THE MA ESSAY: AN OVERVIEW

Important Dates in 2026-27

Fri Nov 6 at 2pm	Required meeting – Preparing for the MA Essay
Fri Dec 4 at 2pm	Required meeting – Pitching the MA Essay
Mon Jan 25 at 6pm	MA Essay Sponsor Confirmation due
Mon Feb 1 at 6pm	MA Essay Proposal due
Fri Feb 12 at 2pm	Required meeting – Drafting the MA Essay
Mon Mar 22 at 6pm	MA Essay Draft (around 20 pages) due
Fri Apr 23 at 6pm	Final MA Essay deadline

Checklist of Required Tasks

- — *Overall objective: write an extended scholarly essay (usually an interpretive argument) around 30 pages long*
- — Attend all required meetings led by the ADGS
- — Secure a faculty Sponsor before the late January deadline
- — Schedule and attend advising meetings with that Sponsor throughout the spring term, on a schedule suitable for both participants
- — Submit, with the Sponsor's approval, a proposal by the February deadline
- — Submit, to the Sponsor's satisfaction, a 20-page draft by the March deadline
- — Submit the final MA Essay by April 23 (absolutely no extensions!)

Requirements for the MA Essay Proposal

- — Approximately 400 words long
- — Includes a working bibliography of ~10 sources, primary and secondary
- — Meets expectations set by Sponsor

Requirements for the MA Essay Draft

- — Approximately 20 pages long (notes and freewriting do not count)
- — Develops a sustained scholarly argument or position
- — Discusses primary and secondary sources
- — Meets expectations set by Sponsor

Assessment of the MA Essay

- — One letter grade, assigned by the Sponsor, evaluates the overall process involved in writing the essay. This grade appears on the student's transcript.
- — Two letter grades, one from the Sponsor and the other from a second reader (assigned by the ADGS), assess only the final written product. These don't appear on the transcript.

Questions? Ask ADGS Dustin Stewart: dustin.stewart@columbia.edu