Written Thesis with Creative Component
versus
Creative Thesis with Process Document

For a student interested in creative production, it can sometimes be difficult to distinguish between what we call a "written thesis with creative component" and a "creative thesis with process document." To help you decide which type of thesis you are interested in producing, we've outlined the components of both below.

Written thesis with a creative component

A *thesis with a creative component* resembles a standard thesis in all ways; e. g., it takes an analytical approach to a well-defined topic within the parameters of scholarly discourse. The only difference is that students may opt to take a creative approach with regard to methodology and/or presentation. We discuss each below:

I.   ***Creative Presentation***

When you engage in creative presentation, you supplement (but do not replace) your written thesis with photo, sound, video, digital or even live material that goes beyond unedited raw footage. Examples include (but are not limited to):

a.   A web site that showcases your research
b.   A slide show or screencast, either with voiceover or without
c.   A mapping presentation of some sort
d.   Some form of data visualization (network maps, tag clouds, etc.)
e.   A small-scale live performance or installation

II.   ***Creative Methodology****:* When you engage in creative methodology, you supplement (or sometimes replace) classical modes of investigation (say, interviews, semiotic readings, discourse analysis) with creative modes of investigation. These might include:

a.   *Creating art projects or social experiments* in collaboration with your research subjects

(for instance, painting a mural with a community or running 'week without social media' projects with teens - any student undertaking a project of this sort is responsible for complying with the University's guidelines on Human Subject Research, and may need permission

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from one or more Institutional Review Boards to gather data)

b. *Creating advertising, teaching products* that are then user tested

(for instance, creating a public service announcement, a promotional campaign, a course syllabus or a series of interactive lectures that are user tested to gauge effectiveness, etc.; sa above re [Human Subject Research](#))

Note: you don't need to draw on creative methods to have a creative presentation element to your thesis, but anyone who includes creative methods almost always wants their work shown in ways that go beyond the written word.

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Creative thesis with process document

The creative thesis with process document is an option available to students interested in **producing large-scale, standalone creative projects**. These include:

- Written creative projects: Novellas, poetry collections, short story collections, screenplays, play scripts, translations, adaptations, etc.

- Visual creative projects: Narrative, experimental, and documentary films, video installations, large-scale artistic photography installations, staged plays, architectural renderings, etc.

- Digital projects: Mobile applications, videogame levels, robotics projects, web sites requiring programming or other skills beyond standard 'plug and play' blogs

  Note: GLS does not provide resources for creating visual or digital theses - e.g., editing software, training, production facilities, insurance, etc - beyond what is available to the NYU community as a whole. Students should therefore research the available NYU resources before undertaking a creative visual or digital thesis (as opposed to including visual/digital elements in a more traditional thesis), making sure that their project is practical.

Every creative thesis requires a **process document**. This document, which is a *minimum* of 8-10 pages long, includes chapters detailing:

1. **The pre-production process.**

    a. This section includes your rationale for the project, background material necessary for someone to understand what you created

    b. This section includes a review of relevant scholarly literature regarding your subject area of interest, to situate your reader academically.

    c. If your project is documentary or non-fiction based, you must include a discussion of your methodology in this section. If your project is fiction-based, you must include a discussion of your creative influences. Either way, you must reference the work of others, to demonstrate familiarity with work outside your own imagination.

    d. This section should discuss your original expectations/hunches/hypotheses going into this project, based on the material cited above.

2.   **The production process**

    a. This chapter details your creative decision-making process throughout the project. This chapter is framed through existing literature regarding your choice of medium, e.g. experimental film production, effective web site construction etc.

    b. This chapter should communicate the following:

        i. What you planned to do (documents, images, storyboards should be shown, here.)

        ii. What actually happened (successes, setbacks, mistakes, confusions)

        iii. How you think that influenced your overall project

        iv. Insights your experience gave you into the process (of interviewing, or storytelling, etc.)

3.   **The post-production process**

    a. This chapter details decisions made when it came present your project to others, including:

        i. Decisions about how, where, and when to show your work to others (with diagrams and maps, ideally)

      ii.   Decisions about things to add or cut (for time, for clarity, etc.)

  b. This chapter details audience response to your work

      i.   In what ways do you think it succeeded?

      ii.   In what ways do you think it could be improved?

      iii.   Do you think the improvements needed are due to time pressures, or money, or things you hadn't realized before beginning the project, or all of the above?

      iv.   This chapter evaluates the responses you received in light of existing written material about what makes a creative project effective (as entertainment, pedagogy, politics, documentary, photography, etc.)

4.   Conclusions

a. This chapter documents what you feel you have learned:

    i. About your subject matter
    ii. About the methods you practiced as a researcher/creator
    iii. About yourself as a scholar who works in the creative field

b. This chapter also addresses "follow up" or complementary projects that might be worth someone undertaking in the future, e.g., at the graduate level.