

SENIOR HONORS THESIS IN FRENCH

ELIGIBILITY

Any French studies major with a 3.5 average or higher in the major at the end of the junior year is eligible to apply for consideration for writing a Senior Honors Thesis.[1]

The students undertaking a Senior Honors Thesis should have a strong mastery of the French language (written/oral). The proposal to be submitted for consideration should exhibit a solid knowledge of French grammar and syntax. The proposal must be the student's original work and should not have been entirely revised by the Language Assistant or the tutors.

The Senior Honors Thesis will be undertaken in addition to all required courses for the major; it does NOT replace any part of the major.

DESCRIPTION

The Thesis is to be a substantial study (between 50-75 pages) of a carefully defined literary or cultural subject and will center on an original thesis supported by critical sources. It will be written IN FRENCH and will conform to The MLA Style Manual.

PROPOSAL

The proposal should answer a specific question related to any topic in French and Francophone studies (literature, cultural studies, the visual arts, history, etc.). What is the subject on which you want to work and its significance in a larger context? What is the question that you want to examine in your research paper? Why is this an interesting and important question? How is it related to a larger context? Will your research bring new insight on the chosen topic? Why does this question deserve attention? Which approach will you choose to explore your thesis? Clearly state your thesis. Define terms if necessary.

The proposal should include the following:

- **Length:** minimum **4 single-spaced pages**; Times New Roman 12; one-inch margin
- **Structure:**
 - 1/**an introduction** that contextualizes your approach, clearly defines and articulates your thesis;
 - 2/ **distinct sections** that will each highlight the specific arguments pertinent to your thesis; it is key to show how a theory/theories will inform your analysis;
 - 3/ **a conclusion.**
- **A bibliography** using MLA Style that should include at least 10 entries (scholarly articles and books in both French and English are accepted).

Your proposal should be built around **a solid theoretical framework**. Which theories inform your main argument? Are you using a comparative, ecocritical, feminist, cross-disciplinary, postcolonial, or

psychoanalytical approach? On these and other approaches, you may want to consult *The John Hopkins Guide to Literary Theory and Criticism*.

The proposal will be reviewed by all continuing full-time faculty in French who will either accept, reject, or request resubmission with emendations or clarifications.

THESIS COMMITTEE

If the proposal is accepted by the Department, the student's proposed director and two additional faculty members (readers) will be approved. They will form the Thesis committee.

The role of the Thesis Director is to oversee the student's progress, to meet with the student on a regular basis, and to ensure the completion of the thesis. The two readers will meet twice with the Thesis Director, at the end of the fall semester as well as before the defense in the spring to discuss the student's progress and the viability of the project. If the Director and the two readers see no progress, or if the quality of the drafts is deemed insufficient by the end of the fall, the thesis will be transformed into an Independent Research project. Both the Director and the readers will assign a grade to the Thesis and evaluate the defense. The student communicates only with the Thesis Director, who will share with her or him the readers' comments and suggestions.

CALENDAR

The student will adhere to the following calendar. Failure to abide by this calendar will result in the cancellation of the Honors Thesis.

- **April 30th (junior year):** The student, having consulted with a faculty member, will submit his/her proposal along with a bibliography to the Chair of the Department of French and Italian Studies. The Chair will circulate the proposal to all continuing faculty in French and Francophone Studies.
- **May 15th:** The Department will announce its decision, confirming the student's proposed Thesis Director and two readers. Students who need to revise and resubmit their proposal will have until **May 30th**.
- **June 1-September 1:** Individual research and reading. The student should keep an active research agenda over the summer, and work on his/her French writing skills.
- **September 2:** The student reconvenes with Thesis Director to establish a timeline for completion.
- **By the end of the fall semester:** The student should have made significant progress (the student should submit a detailed outline with a complete introduction). The Thesis Committee will meet to discuss the viability of the project. If the project does not meet the requirements at this stage, it will be transformed into an Independent Study.
- **JanPlan:** The student is expected to revise the introduction and continue writing and researching.
- **Spring semester:** The student will devote his/her time to the writing of the thesis.
- **April 1:** The final draft of the thesis is due. The Thesis Committee may ask the student to make revisions before a final grade is assigned.

- **The end of April:** The student will defend his/her thesis (the student will have the opportunity to share his/her work at the CLAS Undergraduate symposium).
- **May 15:** The student turns in the final thesis to the Chair of the department.

GRADE

The thesis must receive a final grade of A- or higher in order to qualify for Honors. The grade will be computed by averaging the grades of the Director and the Readers.

CREDITS

The student will register in French 483/484 (Senior Thesis) for two credits in the fall semester, two credit in the January term, and two credits in the spring semester. If the student is making satisfactory progress, non-graded credit(s) (CR) will be posted for the fall and January terms. Once the Thesis is completed and assigned a grade at the end of the spring semester, this grade will then replace the CR posted for the fall and January terms.

If a student's thesis does not receive the required minimum grade of A-, the grade assigned will replace the CR posted for the fall and January terms, but the Registrar will change the registration to 493/494 (Independent Study) for all three terms. If for whatever reason a student does not bring the Honors Thesis to satisfactory completion after having received non-graded credit(s) in either or both the fall and January terms, the grade of CR will remain in the student's transcript for those terms.[2]

DEFENSE

Upon completion of the thesis, there will be an oral defense in French which will be open to all members of the Program in French and Francophone studies and invited guests.

On May 15th, the student will submit a clean, bound copy of the thesis to the Chair so that it can be kept in the archives of the Department of French and Italian Studies.

[1] The average will be computed by using all French courses taken for credit in the major, either on campus or on an approved program abroad. Since final grades from programs abroad are not usually received before summer, students with successful proposals, but who have not yet received their junior-year-abroad grades, will be accepted conditionally to do the Thesis work.

[2] If the members of the Thesis Committee determine that a student is not making satisfactory progress toward the completion of the Thesis, they reserve the right, at any time, to ask the student to withdraw from the Honors Thesis program.