers. It can be included on the same page as the List of Figures if there is sufficient room to fit both on a single page.

Acknowledgments: (continue lower case Roman numerals) As a matter of professional courtesy, any source, person or organization from whom you received substantive research and writing support should be acknowledged. Your reader(s) should always be acknowledged.

Text: (first text page is counted as page 1, which starts the numbering with Hindu-Arabic numerals—i.e., what used to be called Arabic numerals; continue with this numbering through the end of the document) Figures and tables should appear in the text as defined by the thesis style.

References or Notes: (continue with Hindu-Arabic numerals) The reference or note list at the end of your project documents all materials cited in the text and provides the information necessary to identify and retrieve each source. References listed must be cited in the text; conversely, each reference cited must appear in the reference or note list. The actual format of your reference or note list will depend on the documentation style that you choose.

Bibliography (optional): (continue with Hindu-Arabic numerals) You may include a bibliography, formatted according to the style you have chosen, listing sources pertinent to your topic but that are not necessarily explicitly cited in your thesis.

Appendices: (continue with Hindu-Arabic numerals) Materials that supplement your text, but which are not appropriate for inclusion, may be appended. Materials should be subdivided in logical sections and listed in the table of contents.

Colored Paper: (not numbered) A piece of colored paper should be inserted between copies of your thesis (if printing more than one) when they are submitted to the Student Assistant's Office (Lab 1, 3019) for binding.

V. Binding Requirements

Number of Copies

The program requires that at least one printed copy of your thesis, signed by your reader, be submitted to the Student Assistant's Office (Lab 1, 3019) for binding. An electronic copy must also be submitted. After binding, both the printed and electronic copies will be delivered to the Evergreen library to be placed in the Archives and Special Collections. You might also want to have more copies bound to provide to your reader or yourself. The costs associated with formatting, printing, and binding all copies of your thesis, including the one that goes to the library, are your responsibility.

Approximate Cost

Theses are currently sent by the college to B & J Bookbinding in Corvallis, Oregon. Bound copies are lettered on the spine (author's name, program name, and the year), and on the front cover (title and author). See the "Layout of Cover on Bound Copies" in Appendix C for an example. Costs for binding vary depending on how many copies of your thesis you want to have bound and how many lines of print the title requires on the cover. The total cost also includes the lettering on the spine of each book and a one-time shipping and handling fee. The actual cost for binding your project will be calculated when you fill out the Thesis Binding Order Form found at <http://www.evergreen.edu/mes/thesisresources.htm>.

Preparing Your Printed Thesis for Binding

The following are necessary steps to assure proper binding of your thesis:

1. Your thesis should be prepared in accordance with the formatting instructions described in the previous section. ***Please check each of your copies before submission to ensure that all required components are included and that the pages are in proper order.*** If your project is bound with components missing or if the page order is not correct, you will be responsible for the cost of corrections.
2. Remember that the Approval page, signed by your reader(s), must be included in each copy of your thesis. An example of the Approval page is shown in Appendix C.
3. Remember to include a flyleaf page (blank page) at the beginning and end of each copy of your thesis, and separate each copy with colored paper.
4. To determine the total cost of binding your thesis, fill out the Thesis Binding Order Form, found at: <http://www.evergreen.edu/mes/thesisresources.htm>.
5. Once you have calculated your total cost, deposit your payment at the Cashier's Office (Library 1125, 360-867-6445) into the account number 29019-52504. The Cashier's Office will provide you with a receipt for your payment, and you will need to attach this receipt to the Thesis Binding Order Form.

Preparing a Digital Copy of Your Thesis

The program requires that you submit a copy of your completed thesis in PDF format for the Evergreen library's circulating collection. Procedures for the submission of the digital thesis copy are as follows:

1. The digital thesis will be, in essence, identical to the bound copy in composition and formatting with the sole exception that the Approval page should not contain digital signatures, for security reasons.
2. The digital copy will be submitted in PDF or TIFF format, which can be attained directly with word processing software or by scanning, using Adobe Photoshop or a compatible program and saving as an image in PDF/TIFF format. The digital copy submitted needs to be in one comprehensive file. *Equipment and software for this activity is available in Media Services or the Computer Center.*
3. Save the thesis on a CD or DVD-Rom or re-writable and use the following format when saving your file: Last name_First initial (Use both first and middle name initials if there are two or more "Smiths or Jones" in the same class with the same first initial) MESThesis 2013 (four digit year of submission).
Example: Jones_AMESThesis2013
4. Labeling
 - a. The disk will be labeled consistent with the thesis Title page. This will include full name (surname, given name, and middle name or initial), full title of thesis, Master of Environmental Studies, Olympia: The Evergreen State College, and date of submission.
 - b. Labeling may be done with a labeling program or by use of a permanent marker on the label side of the disk as long as the lettering is clear and easily readable.

Final Submission

Once you are ready to submit your thesis, please make an appointment with the Student Assistant by calling 360-867-5940. Prior to your appointment, make sure all copies of your thesis are in proper order and that you have submitted your payment to the Cashier's Office. When you are ready, please bring the following to your appointment in Lab I, Room 3019.

- At least one complete printed copy of your thesis. Make sure that the number of copies submitted is equal to the number ordered and that components such as the Flyleaf pages, Title page, and Approval page are included in each. Place a piece of colored paper between each copy of your thesis.
- One electronic copy of your thesis. Please follow labeling instructions found earlier in this section
- Payment receipt from the Cashier's Office. This must match the final number on your order form. The form can be found at <http://www.evergreen.edu/mes/thesisresources.htm>.
- Two copies of the Thesis Binding Order Form that you used to determine the total cost. One copy will be kept for our records and one copy will be sent to B & J Bookbinding with your thesis.

The Student Assistant will confirm that your copies are in order, that all copies are signed by your reader, that you included an electronic copy, that the Thesis Binding Order Form is filled out correctly, and that you have a payment receipt.

Deadlines and Distribution of Bound Theses

Your printed and electronic thesis, with signatures and binding fees paid, is due no later than the Friday of Week 10 of the quarter in which you last took thesis credits. This allows time for your reader to write your thesis evaluation during evaluation week. You will earn credit for your thesis after you've presented, the office has your thesis with a signature from your reader, and your reader submits your thesis evaluation.

The Student Assistant will send off groups of theses to be bound at B & J Bookbinding. Turnaround time for binding varies from 4 to 6 weeks after mailing. Once the bound copies of your thesis returns, one copy, along with the electronic copy, will be forwarded to the Evergreen library and any additional copies will be held for you in our office. You will then be notified to pick them up. We are not able to mail bound copies to students, but you may send a representative if you are not in the area.

Appendix A: Request to Present Thesis Research

Request to Present Thesis Research

Graduate Program on the Environment
The Evergreen State College

Student Name: _____

Reader Name: _____

Students enrolled in the thesis workshop or with approved research extension to complete their thesis work must receive approval from their thesis reader to make a public presentation of their work.

To present research, the reader must have made comments and requests for change on a complete first draft. Presentations in the spring must be approved by May 15th.

Reader Approval:

The above named student has received comments based on my review of a complete first draft. I approve the student's work and support a public presentation of the research.

Reader Signature: _____

Date: _____

Please submit to the thesis workshop faculty by May 15.

Appendix B: Request to Extend Thesis Research

Request to Extend Thesis Research

Graduate Program on the Environment The Evergreen State College

Graduate students who require additional time to complete their thesis work may request an extension for the Summer or Fall quarter beyond the Spring Thesis Workshop. The extension must be requested by the student and approved by the thesis reader and the Director of the program. If a student does not complete the thesis by the requested quarter, it may result in the student receiving No Credit for their thesis. This will require the student to re-enroll in thesis credits the following Winter and Spring quarters to work on a new thesis.

I, _____, request an extension to complete my thesis in (choose only one quarter):

___ Summer Quarter

___ Fall Quarter

Approved: _____
Thesis Reader Date

Approved: _____
Director Date

Please submit to the Director of the Graduate Program on the Environment
by May 15.

Appendix C: Sample Pages

[Title Page Layout]

[Start title 2" from top of page]

[The title is 1.5 or double spaced]

THESIS TITLE AT TOP WITH
A SECOND LINE OF THE TITLE
AND EVEN A THIRD LINE OR MORE

["by" is 5" from top of page]

[1.5 or double spaced]

by
{Name of Author}

[This text is single spaced]

[Last line is 1" from bottom of page]

[Date should be month and year of the
final week in which you took thesis credits]

A Thesis
Submitted in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree
Master of Environmental Studies
The Evergreen State College
June 2013

[Copyright Page Layout]

© {year} by {Your Name}. All rights reserved.

[Approval Page Layout]

This Thesis for the Master of Environmental Studies Degree

by

{Your Name}

has been approved for

The Evergreen State College

by

[check with reader regarding
how they want their name listed]

{Reader's Name}
Member of the Faculty

Date

[Abstract Page Layout]

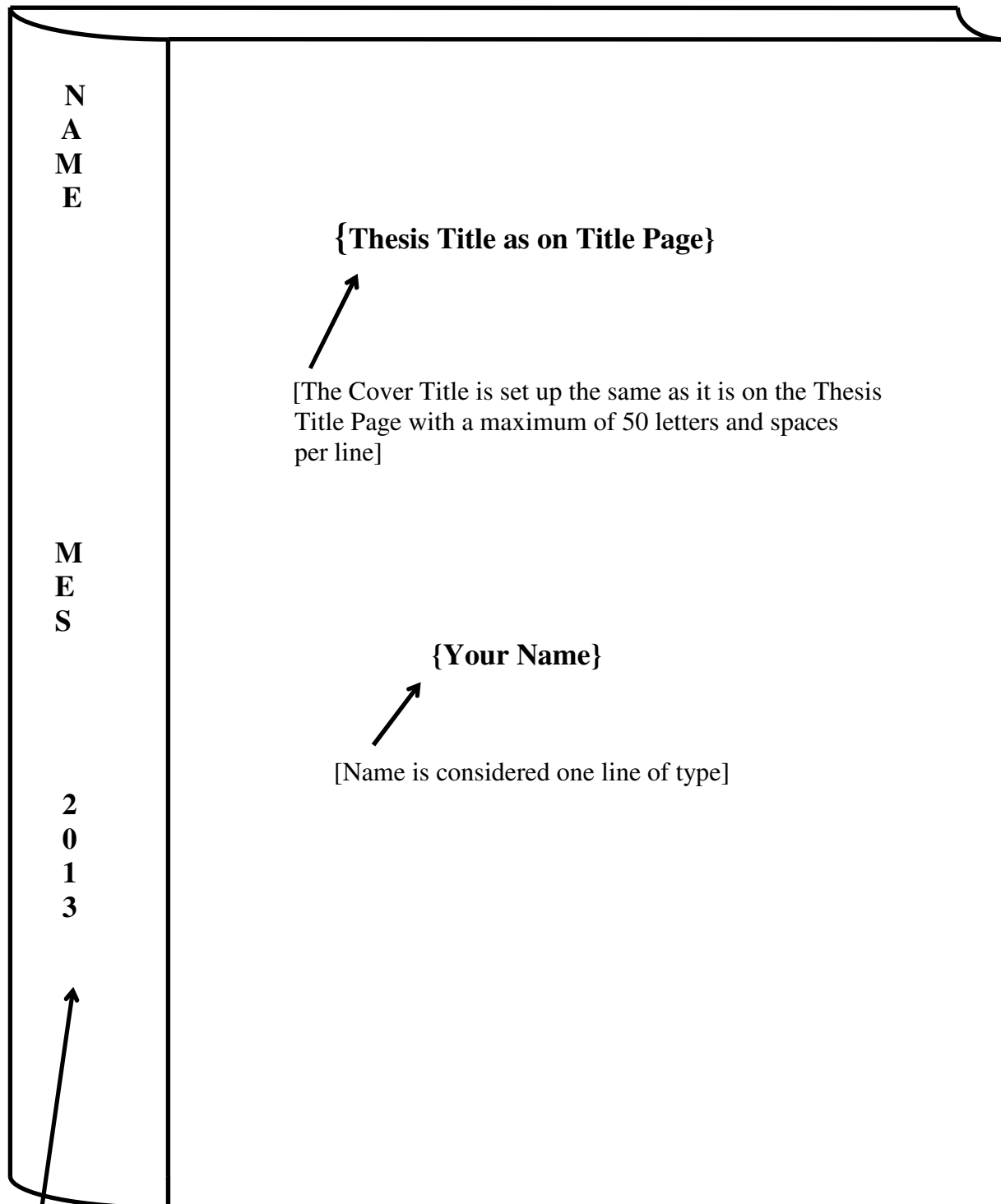
ABSTRACT

{Title of Thesis -- single-spaced
if on more than one line}

{Your Name}

{Text: The text should be single-spaced and left-attributed, like this. Your abstract should be no more than 300 words, and describe succinctly your thesis, your basic findings, and conclusion.}

[Layout of Cover on Bound Copies]



[Book Spine - name, degree and year is considered one line of type]