

CLASSICAL ACADEMY OF ARMS Classical Fencing Master Thesis Template

The thesis required for candidates for the rank of Classical Fencing Master is an academic paper intended to make a significant contribution to knowledge of classical fencing, its techniques, rules, training methods, organization, and context.

This template provides a standard format for the thesis. The sections in italics are explanatory material, and the sections numbered, lettered, or underlined provide the basic format. Prepare the paper in Times New Roman 12 point using 2.0 line spacing. While this format is not mandatory, and there are a variety of approaches to writing an academic paper, we suggest that any significant variation be discussed with your thesis supervisor.

TITLE

Author

I. INTRODUCTION

A. Research Question

This is the major question that must be answered: what do you want to know, what is the importance of the information, how can the information be used?

Example - This research study examines the reported range and frequency of wounds in sword duels in order to better understand the validity of the concept of hitting without being hit as the basis for instruction in fencing.

Subordinate Questions:

1. *These are questions required to answer the research question listed in the order in which they had to be answered in order to answer the main question. Note that not all research questions will have subordinate questions.*

Example - what is the relative frequency of duels with the military issue broadsword or sabre, dueling sabre, and dueling sword among reports examined in this study?

2. *etc.*

B. Background

Information which sets the stage for the research project, describes the context, establishes its value, and suggests ways in which the results might be used. Typically this should be concise but have sufficient detail for a reader to be able to determine whether this research is relevant to his or her needs.

Example - in our dueling study above the first paragraph might establish the role of the duel and its frequency, the second the origin or the hit without being hit model and who its proponents are, and the third the implications of this for teaching classical fencing.

C. Assumptions

1. *List any assumptions that are the basis for the research, preferably in their order of importance to the research.*

Example - This study assumes that the descriptions of fencing technique in period fencing texts are an accurate reflection of the full body of technique taught in classical fencing.

2. *etc.*

D. Definitions

1. *Definitions of any key terms that are either unique to this paper or that have a variety of possible meanings, the choice of which needs to be specified for clarity.*

Example – Classical fencing: fencing in the manner taught by fencing masters and practiced by fencers in the period from 1880 CE to 1939 CE.

2. *etc.*

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

There are two types of applicable literature - the literature composed of fencing texts, books describing fencing and dueling, and articles of the classical period, and modern literature including modern translations and reconstructions of classical technique and commentaries on classical fencing.

The purpose of a literature review is to set the stage for your research by showing (1) how much has been written, (2) what the common themes are, and (3) what needs to be discovered (establishing your research question).

Literature reviews can be organized in two common ways - chronological (what was written earliest to most recent) or topical (what are the major themes and what do people say about them).

Use in-text citations, the author's name and date of publication - for example (Green, 2005) - to identify your sources.

III. METHOD

Because classical fencing lacks a large body of published credible research, in most cases the primary research designs will be observational or descriptive research appropriate for

establishing the baseline for further studies. There are dozens of possible research approaches; the following may prove useful:

Case study - a detailed examination of a specific case or situation, documenting the who, what, why, when, where, and how effective the practice or approach was. A case study could examine the practice of a specific master who had a significant impact on fencing development, the politics of a decision on which approach to fencing an official body decided to adopt, or in a more modern example, how you approached a specific type of instructional problem.

Survey research - this may either be literature survey based or questionnaire based. For example, you could consult 10 textbooks from the classical period to determine the frequency of descriptions of four or five part actions or distribute a mail survey among known teachers of classical fencing to determine the schools, periods, and weapons they teach.

Comparison research - this is conducted to compare and contrast different approaches to classical fencing. For example, what are the core differences between the Italian and Spanish schools?

Quasi experimental research - if you are working on more effective ways to teach, it may be useful to divide your students into two groups, teach the standard way to one group, and a different way to the other group, and then describe the differences in outcome using evaluation tools designed to identify those differences. For example, you might test the effectiveness of short individual lessons in an open fencing setting against instruction in the same skill in a group class lesson.

Regardless of method selected, it should be one capable of answering the research question. To demonstrate that you should describe exactly how you did the method, step by step, and include copies of any questionnaires or measurement tools you used.

IV. RESULTS

The results are just that, results, not interpretation or commentary (which belong in the Conclusion). List them in either the order obtained or in the order in which they address the subordinate or primary questions.

Be detailed - for example 60% (n = 24) of 40 individuals completing the questionnaire stated that they base their teaching of classical technique on videos by other modern classical fencers. An additional 30% (n = 12) stated that they relied on books published by modern teachers of classical fencing. Only 10% (n = 4) indicated that they used original texts published in the classical period.

V. CONCLUSION

In the conclusion you should answer the research questions and provide any supporting discussion.

A. Subordinate Questions

1. *The answers to the secondary questions, and how they point the way to the answer to the research question.*
2. *etc.*

B. The Research Question

Tie the answers to the subordinate questions together to answer the main question.

C. Recommendations

Develop any additional recommendations of observations based on the answer to the research question.

D. Implications for Future Research

If your project identifies more questions that need to be answered, briefly describe these.

WORKS CITED

Articles and books used in the project and cited in the text (such as in the background and the literature review). List in alphabetical order, each cited as follows: name of author; title of book or article; for articles the name and date of the publication or volume and edition number; for books the publisher, place of publication and date, for videos (tape or CD/DVD) the publisher, and date of publication, and for webpages the URL and date it was accessed.