DEPARTMENT OF ANTHROPOLOGY UNC-CHARLOTTE

CAPSTONE PROJECT IN THE M.A. IN ANTHROPOLOGY

Students in the General Track of the M.A. in Anthropology complete a thesis as their capstone project. Students in the Applied Track complete a practicum with an organization or agency and write a report for their capstone project. These projects are equivalent in length and complexity.

Thesis Option

There are several models for an M.A. thesis. In the Dept. of Anthropology at UNC Charlotte, we envision a completed M.A. thesis as a paper that is potentially publishable in an anthropological scholarly journal. In practice, this means a paper that is no more than 50 pages of (double-spaced) text and usually closer to 35-40 pages of text, plus necessary supporting sections such as illustrations, charts, bibliography, etc. You may also include appendices which provide copies of survey questionnaires or interview questions or charts of raw data, etc., as appropriate for your topic. The appendices are not included in the page count.

You will write at least one preliminary document before the actual thesis. This preliminary document is the thesis proposal. After successfully defending your thesis proposal you will then start working on your thesis. The thesis proposal will be completed in ANTH 6910, Thesis Tutorial. The thesis will be completed in ANTH 6920, Masters Thesis. You will enroll for 6910 in either the summer between your first and second year or in the fall of your second year (assuming you start in a fall semester; this will be adjusted for students who start in the spring). You will enroll for 6920 in the spring of your second year (or the semester that is equivalent to your fourth full-time semester).

In ANTH 6910, you will complete a <u>thesis proposal</u> in which you (a) propose a focused research problem; (b) situate the research problem within current anthropological research and document the relevant anthropological literature related to your research problem ("literature review); and (c) describe the methods you plan to use. At the end of 6910, you will have an oral defense of your proposed research. If you are successful in your proposal defense, you will have clearly defined your research problem, comprehensively situated the research problem, and effectively developed the analytical methods. You may have started collecting data at this stage as well. Your data may be ethnographic, archival, archaeological, and/or biological in nature.

If your research involves gathering data from humans (e.g., interviews, focus groups, participant-observation, etc.), you must submit appropriate information to the University's Institutional Review Board (IRB) for review and approval. This should happen during the proposal stage. You must receive approval from the IRB *before* collecting data from humans. If your research involves gathering data from animals, you must also submit appropriate information to the University's Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee (IACUC). You must receive approval from IACUC *before* collecting data from animals.

In ANTH 6920, you will complete gathering and analyzing data. This will be followed by writing the final <u>thesis</u> itself, which will include compressed sections (a), (b), and (c) from your proposal and will also include (d) a summary of the collected data; (e) analysis of the data in the context of your chosen theory or theories; and (f) conclusions. There will be an oral defense of the completed thesis. This will include a presentation of your research and questions about the thesis from your committee.

It takes focused writing to compress the material into the space constraints. Throughout your M.A. career, you should regularly read current scholarly journals in anthropology, so you develop an

understanding of the writing style and structure used in anthropological publications. It is helpful to specifically read scholarly journals that publish research in the area that you are working in. It is a good idea to format your thesis to meet the requirements of one of these journals. Your advisor can provide advice on appropriate scholarly journals.

If you are unable to complete the thesis during ANTH 6920, you must enroll for the 1-credit course, ANTH 7999, during each successive semester until you graduate (this is a university requirement).

Practicum/Report Option

Students in the Applied Track will take ANTH 6400, Practicum in Anthropology, twice. During the first semester you take this course, you will complete the equivalent of a <u>research proposal</u>. You will: (a) identify your practicum location; (b) identify the potential research question(s) that you will address for the organization or agency (this must be done through collaboration with agency personnel); and (c) prepare a thorough literature review of the relevant work in applied anthropology and related fields (i.e., anthropology more broadly and other disciplines appropriate for your placement). This proposal document should clearly delineate the potential research questions, the appropriate methods for the project, and the ethical issues that need to be addressed. You will have an oral defense of this proposal.

If your research involves gathering data from humans (e.g., interviews, focus groups, participant-observation, etc.), you must also submit appropriate information to the University's Institutional Review Board (IRB) for review and approval. This should happen during the proposal stage. You must receive IRB approval *before* collecting data from humans. If your research involves gathering data from animals, you must also submit appropriate information to the University's Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee (IACUC). You must receive approval from IACUC *before* collecting data from animals.

The final product for the applied anthropology track will be a <u>report</u> on your activities during your practicum, including results of research conducted for the agency and appropriate recommendations to the organization or agency. An effective report will contain a condensed version of the information in the research proposal. The exact form of this report should be established by the student, in collaboration with the agency and the faculty advisor. The form of the report should be established at the beginning of the second semester that you take ANTH 6400. As with the thesis described above, the report should be no more than 50 pages of text, double-spaced (although it may contain additional appendices). When the report is finished, you will have an oral defense that will include a presentation about your practicum and questions from your committee. In some cases, a separate paper for the student's committee may be required, in addition to that requested by the agency. This should happen only if the agency requests a very brief report or only requests an oral report.

The actual hands-on activities of the practicum may be accomplished either partly in the first enrollment in ANTH 6400 and partly in the second enrollment in ANTH 6400, or entirely in one semester. Students may enroll in 6400 for the first time, during the summer between the first and second years or in the fall of the second year. Students will enroll in 6400 for the second time in the spring of the second year (this scheduling assumes that a student begins in the fall semester and is full-time; it can be adjusted for students working on different time tables).