Thesis Preface
Guidelines

Description

The thesis preface is a required component of every thesis submitted in fulfillment of the MFA in Creative Writing at Mount Saint Mary's University. Serving as a critical introduction, the thesis preface is a 10-15-page essay examining the creative and critical ideologies that have informed the writer's artistic development and composition of the thesis manuscript. Accompanying the thesis manuscript, the thesis preface will be submitted to all members of the thesis committee prior to the student's oral defense and will provide a lens through which committee members may examine the submitted manuscript. The thesis preface must be included in all copies of the bound thesis filed with the University.

What makes for a successful thesis preface? Some of the same elements that make for a good short story, personal essay, or poem. Specificity is key. When you discuss the writers that influenced your own creative work, refer to individual works by title and don't hesitate to quote. In fact, quoting is invaluable in the thesis preface; quoting from your thesis manuscript will allow the thesis committee and future readers to see how you're conceiving of your own artistic development. It's also important to situate yourself in a larger literary context or tradition. If you're submitting a coming-of-age novel as your thesis manuscript, considering your adherence to or subversion of tropes of the *Bildungsroman* will show the thesis committee and future readers that you understand the work that has come before you. Finally, be sure your thesis preface tells a story in lively, clear prose. This story might be one of finding your voice or revising your novel, but it's a story nevertheless, and as your time at Mount Saint Mary's University has evinced, the language writers use to tell their stories is of the utmost importance.

Logistics

The thesis preface should be composed in size 12, Times New Roman or another standard serif font. Prose should be double-spaced. If quoting poetry or drama within the thesis preface, please follow conventions of those genres.