**University of Redlands**

English Department Guidelines for the Honors Thesis

2016-2017

**Eligibility for Honors**

English honors may be pursued by invitation only. Invitations will be decided by the entire faculty of the English Department based on GPA, capstone essays, and proposals for an honors thesis. A candidate must have a minimum GPA of 3.50 in the major and maintain it through graduation. Additionally, the candidate must have completed at least 16 credits in the major and 70 credits overall. Candidates will be invited to pursue honors in writing by **December 13, 2016**.

**Expectations for Honors Projects**

As with the capstone, the culmination of your undergraduate work, the honors thesis ought to do what you do best, both in terms of literary analysis and in your ability to engage with the ideas of other critics. Your completed essay should aspire to a brave, extended, complex argument that relies on analysis and research. Because there are many ways a project of this nature may evolve, you should work closely with your thesis director to set and meet deadlines, maintain forward momentum, and communicate effectively with the rest of your committee.

**Projects invited to submit for honors** must demonstrate excellence in the following basic areas:

Textual Analysis

* Careful close readings and detailed textual analysis of the primary work(s)
* A focused, well-developed research question of deep interest for the student and relevance for the field, and a clear and well-reasoned argument

Critical Context

* A clear understanding of interpretive context: the critical discourse, or dialogue, surrounding the genre/texts/problem in question
* The student’s own contribution to that critical dialogue, however small or large

Writing and Revision Process

* Clear, controlled, organized prose; well-integrated examples; well-structured introduction, conclusion, paragraphs and sections
* The ability to integrate secondary materials effectively and proper use of MLA or Chicago style conventions
* Evidence of a meaningful revision process and response to feedback

**DETAILED TIMELINE**

**1. PROPOSAL** to pursue honors with bibliography (3-6 pages total) is due to your ENGL 420 instructor on the day that the capstone paper is due. **This is for GPA-eligible students only**. Brief proposals are to be submitted with the capstone project. Eligible projects will be determined by English Department faculty and invited to pursue honors on that basis.

A. Writing the Proposal

The best way to put together a proposal is to reread your completed capstone essay and propose any outstanding questions that you find yourself drawn to and would like to develop. For this proposal, it is helpful to think not in terms of what you are going to say, but rather to focus on what your capstone has achieved, and what remaining or new questions you now want to investigate.

1. For the body of the proposal (3-5 pages), please address the following points:

a. What questions are you addressing, and why are they important?

b. What work have you already accomplished in your capstone on these questions, and where has it led your inquiry so far?

c. What argument or new questions will your revised essay pursue? How do you see the scope or focus of the capstone essay developing? Spell it out as fully as you can at this point; it may feel more like a hypothesis than an argument.

2. Attach a brief bibliography (1 page) of secondary sources and other research materials relevant to your topic.

3. Please include the names of a proposed director and two readers on the cover sheet. Honors committees must be composed of at least two (2) English faculty members.

NOTE: If necessary, the faculty may change a student’s choice of director/readers. If you have readers outside of the English Department, please give them a copy of these guidelines so they will know what’s expected of both you and them.

B. Departmental Approval

Eligible candidates will be invited to pursue honors, in writing, by December 13, 2016. Invited candidates should enroll in ENGL 498, Honors Independent Research, in the Spring semester. In order to enroll in this permission-only course, complete an add slip and take it to the English Department office.

**2. FULL COMMITTEE MEETING**: **Between December 14-17, 2016**

The candidate, director, and all faculty readers will convene to review the capstone draft. Candidates are responsible for circulating the capstone paper to the committee right away, and then for scheduling the meeting by contacting the full committee with a range of date/time options and reserving a room via Berlene Norris for the agreed upon time.

**3. FIRST COMPLETE REVISED DRAFT** (minimum 25 pages) due **Friday, January 20, 2017**

A. Writing the Draft

There are many different ways to write a thirty-page essay. Consult closely with your director to determine the best method for your own project and writing habits. However you proceed, it’s easier to start with your own argument than with lots of quotation from other sources. Let the first draft be an adventure in what youwould like to say. Once you have unleashed your own thoughts, you can do your research with more confidence. Investigate books and journal articles on the topic, and evaluate pertinent (academically credible) websites critically. Keep careful and full citations of what you read, and quote accurately (note cards, journals, and computer files can all work equally well, depending on your own thought process).

B. Getting Help

Meet with your director every week or so throughout the year, giving her/him rough drafts of what you’ve written and asking for guidance. Go to your committee for expertise in secondary sources early in the Fall and consult librarians for help locating sources you’ve identified; even the first draft should include a list of works you have consulted, properly cited. If your readers disagree with your director’s suggestions (or vice versa), it’s up to you to resolve those disagreements for yourself. Embrace the resource embodied in classmates. Exchange drafts with fellow honors candidates, as well as trading tips about research strategies and offering general support.

C. Submitting the Draft

Consult your committee on whether they would prefer the draft in paper or digital copy; if paper, print and distribute them yourself.

**4. FULL COMMITTEE MEETING (OPTIONAL)**: **By Friday, February 3, 2017**

The candidate, director, and all faculty readers will convene to discuss the state of the project. Candidates are responsible for scheduling the meeting by contacting the full committee with a range of date/time options and reserving a room via Berlene Norris for the agreed upon time.

**5. COMPLETE ESSAY** (minimum 30 pages) due **Friday, February 24, 2017**

**6. HONORS DEFENSE must be completed by Wednesday, April 12, 2017.**

**OPTIONAL: To have honors listed in commencement program, defense must be completed by Friday, March 10, 2017.**

Schedule the defense for two full hours, after consulting with your director and readers on their schedules. Berlene Norris will help you reserve a room. Your defense may be open to the public as you wish. Accordingly, you may invite your friends and post flyers in advance to announce the defense.

**7. EATON SYMPOSIUM: Tuesday, March 14, 2017**

All seniors are invited to present their capstone projects and celebrate the academic achievements of the graduating class. A detailed announcement and call for presentations will appear in January.

**8. REGISTRAR COMMENCEMENT DEADLINES**

**March 15, 2017:** Final day for department to submit paperwork to have honors listed in the commencement program. **OPTIONAL**.

**April 14, 2017**: Final day to submit paperwork to have honors listed on your diploma.

All revisions required by the committee after the defense must be completed by the end of May.

**TIMELINE OVERVIEW**

Between December 14-17, 2016: **Full committee meeting** to review capstone draft and discuss way forward.

Friday, January 20, 2017: **First complete draft** (minimum 25 pages) due.

By February 3, 2017: **Full committee meeting** to assess progress of thesis. (OPTIONAL)

Friday, February 24, 2017: **Complete essay** (minimum 30 pages) due.

By Friday, March 10, 2017: (OPTIONAL) **Defense** must be completed to have honors listed in commencement program.

Tuesday, March 14, 2017: **Eaton Symposium**: Celebrate the achievements of the senior class!

March 15, 2017: (OPTIONAL) **Deadline for honors paperwork submission to be listed in commencement program**.

By Wednesday, April 12, 2017: **Defense** must be completed.

Friday, April 14, 2017: **Deadline for honors to be listed on your diploma**. Honors will not appear in the commencement program.