

Attending Grad School



YOU will be creating a DESIGN THESIS

WHAT IS A THESIS - A thesis is a personal methodology that you must create as a unique way to generate form. It must be something that is fundamentally new, and has never been done by anyone else.

A new personal conceptualization. A never before witnessed / achieved means of form-making.

NEW - UNIQUE - NEVER BEEN DONE BEFORE - GET IT? GOT IT? GOOD

NOW GOOD LUCK



Professor Andrade

WHAT IS A THESIS?

The most important thing to know is, what you're doing – right?

You can't solve any problem and or create anything until you know or have a proposal about what that thing is. THE most common error I have experienced in teaching Grad level thesis efforts is that, when asked, most students can't tell me what a thesis is?*(^%&^(*)@???

Definition: A THESIS is- The creation of a unique, never before seen, methodology for creating form, in terms of an object – place – eventscape or environmental experience.

That's it.

This simple and direct definition is the ultimate goal of any thesis project. Yet, as simple as this definition might be, achieving a completely new and unique mode of form generation, is NOT easy. This is why designing a thesis is a real struggle. This is why thesis work is so challenging and difficult. It calls for being comfortable in undefined realms of thought. It is similar to applying the scientific method to design. It requires getting lost and then finding your way. This condition is difficult for many people. The dark space of not knowing is the key to discovery but it requires trusting your intuition as a guide.

WHAT AM I SUPPOSED TO BE 'DOING'?

STEP #1 – THESIS STATEMENT – If you don't start with this you lose valuable time.

Define a premise or statement that explains **what** you intend to investigate. Remember your work is similar to a scientist looking to find an answer to an unknown. Your thesis statement should be short and sweet because it's only going to tell us WHAT you are going to do – not how –not in what order and not why – this all comes later. The thesis statement answers what unique proposed direction or conceit will you support, prove and or explore. It can be a statement or a theory that is put forward as a premise to be maintained or proved. It should not be more than a few sentences. A thesis statement is NOT just a matter of fact-like statement and never states I'm going to do this thing or that thing. It is a directive of great importance, a definition of purpose.

Professor Andrade- WHAT IS A THESIS (Cont.)

PRIOR TO SELECTION OF ANY THESIS DIRECTION OR IDEA: There are all sorts of interesting ideas for what might become a thesis, however, in order to be a viable thesis that requires a thousand hours to complete it pays to make sure you choose wisely.

Below are tests that your thesis should pass before selecting a finalized thesis direction.

Test #1 – Does this direction align with your passions – does it tap into who you are and where you want your career direction to go upon leaving your university master’s degree program?

Test #2 – Does your direction tap into a known, or attainable skillsets, within your reach and timeframe?

Test #3 – Has this notion been done achieved / studied / designed / detailed successfully by many many other people over time? – If so then it might be wise to skip this direction and move on to another idea.

Test #4 – If your idea will not result in a unique approach to form making or entertainment then it would be wise to skip this idea and move on. Your thesis pretext must *mean something* to the audience.

Test #5 – If you have a crazy idea, and everyone tells you that it won’t work, you might just be onto something amazing! Never be dissuaded or disillusioned – stick to your guns and go for it!

CASE STUDIES – Be open and loose – Don’t think that these are IT! – Be flexible.

- The reason we do **CASE STUDIES** for a thesis is in order to posit a unique direction never done before, we need to rule out 'similar' projects preceding our own investigations. This allows us to move beyond all existing similar efforts and supports our own unique findings. These case studies need to reflect investigation on behalf of *your thesis* and are not just a book report or a brief. Start with three case studies. It’s ok if they fail and become substituted by more pertinent studies later on in the process. These first studies are just a start. Sometimes they can stand up to the overall process until the end and become a part of your thesis paper – sometimes not.
- Rigorous research and documentation supports our grand experiment with factual input / knowledge of what ideas have preceded our project allowing us to break into new territory
- Once we have completed our thesis proposal statement and case study research it’s time to write up a **THE ANALYTICAL ABSTRACT**. This abstract helps lay out the directives / next steps / objective tasking for the creative portion of the thesis project- then *the real adventure* begins.

THE THESIS PAPER

Summary of Thesis Paper Deliverables:

- 1 – Thesis Statement
- 2 – Case Study examples
- 3 – Analytical Abstract
- 4 – Images from Project
- 5 – Critical Abstract

Bibliography – Research Sources / foot notes

WHAT IS AN ABSTRACT?

Dictionary – adjective: abstract- /ab'strakt,

Existing in thought, or as an idea but not having a physical or concrete existence.

There are two abstracts involved in a thesis –

The first is a Map of Intentions (Objectives) – this is **The Analytical Abstract** = Intentions

The second is a more traditional commentary called – **The Critical Abstract** = Findings

THE ANALYTICAL ABSTRACT at the beginning of the process

An Analytical Abstract describes the directives for our thesis statement – it is a mandate that outlines our efforts – defines our objectives which then once set into a schedule become a list of tasks. These tasks are what we're going to do in our 'laboratory' our 'incubator' of design explorations. These things may also evolve and change through the design process.

The analytical abstract summarizes a prescribed sequence of objectives including – this is where you explore the WHY you're doing what you're doing- WHAT you're going to be doing and HOW and WHEN you plan to do it – these are NOT discussed as part of the thesis statement.

- 1) The overall focus of the studies and the research problem(s) planned for investigation
- 2) The basic design typology that will be the focus of research studies
- 3) Listing of major findings/trends expected to be discovered in the analysis phase
- 4) A summary of your proposed design methodology for achieving your goal(s)

This is often inclusive of an outline in the form of listings of tasking tied to a schedule and is only a best guess as to how things will go. This document may evolve and change.

THE CRITICAL ABSTRACT at the end of the whole thesis process

A Critical Abstract describes the results of your research discourse in addition to describing main findings and information, it also outlines an evaluation of the final project. It summarizes efforts and explains results of original intentions, goals, and objectives to the reader. Written comments and realizations about the validity, reliability of discoveries and how the study research worked to support the overall final design = what did you learn and why?

The critical abstract summarizes actual findings including-

- 1) An explanation of all the main findings and the important results of the investigations
- 2) Includes the purpose, methods, scope and applications of the research.
- 3) An evaluation of the project that compares it with other works on the same subject.
- 4) Commentary on the related success or failures of the proposed design methodology

RESEARCH and ANALYSIS MODE prior to DESIGN THESIS PROCESSES

By Professor Andrade

● **ANALYSIS** *For the development of Thesis*

Considerations for developing your
Proposed Thesis 'Experiment'



CASE STUDIES

These baseline comparisons support the following important factors:

- Gain new insights / design input
- Validate that your direction is unique
- Document what other designers have done
- Record how others solved similar problems
- Establish precedents for your own project
- These case studies may be included as part of your final written Thesis paper.

THE THESIS BIG IDEA

These questions must be considered in the creation of your thesis big idea:

WHY = WHY

Why is what you're doing important?

Why will anyone care about it?

Why is it important to you?

HOW = UNIQUE APPROACH

How will your problem solving approach the creation of a unique methodology?

● **PROJECT DEFINITION**



WHAT

What is your ultimate goal?
(Personal and project related goals)

HOW

What are your objectives as noted in your Analytical Abstract = tasks you will complete as a part of your investigation / experiment.

WHERE - WHEN

Where is this project happening?
Is there a time frame Past, present, future?
Is there a site, place, or placement or maybe none of these?

Answers to the above and adjacent inquiries can now support **THE** most important part of any thesis.

THE BIG IDEA = Project Pretext

The big idea *Pretext* guides explorations of supporting *Concepts*. In idea mode you will be searching for ideas concepts and or answers that support the big idea pretext. Following this chart will help you avoid having to backtrack because your mission is clear. This is a home base of operations for the trial and error of the design process