

ENGLISH - SENIOR THESIS GUIDELINES

The senior thesis is a 3-hour research project, usually undertaken for honors credit, following the prerequisite course English 270 – Literary Research. This project is more ambitious than English 375 in one of two ways. The project may be similar in design but broader in scope. For example, instead of surveying only the critical responses of the first twenty years to *The Sun Also Rises*, the student might survey responses up until Hemingway's death. Or the project might go into more depth on a particular critical question and end with the student's defending her own position on that critical question. For example, a student once did a project in which she surveyed all the criticism to Updike's *Rabbit Run* relating to the theological stance in the novel. She then found an essay by Updike in which he said that he had been reading Barth before writing that novel and that he (Updike) intended the old Lutheran minister to be the touchstone of the novel. The student then read some Barth (and Kierkegaard) and came to the conclusion that all the critics had missed the boat slightly. She defended her own reading of the novel. That was a 3-hour project.

The senior thesis director and the student must come to agreement on the following:

1. What kind of project is to be undertaken
2. A schedule of deadlines for the work to be carried out
3. How the grade will be arrived at
4. What is required for the work to receive honors credit

The director and student must file a form describing this project with the Honor's Director and Registrar's Office. The number is 498. The title is Senior Thesis.

Whether or not the student earns honors credit, she will earn 3 hours credit if she does passing work on the project. And if she does passing work on the project, it will satisfy the English department's requirement for the 375 paper.

Approximate length of paper 25-30 pages

Approximate number of cited sources 40-50

Research Steps for the English 375/498 Paper

(Copies to be kept by both student and teacher)

Project step	Date
1. Project definition (Determine literary work, parameters of research)	
2. Time line (publication history of work)	
3. List of contemporaries	
4. Annotated bibliography	
5. Notes	
6. Outline	
7. Tentative thesis and 2 body paragraphs	
8. Complete rough draft	
9. Final draft	
10. Oral presentation with handout (For 498 students only)	

Length of 1-hour paper 10-12 pages

Approximate number of cited sources 20-30

Length of 3-hour paper 25-30 pages

Approximate number of cited sources 40-50