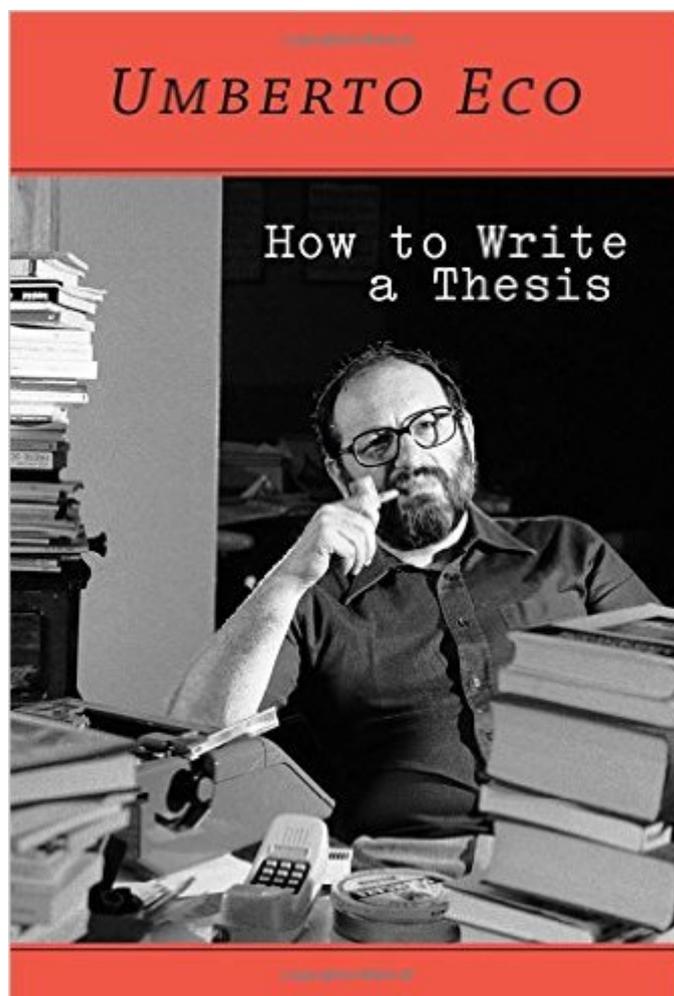


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# How To Write A Thesis (MIT Press)



## Synopsis

By the time Umberto Eco published his best-selling novel *The Name of the Rose*, he was one of Italy's most celebrated intellectuals, a distinguished academic and the author of influential works on semiotics. Some years before that, in 1977, Eco published a little book for his students, *How to Write a Thesis*, in which he offered useful advice on all the steps involved in researching and writing a thesis -- from choosing a topic to organizing a work schedule to writing the final draft. Now in its twenty-third edition in Italy and translated into seventeen languages, *How to Write a Thesis* has become a classic. Remarkably, this is its first, long overdue publication in English. Eco's approach is anything but dry and academic. He not only offers practical advice but also considers larger questions about the value of the thesis-writing exercise. *How to Write a Thesis* is unlike any other writing manual. It reads like a novel. It is opinionated. It is frequently irreverent, sometimes polemical, and often hilarious. Eco advises students how to avoid "thesis neurosis" and he answers the important question "Must You Read Books?" He reminds students "You are not Proust" and "Write everything that comes into your head, but only in the first draft." Of course, there was no Internet in 1977, but Eco's index card research system offers important lessons about critical thinking and information curating for students of today who may be burdened by Big Data. *How to Write a Thesis* belongs on the bookshelves of students, teachers, writers, and Eco fans everywhere. Already a classic, it would fit nicely between two other classics: *Strunk and White* and *The Name of the Rose*.

Contents

The Definition and Purpose of a Thesis

Choosing the Topic

Conducting Research

The Work Plan and the Index Cards

Writing the Thesis

The Final Draft

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

Reading *How to Write a Thesis* by Umberto Eco, even an "updated"™ version in this MIT Press edition, felt like a sweet exercise in futility. There's something folksy and quaint about being told how to put notes on index cards and properly organize them and being given tips for using the library and talking to librarians. (Not too surprising, as Eco wrote this in the late seventies "almost forty years ago!") But with over twenty-three editions and countless translations, there's something to be said about this just-won't-die thesis-writing guide. It endures, even in a world of Dropbox and Evernote and Endnote and online style guides and, of course, the oracle of information "the internet." The reason for this is that Eco's book actually has a lot more to say to people outside of academia, to those no longer writing long tracts of academic esoterica or using words like "juxtaposition," "asymmetricality," or "reconfigurations" in everyday writing. *How to Write a Thesis* could be easily re-titled "How to Live a More Realized Life"™ or something along those lines "tongue-in-cheek, of course, as this is Eco and despite all the rhapsody in his prose is actually quite funny. What Eco's classic tome gives us is the kind of advice you might get from an inspiring college graduation speech. It resonates with wisdom about being more curious, about being more engaged in the world "which is wonderful advice, especially for those who stand on the precipice of maturity, where on one side is youthful idealism and optimism still, and on the other side, lingering over the horizon, is the embittered resignation and indifference of...middle age?

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