

## Procedures for Master of Art Degree Program

The Department of Geosciences and Environment offers a Master of Art (MA) degree in Geography. All MA students can choose from two tracks to complete the MA program; one is the Thesis track, the other is completion by Comprehensive Examination. These two options are explained in detail below.

**1. Thesis track.** The thesis option involves choosing a committee, conducting a research project, writing and defending a thesis. This track is recommended for students planning to pursue a Ph.D. or high-level industry job. Students must convene a committee of at least three members in consultation with major thesis advisor. At least two members of the committee must be a Cal. State L.A. faculty members.

**2. Comprehensive Exam track.** Candidates on this track must pass a hand-written, 9-hour examination in order to receive their MA degree. This track does require the student to convene three committee members. One of the committee members needs to be a faculty teaching GEOG 595 Geographic Thought; the remaining members must be selected from those teaching a 400 or 500 level course the student has taken. Students are required to fill out M.A. Comprehensive Exam Committee Selection Form at least one month before they can take the comprehensive exam. The exam should be scheduled by the student with the committee during the final semester of the Masters Program. Students must contact the committee at the beginning of the semester of graduation to schedule the examination. The exam takes place in three consecutive days with each day of 3-hour examination on one subject. This exam will be scheduled during either Week 11 or Week 12 of the semester. Students who fail a particular section will be given one opportunity to re-attempt that section. This track is recommended for students planning to pursue entry-level jobs in industry.

The examination consists of a section about geographic thought plus sections about two of the following subject matters selected by the student with approval of the principal graduate adviser: Biogeography, Climatology, Cultural Geography, Economic Geography, Environmental Studies, Geographic Information Systems, Geomorphology, Historical Geography, Locational Analysis, Mathematical Modeling, Medical Geography, Population Geography, Qualitative Research Methods, Remote Sensing, Settlement Geography, Spatial Statistics, Transportation Geography, Urban Geography, and Geography of a particular region.