

CJ THESIS 7900(9)

Design and completion of independent research is a key goal of the Criminal Justice MA program. CJ Thesis 7900(9) develops students' skills to write a major work based on original research. Students who wish to engage in a less in-depth project, and especially those who view the MA as a terminal degree, should consider the research paper option.

FORMAT

The Thesis must contain the following elements:

- 1. Introduction/Statement of the Problem*
- 2. Literature Review*
- 3. Theoretical Framework, Methodology, Research Questions and/or Hypotheses (multiple chapters)*
- 4. Findings (multiple chapters)*
- 5. Discussion and Conclusion*

Style: APA for empirical papers, Canadian Uniform Legal Citation (McGill Style) for legal research papers.

Length: 80-120 pages.

The thesis will make an original conceptual, empirical, and methodological contribution to the field.

THEORETICAL PERSPECTIVES

Students in CJ Thesis 7900(9) will be expected to draw from conceptual and theoretical literature to guide their analyses and writing. Students will need to engage with the core assumptions, concepts, and claims of one or more theoretical perspectives as part of their thesis research and writing. Students should consult with their supervisor and committee members to discuss the theoretical perspective(s) they plan to work with. The final written thesis should demonstrate a masterful understanding and engagement with these theoretical perspective(s).

QUANTITATIVE PROJECTS

Students can design a survey or interviews / observations and involve police (public, private), legal actors (judges, Crown and defence lawyers) corrections workers (parole/probation, correctional officers), offenders (parolees/probationers, provincial or federal inmates. Official records analysis may include publically accessible records such as court documents, including case law, or government data obtained through access to information or other channels. Secondary data analyses are possible through data depositories such as the Canadian General Social Survey, Adult and Youth Corrections Survey Adult Criminal Court Survey and Homicide Survey. Students may also analyze existing data from studies conducted by criminal justice faculty.

QUALITATIVE PROJECTS

Observation can be undertaken of criminal justice processes that might range from police activity, court behaviour and citizen – CJ agent interaction. Depth interviews and transcript analysis could be conducted with police (public, private), legal actors (judges, Crown and defence lawyers) corrections practitioners (parole/probation, correctional officers), and offenders (parolees/probationers, provincial or federal inmates. Content analysis of government documents and other official records is another strategy. Projects may also review case law, using doctrine research methods alone or in conjunction with other social science methods.

ETHICS

Studies involving human subjects require approval of the University's Research and Ethics Board (REB). Approval is required from criminal justice agencies prior to being allowed access to facilities, practitioners or offenders, and a record of this approval is needed by the CJ department's research committee or REB prior to any formal approval of a research project being granted.

PROCESS

Students will have identified a thesis supervisor and research area of interest on their application to the MA program. A criminal justice faculty member must supervise CJ Thesis 7900(9), and this arrangement must be formalised by the end of the first term of study. A committee of 2-3 other members must be assembled, and the supervisor will assist with this task. The CJ Graduate Program Chair must approve committee members outside the CJ department. Formal presentation of the study results are required as part of the thesis defence. Full-time students must complete the requirements under this option within 24 months (September 1 to August 31), part-time 48 months.

SCHEDULE FOR FULL-TIME STUDENTS

<i>Fall/Winter application:</i>	<i>A CJ faculty member and thesis topic area are identified in the student application.</i>
<i>Fall Term 1</i>	<i>Student completes course work, meets with Thesis Supervisor to discuss proposal, literature.</i>
<i>Winter Term 2</i>	<i>Student begins work on their thesis proposal.</i>
<i>Spring/Summer Term 3</i>	<i>Student submits thesis proposal to supervising committee. The supervisor will determine that a proposal presentation can proceed. The supervisor will distribute the proposal to faculty and graduate students and arrange a time for a public presentation.</i> <i>Once the supervising committee approves the thesis the student may proceed. This may include submitting the proposal to the University of Winnipeg Research and Ethics Board, if needed.</i>
<i>Fall Term 4</i>	<i>Enrol in CJ Thesis 7900(9). Data collection/analysis.</i>
<i>Winter Term 5</i>	<i>Enrol in CJ Thesis 7900(9). Complete writing.</i>
<i>Spring/Summer Term 6</i>	<i>Present research findings at thesis defense.</i>

SCHEDULE FOR PART-TIME STUDENTS

<i>Fall/Winter application:</i>	<i>A CJ faculty member and thesis topic area are identified in the student application.</i>
<i>Fall Term 1</i>	<i>Student completes course work, meets with Thesis Supervisor to discuss proposal, literature.</i>
<i>Winter Term 2</i>	<i>Student completes course work.</i>
<i>Spring/Summer Term 3</i>	<i>Student completes course work.</i>
<i>Winter Term 4</i>	<i>Student begins work on their thesis proposal</i>
<i>Spring/Summer Term 6</i>	<i>Student submits thesis proposal to supervising committee. Once the supervising committee approves the thesis the student may proceed. This may include submitting to the proposal to the University of Winnipeg Research and Ethics Committee, if needed.</i>
<i>Fall Term 7</i>	<i>Student completes course work, enrolls in CJ Thesis 7900(9), data collection/analysis.</i>
<i>Winter Term 8</i>	<i>Enrol in CJ Thesis 7900(9). Data collection/analysis.</i>
<i>Spring/Summer Term 9</i>	<i>Enrol in CJ Thesis 7900(9). Data collection/analysis.</i>
<i>Fall Term 10</i>	<i>Enrol in CJ Thesis 7900(9). Complete writing.</i>
<i>Winter Term 11</i>	<i>Enrol in CJ Thesis 7900(9). Complete writing.</i>
<i>Spring/Summer Term 12</i>	<i>Present research findings at thesis defense.</i>

Things to think about:

- Students enrolled in the thesis must consult the general thesis guidelines: <http://www.uwinnipeg.ca/graduate-studies/docs/current-student/thesis-booklet.pdf>
- It is imperative to find a supervisor and topic quickly. Taking too long to decide, or changing your topic mid-stream, increases the risk you will fail to finish within your allotted program period.
- Human subject research is laudable, but if you have not established access to an organizational site or study subjects within the first few months of the program, you may have to rethink your project or submit a new proposal.
- Surveys may require a substantial sample size to be credible, so think carefully about your ability to access a sufficient population and survey them within a reasonable time frame.

The following will help students distinguish the Thesis from the Research Paper option and more comfortably situate themselves within the MA program.

MASTER’S THESIS AND RESEARCH PAPER GUIDELINES (CRIMINAL JUSTICE DEPARTMENT)

THESIS	RESEARCH PAPER
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 80-120 pages 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 30 - 45 pages
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Original research theoretically-filling clear gap in existing literature 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> While theoretically informed, focus is on developing research skills and answering a research question.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Designed, researched and written with regular consultations of the supervisor and/or other faculty 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Supervisor must be consulted at major points of the process but will have a lesser role; other faculty usually not involved until grading
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Should represent a distinct and original contribution to the field 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Should indicate a strong understanding of the field and an ability to conduct and present research.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Formally requires 9 credit hours 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Formally requires 3 credit hours.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Takes on average approximately 9 months of full-time work from beginning to completion, but this will vary considerably according to a wide range of factors 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Takes on average approximately four months on a full-time basis.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Defended before a formal thesis board 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Graded by the supervisor and one other faculty member
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> As a distinct contribution to the field, should likely be publishable if it can be summarized into article length 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> May or may not be publishable
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Will be particularly valuable for students who: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Strongly wish to study a particular topic in depth using primary resources -Want to undertake a major piece of research to prepare themselves for eventual PhD studies 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Will be particularly valuable for students who: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Have a wide range of scholarly interests and do not feel strongly drawn to a single topic -Do not plan doctoral study and would rather develop general writing and analytical skills