

MAIS

MASTER of ARTS in
INTERNATIONAL STUDIES



THESIS HANDBOOK

2011-2012



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The Masters of Arts in International Studies (MAIS) Program Specifications, Requirements and Guidelines (described here in this document) are subject to the interpretation of and may be modified as deemed appropriate or necessary by Concordia University, Irvine.

CAPSTONE PROJECT OVERVIEW

The Master of Arts in International Studies (MAIS) degree has concentrations in Business and Education alongside a 12-month internship in the People’s Republic of China. This course of study culminates in a Capstone Project (Masters Thesis) that represents a consolidation, synthesis, and reflection of your academic, professional and personal experience in the program.

Capstone Project Definitions

The Capstone Project of the MAIS program is the Masters Thesis, one that provides an **end goal** for students as they enter the program, a tangible outcome that guides and sustains their studies – both formal and informal – starting in the US at the Concordia University Irvine campus and throughout their year in China.

Furthermore, it is a **demonstration** of students’ knowledge, intellectual ability, cultural sensitivity, responsibility, diligence, maturity, resilience, independence, ethical character, and commitment to learning, serving and leading.

Finally, the Capstone Project (i.e., Masters Thesis) is a public document that benefits and informs the greater academic, professional and/or public community. It is a **contribution** towards the knowledge on China – suitable for publication and dissemination.

A *thesis* can be defined as:

“...a detailed study based on original research and submitted for a Master’s degree.”
- University of Canterbury

“...a scholarly essay defending some proposition, usually a dissertation submitted for an academic degree”
- Oxford University Press

“...a dissertation embodying results of original research and especially substantiating a specific view”
- Merriam-Webster Dictionary

** Students who are in the joint MAIS/MBA degree program, will be required to complete separate capstone projects for the MAIS and MBA programs.*

Capstone Project Goals & Outcomes

- Support original student scholarship and research as a culmination of his/her coursework and experience in China by collecting and analyzing primary data from China.
- Encourage students to personalize their experience by choosing a topic that is relevant to their educational/personal/professional goals, needs and interests.
- Afford faculty the opportunity to deepen their knowledge and pursue scholarly interests through the mentorship of students.
- Assess students’ academic skills and knowledge, their depth and breadth of experience in China, and their personal development and growth.
- Demonstrate program effectiveness in preparing students to accomplish and attain the following **MAIS program outcomes** (and corresponding University Targets):
 1. Develop practical knowledge, skills, aptitudes, experiences and relationships to recognize and be poised for potential multinational, strategic opportunities.
[Systematic Inquiry, Health & Well-being]

2. Gain a critical and comparative perspective of the interactions between business and/or education and the spheres of politics, culture, economics, law and society. [*Systematic Inquiry, Sociocultural Responsiveness, Aesthetic Responsiveness*]
3. Design, implement and document primary research in an international context. [*Systematic Inquiry, Clear Communication*]
4. Demonstrate servant leadership as an ambassador of American culture, develop confidence and overcome obstacles, and learn how to live and work in a foreign country. [*Sociocultural Responsiveness, Christian Life and Literacy, Servant Leadership*]
5. Engage other cultures and worldviews, communicate professionally and interpersonally in a cross-cultural context; establish authentic relationships and networks. [*Clear Communication, Health & Well-Being, Sociocultural Responsiveness, Aesthetic Responsiveness*]

**Throughout this document the terms “Capstone Project” and “Masters Thesis” will be used interchangeably, both denoting the same meaning and usage.*

THESIS CURRICULUM

All of the coursework in the MAIS program is organized to prepare students for their Capstone Project. In addition, there is a specific strand of courses designed to scaffold the research experience for students – courses that begin in the Summer I term and continue through each subsequent semester until students finish their masters theses and graduate.

SUMMER I (CUI)

MAIS 502 – International & Comparative Research Methods (4 units)

FALL I (China)

MAIS 503 – Ethnographic Field Research (3 units)

- Thesis research proposal due at the end of the course
- Preliminary contact with potential advisors by the end of the course

SPRING I (China)

MAIS 504 – Data Analysis (3 units)

- Secure advisor during the course
- Begin data collection

SUMMER II & FALL II (location unrestricted)

MAIS 600 – Thesis Writing (4 units)

- Complete the writing and filing of the thesis by the end of the course

The Research Strand

The four courses in the research strand collectively and sequentially provide a continuum of preparation, support and accountability for the successful and timely completion of the Capstone Project/Masters Thesis.

In the Summer Term in residence at Concordia University, Irvine, students take the first course in the research strand: **MAIS 502 – International & Comparative Research Methods** (4 units), a survey course that is designed to provide students with fundamental research skills that can be applied to an international context and guidelines for their masters thesis. The methods learned include case study, surveys, interviews, discourse analysis, and other qualitative and quantitative research methodologies. Students will also learn how to create a literature review, and subsequently, to utilize that knowledge to formulate a research plan.

During the Fall Term in China, students will continue to progress through the research strand with **MAIS 503 – Ethnographic Field Research** (3 units), an opportunity to put into practice and take to the field the research skills learned in MAIS 502. In this course, students will explore contemporary economic, social, and political issues impacting China through carefully

The Thesis Proposal is an outline of why, what, when, where and how a student intends to proceed with their intended plan. It should be approximately 8-10 pages in length, and may also include a brief literature review.

*Why – Rationale/Purpose
What – Topic/Question
When – Timeline
Where – Sample/Setting
How – Methods/Instruments*

designed field research experiments that evaluate documented data and results from the course text (*The Return of the God of Wealth: The Transition to a Market Economy in Urban China* by Charlotte Ikels). This course will also provide exposure to a diverse array of viable topics for students to focus their own Masters Thesis on. Students will write a draft *Thesis Proposal* as a requirement of the course and are expected to contact potential advisors and submit their Thesis Proposals by the end of this course. A list of potential advisors (along with their areas of expertise/interest and contact information) may be found at: <http://www.cui.edu/mais> - click on the left hand link “Capstone Thesis Information.”

During the Spring Term in China, students will acquire the skills of quantitative data analysis in **MAIS 504 – Data Analysis** (3 units) to examine and make sense of both business and educational information. The course will focus on descriptive statistics and regressions, though other forms of analysis will also be covered. Students will be required to build on their research from MAIS 503 by either utilizing data that was already gathered through the ethnography or collecting additional first-hand data sufficient to run analyses on. By the end of this course, students may have completed all of the research steps up to data analysis, have secured an advisor, and are ready to finish their Masters Thesis by writing, editing and formatting their paper appropriately. Students may not collect data without the approval of their Thesis Proposal by an advisor, therefore it is essential that students secure an advisor as early as possible and initiate contact and communication regarding their research. [Note that advisors are not officially assigned to students until they have enrolled in the MAIS 600 course towards the end of the Spring term.]

The research strand culminates in **MAIS 600 – Research Writing**, where students are officially assigned to a faculty advisor and are engaged in completing their research project by editing and publishing a final research paper that will meet the professional standards of validity, reliability and credibility. Once a student has selected/been assigned a faculty advisor they are required to complete their work with their advisor; students who desire to change their advisors after they are officially assigned will be assessed a \$500 Advisor Drop Fee. Students may not enroll in this course if they have any other courses that they have not passed (with a grade of C- or higher) by the beginning of the term. There is no requirement for students to be in residence during this time, as students’ work, communication and collaboration with their advisors can be accomplished over the Internet or phone. It is the advisor’s discretion to determine the methodology and frequency of communication, though regular meetings are expected.

The anticipated time allowed for the student to complete their research writing spans the Summer and Fall Terms, [note that students must register in their 2nd Academic Year for the MAIS 600 course during the summer (at full tuition) and if necessary, the MAIS 600E-0 course during the

It is the expectation of the University that students finish their Masters of Arts in International Studies (MAIS) Degree within 18-19 months (Summer I, Fall I, Spring I, Summer II, Fall II).

fall term (at no charge)]. Only students starting the summer term (during the 2nd Academic Year) are eligible for the free extension. Students who do not file their Master’s Thesis by the end of the Fall Term may repeat the Research Writing course in the Spring Term, but must obtain their advisor’s approval. Students who obtain advisor approval to repeat the Research Writing course must again register for the 4 additional unit course (full tuition fees apply again). Students

filing their theses during the following summer (the absolute latest deadline) will additionally be subject to a \$500 late filing fee and will need to register for the MAIS 600E-1 course. Students may file their thesis at any point within the course – it is not necessary to wait until the end of the term. As part of their evaluation by the Dean, students will receive a Pass or No Pass at the end of the course.

MAIS 600 Project Timeline

<u>summer term</u>			<u>summer term</u>			<u>summer term</u>
<u>fall term</u>	<u>spring term</u>		<u>fall term</u>	<u>spring term</u>		
[-----1 st Academic Year-----]			[-----2 nd Academic Year-----]			3 rd Year
MAIS 502	MAIS 503	MAIS 504	MAIS 600	MAIS 600E-0	MAIS 600	MAIS 600E-1
	Thesis Proposal Due @ end of course	Data Collection [only with advisor approval]	Thesis Writing [Full \$ tuition]	[No \$ tuition]	[Full \$ tuition]	\$500 Extension Fee
	Search for Advisor	Secure an Advisor	Advisor Assigned	Extension if necessary	Reenroll w/ Advisor’s approval	Final Extension

*MAIS 600E-MAIS 600E-0, No Charge Extension of MAIS 600 course
 MAIS 600E-1, \$500 Charge for Extension of second MAIS 600 course*

**After these 4 semesters of Thesis Writing, if the thesis is not completed and approved, the work will be disqualified, there will be no further extensions, and the student will be dropped from the program. Students may reapply to the program, but there may be additional requirements.*

THESIS ADVISEMENT & EVALUATION

Through the MAIS 600 (Thesis Writing) course, the advisor guides students by reading drafts and offering helpful comments and insights. The advisor is required to provide his/her own written evaluation (1 page minimum) of the strengths, limitations and overall assessment of the final draft of the masters thesis as submitted by the student. The document will then be forwarded to the Dean for his final evaluation.

Thesis Advisor

It is the goal of Concordia University, Irvine (CUI) to match appropriate advisors with students who are enrolled in the MAIS 600 (Thesis Writing) course and pursuing their Masters Thesis.

This match depends not only on the expertise, availability and interest level of faculty, but also upon the students' goals, needs and interests. Even before an advisor is officially assigned, students should be working informally with a faculty member who will provide guidance for the development and implementation of a research plan. This interaction is also intended to provide time for both student and faculty to familiarize themselves and develop a positive working relationship with one another.

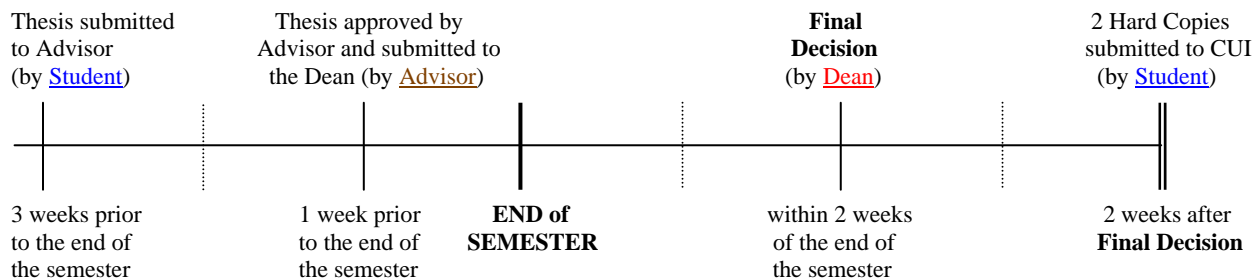
The initial role of an advisor is to read and approve the *Thesis Proposal* (even if it has already been approved by the Dean, you must get the approval of your thesis advisor for him/her to be willing to work with you). In most cases, this involves a negotiation between student and advisor, as an appropriate topic/question and methodology are determined (including a discussion of the resources required for successful implementation of the project). Thus students are expected to work closely with their advisors, and under their guidance, develop clear and cogent research plans. It is up to the advisor whether or not to accept the *Thesis Proposal*, and thus it must meet their expectations, standards and consent.

Once an advisor has agreed to support a thesis proposal, the student should complete and submit the **Thesis Proposal Approval Form** (see Appendix B) to the MAIS office. Once the form has been received and approved, students may then initiate collection of their data. Advisors should be regularly updated on the progress of data collection, particularly, but not limited to when there are issues or anomalies in the data. It is imperative to wait for approvals by the advisor before proceeding with the research, as you may be required to make major changes to your research plan. Once a student has selected/been assigned a faculty advisor they are required to complete their work with their advisor; students who desire to change their advisors after they are officially assigned will be assessed a \$500 Advisor Drop Fee.

Thesis Evaluation

Students must submit the final draft of their masters thesis to their advisor no later than 3 weeks prior to the close of the semester in order to for them to have the possibility of graduating that term. This provides advisors with up to two weeks to complete their evaluation of the thesis and to pass it on to the Dean (if approved).

Deadlines for Submission of Thesis (to Advisor & Dean)



As the “professor of record,” the Dean will consider the submitted work along with the advisor’s recommendations in assigning the final grade for the MAIS 600 course. Note that none of the following guarantees the approval of your master’s thesis:

- an approved *Thesis Proposal* by the Dean and/or advisor;
- your advisor's approval of your masters thesis;
- meeting the deadlines for turning in the master's thesis;

The Final Decision by the Dean will determine whether or not any thesis is approved – if it is not approved, then you may need to enroll in another term in order to make revisions and resubmit. If you submit the thesis early enough, you may be able to revise and resubmit the thesis in the same semester and avoid having to enroll in (and pay for) another MAIS 600 course.

The two hard copies submitted to CUI must meet these specifications:

- √ *Tape Binding*
- √ *#100 lb. Paper Cover Stock on front and back. The front cover should contain cover page information. The back cover should be blank.*
- √ *Cover paper stock should follow the correct color scheme based on the year that they entered the program.*
 - *2005 (Cohort 1) – White*
 - *2006 (Cohort 2) – Red*
 - *2007 (Cohort 3) – Orange*
 - *2008 (Cohort 4) – Yellow*
 - *2009 (Cohort 5) – Light Green*
 - *2010 (Cohort 6) – Light Blue*
 - *2011 (Cohort 7) – Red*
 - *2012 (Cohort 8) – Orange*
 - *2013 (Cohort 9) – Yellow*
 - *2014 (Cohort 10) – Light Green*
 - *2015 (Cohort 11) – Light Blue*

** it is recommended that students utilize Kinko's, Office Max, or other commercial office service centers of comparable quality for the printing and binding of their thesis.*

**Masters Theses should be mailed to:*

*Concordia University
Attn: MAIS Department
1530 Concordia West
Irvine, Ca 92612*

Approval by the Dean of the thesis and a subsequent passing grade in the course indicates permission for students to submit and “file” two copies of their masters thesis to Concordia University, Irvine in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the MAIS degree. The filing of the thesis must be completed within two weeks of receiving approval from the Dean. Every filed MAIS theses must contain an executive summary (no more than 100 words) and a list of “key words” so that they can be easily indexed by the university library. Remember that even if a thesis has been accepted and a final grade of Pass entered, a student is not eligible to graduate

until the two hard copies adhering to the program guidelines have been received, approved and filed at CUI.

One final note on advisement: Quite often, faculty members will see significant potential in a research project and may invite students to co-author a publication that is based on a Masters Thesis. Faculty advisors may choose to pursue publication of any thesis that they work on with an MAIS student. It must be co-authored with the student (who must, at minimum be named second author). Depending on who was involved in the development of the project, additional authors may be appropriately recognized as a co-author (e.g., the professor of a research strand course).

Recommendations

1. Build a positive relationship with your advisor – they can be your greatest asset.
 - a. Your advisor is committed to work with you to help you achieve your goal of completing your research project, but remember that faculty are not obligated to serve as advisors – impress and convince them that you are the type of student and yours is the type of project that they would like to work with/on.
 - b. Recognize that your advisor has other professional obligations (e.g., teaching a full load of courses, on Sabbatical, advising other students, or involved in a research project of his/her own.). Be mindful of your professor’s time.
 - c. Students who are genuinely interested in their studies, demonstrate enduring effort, are respectful and humble, and attend to appropriate detail are a joy to their professors.
2. Take initiative and take advantage of the resources available to you.
 - a. Your advisor’s job is to make sure that you are successful – and by this we don’t merely mean that you graduate. Advisors are required to provide guidance, feedback and accountability for their advisees. They will ensure the quality of your experience and final product (i.e., the Masters Thesis). Heed their advice, listen to their counsel, seek their guidance, learn from them.
 - b. Do not hesitate to ask for assistance. Your advisor expects such requests, and is very willing to help by providing suggestions and direction. However, be sure you are not asking your advisor to do your work. If you are asking for more than assistance, you will be so informed. Your advisor will support you, but will not do your thinking, your research, and your writing.
 - c. Similarly, the library staff is more than eager to direct you to useful resources for your literature review. They will help you to plan your search strategy, if desired. However, it is not the librarian’s task to search for references pertinent to your study or project, and to prepare a comprehensive report of search results.
3. Pursue excellence at every step of your project.
 - a. Of paramount importance to your advisor is the *quality of your thinking* as reflected on the pages of your masters thesis – for it is also a reflection of the degree to which your advisor has properly guided its development.
 - b. Your paper is a running log of decisions you have made—decisions about the value of literature reviewed, the framing of research questions, selection of subjects, methodology

- used, analysis of data, conclusions drawn, and so on. The *decision making* during your research is a prime indicator of the quality of your thinking.
- c. The quality of student thinking is generally reflected in the quality of student writing. Selecting the right words (notice: decision making!) to express an idea is of critical importance. It is well worth the time and effort it takes.
 - d. In addition to your advisor, have others proof-read and edit your document carefully. You may wish to hire a professional editor to edit your writing.
4. Work incrementally, making steady progress towards your thesis.
- a. Regularly monitor your schedule and tasks to be completed, and move ahead with steady, observable progress. If a problem with time implications arises, please consult with your advisor at your earliest opportunity.
 - b. If you procrastinate and attempt to squeeze your work into a tight span of time, your advisor or Concordia may not be able to accommodate that burden.
 - c. A rushed product is most likely an inferior one, as writing requires revision after revision – something you will not have time for if you attempt to cram it into too short of a schedule.
 - d. Submit your thesis early (mid-semester if possible). Submission of a masters thesis by the latest deadline will put you at great risk – if it is not approved by either your advisor or Dean, you will have to enroll in another term in order to revise and resubmit the thesis.

THESIS REQUIREMENTS

A masters thesis is driven by a question (and in many cases, a hypothesis) that is inspired by a variety of knowledge sources: experience, history/literature and revelation (to name a few). A systematic approach is organized and implemented, and first-hand data/information/evidence is collected, analyzed and interpreted. These results are then compared to the original question (and hypothesis when posited) along with the body of knowledge (i.e. Literature Review). A conclusion is drawn regarding the limitations, implications and future directions of the research.

Questions & Answers

Though the thesis is motivated by inquiry that demands a response, the conclusions may actually provide more questions than answers. In most cases, a thesis does not create entirely new knowledge as much as it tests, modifies, or extends knowledge that already exists (although in some cases it may revolutionize the field). Though many definitions offer an argument, proposition or hypothesis as a central component of the thesis, it is not necessary, particularly given the nature of the MAIS program and the unique experience that it hopes to provide its students – one that is based on the humility of good anthropology (Murrell, 2001). By this we intend for MAIS students to be explorers and learners, challenging their preconceptions or preferably leaving them behind as they discover both the strange and familiar in China. Any argument, proposition or hypothesis must be at least tentative, testable, and malleable.

Components

The documentation of the results from the research conducted will take a specified form with key components. The details of the precise requirements of paper formatting will come later in this

handbook (see the section titled: *Thesis Guidelines and Requirements* pgs. 10-11). The necessary components of the Masters Thesis for the MAIS program include the following:

MAIS THESIS COMPONENTS

1. Title Page
2. Abstract [comes before the Table of Contents]
 - a. Executive Summary: purpose, questions, methods, findings and implications
 - b. Key Words: searchable and topical words that others can search for in the library database to find your particular thesis (i.e., “Subject” search words)
3. (optional) Acknowledgements
4. Table of Contents
5. Introduction
 - a. China – an Overview
 - b. Research Topic/Question/Issue/Problem/Proposition/Argument
 - c. Definitions of Key Terms
 - d. (optional) Rationale/Experiences/Potential Contributions and Benefits that the research is motivated by
6. Background
 - a. Literature Review (of the relevant research available)
 - b. (optional) Theoretical Framework/Lens/Perspective
7. Methodology
 - a. Research Approach & Tools (qualitative and/or quantitative)
 - b. Execution Plan (including timeline of steps/stages)
 - c. Subjects/Sampling
8. Results (Data Analysis)
 - a. Description of analyses utilized (including rationale)
 - b. Documentation & Interpretation of data (including charts and graphs)
 - c. Interpretation of the data
9. Discussion & Conclusion
 - a. Discussion of key findings (particularly as they relate to your original questions, propositions and arguments)
 - b. Presentation of limitations and implications
 - c. Suggestions for future research
10. References
 - a. Bibliography of all citations
11. (optional) Appendices
 - a. Research Instruments
 - b. Raw or Reorganized Data
 - c. Additional Information

Requirements & Guidelines

1. Your masters thesis must strictly adhere to specific formatting requirements.
 - a. The thesis must be between 25-40 pages in length (according to the formatting standards described below) not including title page, table of contents, references and appendices.
 - b. Use “Times” (or “Times New Roman”) type font in 12-point size that is double-spaced throughout the paper.
 - c. Use one inch (1”) margins at the top, bottom, right and left of every page.
 - d. Page numbers are flush right and starts on first page after the Table of Contents.
 - e. Running head is all CAPS, flush left in the header (same line as the page number), and starts on first page after Table of Contents.
 - f. Besides the exceptions listed in the Thesis Handbook (e.g., title page, page numbering, running heads etc.), please refer to the *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association (6th Edition)*.
 - g. The electronic copy must not be larger than 5MB uncompressed total file size for the entire paper. If you have images embedded in the paper, make sure that they are of an appropriate file size so that you meet this requirement.
 - h. There are additional requirements for the two bound hard-copies that you will file with CUI found earlier in this handbook.

2. The paper must be comprehensible in order to be a true contribution to the public audience. This does not mean “dumbing” down your language – rather it requires clear and concise use of language.
 - a. Use simple language. If you have a choice of a long word or a short word to express the same idea, choose the short word. Don’t use words you do not know the meaning of.
 - b. Define key terms in your paper (e.g., “at-risk student” or “joint venture”).
 - c. Avoid unjustified or undefined jargon, omit needless words and avoid repetition.
 - d. Make sure to write out every acronym the first time you use it in your thesis.
 - e. Use appropriate APA (2009) headings to show organization and flow throughout your paper.

3. Your reference list should only include sources that you cite in the body of your paper. You must always fully cite your references, including websites (please refer to the most recent printing of the APA Publication Manual for conventions and requirements). You must utilize recognized and legitimate literature in you paper.
 - a. Websites like Wikipedia are not authoritative sources (if you decide to utilize this reference, be sure to supplement with other validated sources).
 - b. Do *not* cite abstracts in your reference list. If the abstract seems to indicate a useful source, obtain the entire document, read, evaluate and cite as appropriate.
 - c. Do *not* cite secondary sources unless it is virtually impossible to obtain the primary material. You should not cite secondary sources merely because of the effort or time required to obtain the source. If you cite a reference, you are tacitly certifying that you have read the entire journal article or pertinent book chapter(s), are familiar with the contents, and have evaluated the substance of the work in terms of your task. Do *not* limit your reading only to introductory or concluding chapters, paragraphs, or abstracts.

4. Adherence to reference rules and publication standards—a hallmark of professionalism—is very important for the sake of consistency as well as easy reading and understanding by other scholars and peers. It will be highly valued by your advisor and dean who will evaluate your thesis. Please obtain your own copy of the *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association (6th Edition)* and refer to it for answers to the numerous style questions that typically arise. Details do matter. The following are a few important ones that merit your attention.
 - a. Your thesis is an account of something you have done that has already happened. Even for the *Thesis Proposal*, the language should not be in future tense, since this will save you time in not needing to revise future tense verbs to past tense when writing the thesis.
 - b. Do not speak of yourself in the first person in your study, e.g., “I surveyed teachers in 15 districts...” Rather, say “Surveys were sent to teachers in 15 districts...”
 - c. Use the “Search and Replace” capabilities of your word processor. For example, search for double spaces and replace with single.
 - d. Use your word processor’s spell checker. But don’t assume your spell checker will catch everything—proofreading is still needed to catch errors like “here” in place of “hear.” (By the way, Microsoft Word’s Spelling and Grammar Checker” catches extra spaces as well as repeated words.)
 - e. Generally, use numerals to express numbers 10 and above, and words for numbers nine and below. However, there are exceptions. Please refer to the current *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association*.
 - f. Paginate even early drafts, with the page number in the upper right-hand corner, one inch from the side (per APA rules). There is no rule about how far numbers should be from the top of the page (APA examples seem to show about ½ inch). Pagination should begin on the first page of text following your table of contents.
 - g. Be mindful of correct usages for dashes
 - Hyphens (-) should be used for hyphenating words or line breaks only.
 - An “en dash” (–), so called because it’s about the width of a lower-case “n”, is used between words indicating a duration, such as hourly time, months, years (February – March, 4:00 – 4:30 PM, 8 – 9 years old). Leave a space on either side of it.
 - An “em dash”—yes, twice as wide as an “en dash,” it is the width of a capital “M”—is often used as it just was in this sentence. It is often seen as a substitute for a colon or parentheses, or indicating an abrupt change in thought, and has no spaces on either side.

Sample Timeline – Thesis Completion Plan

TERM	MONTH	OBJECTIVE
Summer 2010	June/July July 16	MAIS 502 - <i>Comparative Research Methods</i> - Research Foundations: Methods (Understanding) - Thesis Proposal Writing (Practice)
Fall 2010	Sep-Dec Dec. 4 Dec. 11	MAIS 503 - <i>Ethnographic Research</i> - Research Foundations: Methods (Practice) - Thesis Proposal (Product) - Contact Advisor (Practice)
Spring 2011	Jan. 30 Feb. 1 Feb-Mar Apr. 17 May 15	MAIS 504 - <i>Data Analysis</i> - Secure Advisor (Product) - Thesis Proposal Approval Form (Product) - Data Collection & Analysis (Understanding & Practice) - Collect Data (Product) - Analyze Data (Product)
Summer 2011	June-July Aug. 1 Aug. 19 Aug. 26	MAIS 600 - <i>Thesis Writing</i> * - Write Thesis - Submit Thesis to Advisor** - Advisor asks for Revise & Resubmit - Rewrite Thesis & Resubmit to Advisor**
Fall 2011	Sep. 5 Sep. 12 Sep. 26 Oct. 17 Oct. 24 Nov. 14 Nov. 21	MAIS 600E - <i>Thesis Writing Extension</i> - Advisor asks for Revise & Resubmit - Rewrite Thesis & Resubmit to Advisor** - Advisor Approves; Submits Thesis & Evaluation to Dr. Kim*** - Dr. Kim asks for Revise & Resubmit - Rewrite Thesis & Resubmit to Dr. Kim*** - Dr. Kim Approves - File Thesis at Concordia University Irvine

* From Summer 2011 (once you've enrolled in MAIS 600) on forward, it's all "Product." You are taking what you've gained in your understanding along with the practice you've experienced to produce your final project for the MAIS Program – the Masters Thesis.

** Please note that advisors have a minimum of two weeks to review, comment on and communicate to students their decision regarding any Masters Theses submitted to them.

*** Dr. Kim has a minimum of three weeks to review, comment on and communicate to students their decision regarding any Masters Theses submitted to him.

<TITLE (CENTERED, 1 INCH FROM TOP, ALL CAPS)>

by

<Student's Full Name>

Advised by <Advisor's Full Name>

A Masters Thesis Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the
Requirements for the Degree of Master of Arts in International Studies
in the School of Business and Professional Studies
Concordia University

Irvine, California
<Month & Year of Filing>

Thesis Proposal Approval Form

Master of Arts in International Studies (MAIS)

In order to be formally assigned to a Thesis Advisor and be enrolled in the MAIS 600 (Thesis Writing) course, this form must be submitted to the MAIS office:

- 1) completed with all blanks filled in (insert n/a if not applicable);
- 2) with the formal approval of your Thesis Proposal by Dr. Kim, Dean of Asia Programs;
- 3) along with a copy of your approved Thesis Proposal (including timeline).

Student Name: _____ **Email:** _____

Title of Research / Thesis Project: _____

Dean's Approval of Thesis proposal: _____

(Dr. Eugene Kim's signature)

(date)

(email approval from Dr. Kim is also acceptable in lieu of his signature here, please include email with this form)

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VALUES AND WORLDVIEWS OF EXPATS LIVING IN CHINA

by

Joe Eagle

Advised by <TO BE DETERMINED>

A Masters Thesis Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the
Requirements for the Degree of Master of Arts in International Studies
in the School of Business and Professional Studies
Concordia University

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Research Topic/Questions

The topic I intend to research is the values and worldviews of expats living in Shanghai. What are the values and worldviews of expats living in Shanghai? Do they differ based on faith/religious affiliation? Are there other factors that influence the values and worldviews of expats living in Shanghai? Does living in Shanghai affect the values and worldviews of expats living in Shanghai?

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to gain an understanding of the perspectives of people who are living within a culture that is radically different from the one in which they were raised. It is to explore how much – if at all – the new culture affects their values and beliefs. It is also to test whether or not the values and worldviews of expats is tied to their faith as it is in the US.

Key Terms

Rokeach Values Survey: The RVS is an assessment in which participants rank two lists of concepts according to their importance to them personally. One list is composed of 18 terminal values and the other of 18 instrumental values.

Expats: Short for expatriates, refers to the term used by foreigners to describe their legal foreign status, meaning one who is no longer living in his/her patriot (home) country.

Worldview: A meta-narrative or holistic description of one's reality.

Values: Principles which determine positions, attitudes and behaviors of individuals.

Faith: Spiritual belief, typically connected to a particular religion.

Literature Review

The concept most heavily relied upon in this study are the values categories that are defined by the Rokeach Value Survey (RVS). The terminal values are “states of being” or goals. The instrumental values are qualities which might help in attaining those goals. The results of the rankings done by participants are analyzed in order to draw general conclusions about the shared values of the sample as a whole.

Debats and Bartelds also chose to employ a four-point system in which four is high and two is neutral. They argue that, “This asymmetric scale, a shortened version of one first suggested by Gorsuch (1970), was used because distributions tended to be negatively skewed. It involves finer discriminations by respondents on the positive end.” Debats and Bartelds cite findings discovered by Feather (1991) that, within the instrumental values, three “value domains” can be seen which he defined as “self-directed competence, restrictive conformity, and pro-social concern.” Feather also determined five value domains among the terminal values which are “positive affiliation, universal pro-social, mature accomplishment, comfort/ stimulation, and security/ salvation.” The findings of their own study, for the most part, support these categories.

Many studies exist which test and validate the use of the RVS. Many more present the results of its application in various settings. Debats and Bartelds (1996) scrutinize the RVS in depth, that the instrumental and terminal RVS sub-scales are too broad and generally defined to draw meaningful conclusions (Kelly & Strupp, 1992); that the distinctions between personal, social, moral, competence values domains have not been empirically confirmed (Weber, 1993); that linguistic variance may be results of the study rather than true differences in values (Braithwaite

& Law, 1985; Gorsuch, 1970). Johnston (1995) also analyzed the RVS because he believed that – despite its many applications in research in many fields – it remained less than adequate for empirical data analysis. He found that the components of the RVS fall rather neatly into the two categories of individualism and collectivism. This may be significant in conjunction with the findings of N. T. Feather in his comparison of Chinese and Australian cultures.

N. T. Feather (1986) compared the value systems of China and Australia. He began by exploring wide generalizations about each culture individually in order to form hypotheses and expectations for what he would find when he compared them. Australia, along with Europe, North America, South America, and some parts of Africa, can fall rather comfortably under the wide blanket of Western culture. Although taking findings about Australian culture and directly attributing them as indicative of American culture would be inappropriate, the two share many similar attributes and this should provide some worthwhile points for consideration. China, in contrast, is a decidedly Eastern culture. In his analysis of Chinese culture, Feather drew heavily from Hsu (1972) who worked with comparisons of Chinese and U.S. cultures. This should prove especially useful in my own study which will seek to explore similar themes.

Hsu (1972, as quoted in Feather, 1986) “abstracts two basic contrasts between American and Chinese ways of life.” The first contrast is an American focus on the individual versus a Chinese focus on one’s “appropriate place and behavior among his fellow men” which he calls “situation-centered.” “The second fundamental contrast is the prominence of emotions in the American way of life, as compared with the tendency of the Chinese to underplay all matters of the heart.” One observation Hsu draws from these basic contrasts is the common dependence among the

Chinese on one another and their tendency to find identity within their network of relationships. Americans on the other hand tend to focus on individual freedom and personal identity apart from the collective group.

The results of Feather's (1986) study showed that the most notable points of contrast between the Chinese and Australian students were the following. "Chinese students assigned more importance to values related to competence and scholarship ... respect, hard work, and self-restraint." The Australian students showed a higher focus on personal and self-related values like happiness and an exciting life.

Guan and Dodder (2001) explored essentially the opposite of what my own study will focus on. They studied and compared Chinese students living in China and those studying abroad in the U.S. The purpose of their study was to discover what changes occur in the values of these students as a result of their different environments. The findings of their study revealed that students studying abroad showed a strong desire to integrate into their new culture and found much less value in maintaining a "cultural identity." Conversely, students still in China who did not have direct contact with U.S. culture expressed a higher interest in the value of cultural conservation.

Methodology

Approach

After the construction of the survey instrument (see below for instrument) around March 2011, data will be collected from my sample (see below for sampling). After data has been collected

and transcribed, it will be analyzed using Excel statistics that include descriptives (measures of central tendency and measures of variances) in addition to simple correlations (without p-values). If it is available, I may also use SPSS 12 to conduct higher level analyses include linear regressions and ANOVA.

Subjects

I will employ convenience and snowball sampling which includes expats living in Shanghai from a variety of countries and seek to find if similar tendencies exist. The sample will consist of classmates I know through this MAIS program who are still living in China and the friends I made through the church I attended while I lived there. In total, I expect approximately 40 MAIS students to be in my sample. In addition, expats from various backgrounds who are friends at church will number approximately 40-60 individuals. Finally, I will ask each participant to contact at 2-4 friends who fit my sample demographic to participate in the study. Thus at minimum, my sample (approximately 240 subjects) will be composed of a near even split between MAIS students and other expats from my religious community. In addition, I may include (if my sample is not large enough), additional expat subjects from my workplace or outside organizations in Shanghai.

Instrument

I will utilize a combination of surveys and interviews. Both sources will have a number of factors to take into consideration – not the least of which is the influence of religious affiliation. The surveys and interviews will largely be based on the Rokeach Value Survey (RVS) with additional items that focus on the religious component. I will also incorporate demographics

(e.g., age, gender, ethnicity, nationality, socioeconomic status, residency status, length of time in China, occupation, faith background, languages spoken, etc.) to analyze alongside the data from the RVS-based survey and interview.

Timetable

December 2010	Complete Thesis Proposal Contact Potential Advisor(s)
January 2011	Secure Advisor (Submit Proposal) Begin working informally with Advisor
February 2011	Complete Literature Review
March 2011	Complete Methods & Sample Section Create Survey & Interview Instruments
April-May 2011	Collect Data & Transcribe to Excel Sheet Submit Thesis Proposal Approval Form
June-July 2011	Analyze Data & Write Results
August 2011	Write Discussions & Conclusions
September 2011	Submit 1 st Draft of Thesis to Advisor (Revisions required)
October 2011	Submit 2 nd Draft of Thesis to Advisor (Revisions required)
November 2011	Submit 3 rd Draft of Thesis to Advisor (Approved) [Advisor submits evaluation & Thesis to Dr. Kim]
December 2011	File 2 bound copies of Thesis to CUI

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