ART & VISUAL CULTURE EDUCATION
THESIS PROJECT

Requirement & General Purpose in Art Education
The thesis for the MA degree in Art Education is structured as a research project. A clear research problem, methodology, and conclusions are necessary. Course work (especially the two research courses required of all MA students, ARE 530 and MUS 551) will help prepare you for designing a research project that is both significant and of interest to you. Your thesis advisor and committee members will additionally help you design your research project. In addition to completing and reporting on a research project of significance to the field, the thesis is meant as a research learning experience.

Structure of Thesis
A thesis must have the following components (though not necessarily in this order):

- A statement of the research problem (this is often both stated and posed as a question with sub-questions)
- Significance and Limitations of the research
- Methodology, or the way in which you will systematically address your research problem (course work will help you determine a methodology)
- Literature review of research relevant to your research
- Data collected through your research
- Analysis of data and conclusions

The Graduate College maintains a thesis manual as well as some other online information. You will need to read through this information; you may wish to download it.

Thesis Committee
A thesis committee is composed of three University of Arizona faculty members. Two must be Art and Visual Culture Education faculty; the third may be from the Art and Visual Culture Education faculty or may come from a cognate area. A thesis committee is formally assigned by the Art and Visual Culture Education faculty, based on the recommendation of the student. Thus, the student asks an Art and Visual Culture Education faculty if she or he is willing to serve as thesis advisor and then suggests or works with the faculty member to identify the other two members of the committee. The student then asks the other faculty if they are willing to serve and reports back to the advisor who recommends the committee to the Art and Visual Culture Education faculty.

*Can someone who is an adjunct faculty, a staff member, a faculty at another university serve as the third member on a committee?*

Not usually, but if there is real reason to pursue this, please explore the possibility with your advisor.
Calendar

A thesis takes time to develop, research, and write. Unlike a research paper for a class, each step of the thesis must be approved by the advisor and, eventually, the entire thesis committee. Expect for each step of the writing: from outline and proposal to writing up each chapter—to go through several drafts. Communication and careful planning are necessary.

The first step is to work with your advisor on a thesis problem statement, after which an outline of chapters is developed. Once these are reviewed and revised in conjunction with your advisor, these must be approved by all committee members. Sometimes this takes the form of a committee meeting, other times, the student meets individually with each committee member to review the thesis problem statement and outline.

Once approval for the project and outline is secured from all committee members, a thesis proposal is developed. The proposal, which usually serves as a draft for the first chapter of the thesis, should include an introduction to the research problem, a formal statement of the problem (usually posed as a main question and a series of sub-questions), significance of the problem (which is often addressed, at least in part, by a survey of the major landmarks in the area to be researched), limitations of the research (for example, what will not or cannot be researched in the study), how the study will be carried out (a basic description of the methodology to be used, including research subjects and site if applicable), and an outline of future chapters. Expect to make revisions. You will share your proposal first with your advisor, who will make suggestions for revisions. After these are completed and the advisor has re-read the proposal, you will share the proposal with all committee members (again, this may be as a formal meeting, but most likely, you will give the proposal to your committee members and meet with them 2 weeks later for feedback).

Once the proposal is accepted by advisor and committee members, you will begin work on the project. A calendar for writing and revising the subsequent chapters should be worked out with your advisor and committee members ahead of time. Your advisor should read each chapter as you complete it. S/he will give you feedback on the chapter, you will make revisions, s/he will re-read the chapter. Once your advisor feels the chapter is acceptable, you may give it to your other committee members. In some circumstances, a committee member (not your advisor) will wish to read your thesis chapter-by-chapter; in other cases, s/he will want to read the whole thesis just before your thesis defense.

The Graduate College posts deadlines by which the thesis must be completed and oral exam passed; please check those in planning your graduation date.

Oral Defense

The oral examination, or thesis defense, is scheduled with all members of your committee. It takes place after the written portion of your thesis has been read. You must give all members two weeks from the time you give them the thesis until the defense takes place. The exam is scheduled for two hours and your advisor will help you with understanding what takes place during the exam. Most candidates are asked to make at least minor revisions after the exam.