



The Advancement to Candidacy Essay Examination, along with the other ATC materials, helps us determine whether or not you are ready to enter the final phase of the HUX program (Phase III). Now that you have completed at least 16 units of coursework, you should be able to reflect meaningfully on the questions below.

The two essay prompts below rely on a traditional approach of linking the specific to the general in critical thinking. If you are not familiar with the academic format for an argumentative paper, consult a writing manual on how to construct an argument.

For each of the following prompts, write and submit a well-crafted, unified, coherent, well-supported, and error-free essay. Each essay should be approximately 500 words, typed, and should follow the current MLA Style manual.

Essay 1. Select ONE paper you wrote in any of your HUX courses that involved research and is of special interest to you. Write an essay explaining the reasons why the central (research) issue of that paper could be suitable for a final M.A. thesis or project in the Humanities. Make sure that you identify the course and purpose of the assignment in your essay. Be specific in presenting your reasons. Take as little space as you can to describe the assignment and your original essay.

Before you write your essay:

Review three to five of your HUX papers (do not submit them). Choose and defend the topic that is most promising in terms of further research by answering key questions, for example: is it an important topic (the question of significance)? is it a viable topic (are there sufficient sources to support your work)? could it make a real contribution to scholarship (is there some angle, approach, or new information not yet addressed by scholars in that field)? Depending on the nature of the original assignment, you may need to do some additional research to answer these questions.

As you formulate what could be the central argument of a 40 to 60-page thesis or creative project based on your topic, be sure that the topic is carefully defined, the central argument has a clear focus and is able to govern the work, and in brief how you might proceed to support the central argument in the body of the thesis or project.

We designed this question in part to help stimulate ideas for students who have not yet found a thesis or project topic. But note that 1) you are not required to base your thesis on a course assignment, and 2) we do not consider this essay your commitment to a thesis or project topic. We will, however, expect your eventual thesis or project to, in some way, flow out of the things you have studied in the HUX program.

Essay 2. Contemporary American society has witnessed a strong push toward graduate degrees that are practical and/or specialized (e.g., M.B.A., M.A. in Educational Technologies). Write an argumentative essay that assesses the value and usefulness of an M.A. degree in the Humanities in the 21st century. Make sure that you provide ample, specific evidence in support of your reasoning and point of view.