M.A. Thesis / Proposal Stage / Draft

Learning Outcome	Beginning (1)	Developing (2)	Competent (3)	Accomplished (4)
Intended Subject including Basic Argument and Larger Key Issues	-Topic is too broad for a 50-60-page M.A. thesis -Basic argument is lacking, too vague, or self-evident to be effectively developed -Connections between evidence and basic argument are weak or missing -Key issues are not clearly identified	-Topic and basic argument are emerging, but need greater focus and clarity -Limited use of specific examples to develop the basic argument -Key issues are emerging, but some are missing and/or not all are related to the topic and the basic argument	-Topic can be addressed in 50-60 pages. -Basic argument is clear -Student has sufficient evidence to support the basic argument, and no omissions of significant evidence -Key issues and historical context are identified	-Argument is sophisticated, acknowledging competing viewpoints -Evidence is compelling and enhances the basic argument -Key issues and historical context are clearly articulated, developing the complexity of the topic and basic argument
Review of Existing Literature	-Bibliography is still being developed -Student is still finding and investigating all potential sources -Annotations are too general or provide only fragments of information related to a specific text	-Student struggles to assess the existing literature, often neglecting to see trends and/or problems in a writer's approach or interpretation -Annotated bibliography demonstrates familiarity with primary and secondary sources related to the general topic -Annotations identify stronger and weaker sources	-Student demonstrates an ability to assess the secondary source material by making general claims and providing evidence to support such claims -Annotated bibliography clearly separates primary and secondary source materials -Annotations identify how specific sources have had a positive or negative impact on the later literature	-Student is able to assess the secondary source material and articulate historical trends in the existing literature -Student has clearly identified the problems in the existing literature and sees how the M.A. thesis will provide new insight for the intended topic -Annotated bibliography demonstrates how primary and secondary source materials can work together
Contribution	-The relevance of the project is not clear -No clear research method is evident	-An explanation of the need for the M.A. thesis is emerging but not fully articulated -A method has been identified, but the complexities of the method and how it will make a contribution to the topic are not clear	-The importance of the project is clear -The chosen method(s) is apparent -Student sees a link between the method(s) and the basic argument of the M.A. thesis	-Proposal clearly articulates how the M.A. thesis will make a contribution to the field -The method(s) is clearly identified -Student articulates how the chosen method(s) will support the basic argument
Outline	-Chapter breakdown is not clear and rational	-A chapter breakdown is emerging, but one or more chapters are too general, representing an M.A. thesis or a book in their own right. -Chapters will likely be wildly uneven in length -Introduction and conclusion are general and repetitive	-Chapters are logically divided and demonstrate a sense of parity, such that each addresses the intended topic and basic argument specifically and each will likely be relatively equal in length -Introduction and conclusion serve their functional purposes in the M.A. thesis	-Chapters are logically divided, and the structure of each chapter is relatively uniform -The order of the chapters enhances the basic argument of the thesis -Introduction is compelling, and the conclusion articulates the larger issues related to the M.A. thesis
Writing Mechanics	-The writing is unfocused and unclear at the sentence level -Problems in grammar, punctuation, and usage undermine the communication of ideas -The proposal reads like a first draft	-Text is unnecessarily repetitive -Ideas are vague, and word choice is confusing -Arguments are not cogently expressed, and ideas do not track from paragraph to paragraph	-Repetition is at a minimum -All statements are articulated fully -Ideas track from paragraph to paragraph in sequence -Text has been proofread, and notes, etc., are included	-Writing is polished and effective at conveying arguments -Proofreading is meticulous -All notes, appendices, and illustrations are presented correctly