



COLUMBIA | HARRIMAN INSTITUTE

Russian, Eurasian, and East European Studies

MARS-REERS THESIS GUIDELINES 2026-2027

The thesis is a work of substance and length – 40 to 60 pages excluding the bibliography – requiring research that draws together ideas developed in the course of a student’s interdisciplinary studies. Students should start thinking about a topic as they begin their coursework.

MA Thesis Regional Studies Seminar

Students write the thesis as part of the MA Thesis Regional Studies Seminar (RERS G6998 & RERS G6999). Students must be registered in this course as part of the requirements for the degree. The seminar is divided into two sections to be taken over two semesters.

Students must first enroll in a one-credit seminar, which focuses on developing the students’ topic, thesis proposal and working bibliography. Students will work under the guidance of the instructor of the seminar. Students will be graded on their work in the seminar. Students will also identify faculty thesis advisors during the thesis seminar.

During the second semester students will work independently with their supervisors while writing their thesis. The supervisors will grade the thesis and this will serve as the grade for the seminar.

Thesis Supervisors

Students are responsible for finding their own faculty thesis supervisors with assistance from the MA thesis seminar instructor. All supervisors must be current Columbia faculty members of a relevant department and must hold a Ph.D. or other comparable degree. Both supervisors must approve the proposal and decide on the grade for the final thesis. The Harriman Institute website and academic department websites list faculty profiles and research concentrations. Students are encouraged to review faculty information to target possible supervisors.

Proposal & Schedule of Deadlines

For MA Thesis Regional Studies Seminar 1 (RERSG6998) students must submit a written Thesis Proposal to the thesis seminar instructor and two faculty supervisors who, by agreeing to be the supervisors, affirm that the topic is satisfactory, manageable, and of appropriate size. The complete Proposal should include:

- A statement of approximately 5-10 double-spaced pages describing the topic, the central question of the thesis, the nature of the sources to be used, and research design (methodology).

- A brief bibliography indicating that you are aware of current work in the field
- Students must organize a Schedule of Deadlines with their supervisors, identifying deadlines for the Outline, Draft, and Revised Draft.

Submission of Proposal to the Harriman Institute Office

Prior to the term in which students plan to write the thesis, they must submit the printed proposal and schedule of deadlines with the seminar instructor's and supervisors' signatures to the Harriman Institute office in 1217 IAB.

MARS-REERS Thesis Guidelines

No one may undertake research that involves human subjects, including interviews, surveys, or related methods, without prior review and approval or evidence of exemption from the Institutional Review Board (IRB). IRB guidelines and applications are available at <http://www.columbia.edu/cu/irb/>.

Completing and Submitting the Final Thesis

With attention to the final deadlines listed on the thesis proposal form, the student and the supervisors must agree on their own schedule for discussions, revision, and grading of the thesis. Be sure to allow enough time for the supervisors to read and grade the thesis and to make any final revisions based on their comments. We recommend doing this three to four weeks prior to the final thesis deadline.

The final version of the thesis must be submitted by email to ar2052@columbia.edu before the student can be certified for graduation. Students cannot submit their own grades. Grades should be sent to Elise Giuliano eg599@columbia.edu by thesis advisors only.

- If the evaluation form indicates that minor revisions are to be made, students must make these revisions before depositing the final copy of the thesis in the Harriman Institute office.
- Students with major revisions required or who do not submit the final thesis by the deadline receive an incomplete grade (IN) and do not graduate. Students have one calendar year to complete an IN thesis.

Deadlines for Final Thesis and Grades:

FINAL THESIS AND GRADES ARE DUE ON MONDAY, MAY 4, 2026 FOR MAY 2026 GRADUATION.

The HI office cannot guarantee that students will be certified to graduate if the signed grade form and the final copy of the thesis are submitted after the listed deadline.

Physical Structure of the Paper

The final thesis marks the end of a student's degree work in the MARS-REERS program at Columbia University. As public testimony of your scholarship, a copy of the final paper is deposited in Columbia University Library, where it is available to other students and scholars. Please follow the following guidelines for the final version of the thesis:

- The final version submitted to the HI office should be 40 to 60 pages long excluding bibliography.
- Use one standard style and size of 12 point font throughout and double-space the text (long quotations, footnotes and bibliography may be single-spaced).
- Choice of style manual (e.g. MLA, Chicago, APA) is up to the student and faculty supervisor, but students should follow one method of reference and bibliographic notation throughout.
- The title page should not be numbered, but all other pages should be sequentially numbered.
- Margins should be 1 1/2 inches at the top and left sides and 1 inch at the bottom and right sides.

MARS-REERS THESIS GUIDELINES

For May 2026 graduation, only electronic copies must be submitted. A physical copy of the thesis will be printed by the Harriman Institute.

- Electronic copies of the thesis are required. Students are asked to submit an electronic copy of their final thesis for the MARS-REERS Thesis Database. Electronic copies may be in Word or PDF format and may be submitted via email to ar2052@columbia.edu.

FINAL THESIS AND GRADES ARE DUE ON MONDAY, MAY 4, 2026 FOR MAY 2026 GRADUATION.

Columbia University
Graduate School of Arts & Sciences

Russia, Eurasia, and Eastern Europe:
Regional Studies Master of Arts

TITLE

a final paper
by
NAME OF STUDENT

Submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree of
Master of Arts

month and year of degree conferred