

## HONOURS COMMITTEE: DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH GUIDELINES FOR HONOURS THESES

An Honours thesis in the Department of English may be a literary argument based on research, critical analysis, and coherent thinking, or it may be a creative writing project of original poetry, fiction, drama or mixed genre.

### **Choice of Subject and Supervisor:**

Because each faculty member is limited to supervising a specific number of theses each year, students should contact a prospective supervisor as soon as they have chosen the general area of study they wish to pursue. The Honours Committee strongly recommends choosing a supervisor in the **second term of a student's third year** so that he or she, together with the supervisor, can further clarify the area of research in preparation for writing a thesis proposal at the beginning of the next term. Although a student may consult any member of the Department for suggestions concerning thesis supervision, if he or she is in doubt about where to begin, the Head of the Department or the Honours Coordinator will be available to provide advice.

### **Thesis Proposal:**

Students are expected to do preliminary research during the summer following the third year of their programme in order to provide the departmental Honours Committee with a **thesis proposal by the beginning of October**. The proposal should be 750-1000 words; it should include a specific description of the objective of the project, a discussion of major publications in the field and their pertinence to the topic, the theoretical context in which the discussion will be developed, and a break down of chapters. The proposal should have a working title and an attached preliminary bibliography. This document will assist the Honours Committee in deciding whether the topic is manageable and appropriate for the level of scholarship required for an Honours Degree. When the proposal is submitted to the Committee, it should be signed by both the student and the supervisor. Please submit one hard copy **and** an electronic copy to the Honours Coordinator.

### **Specific Guidelines for writing the Thesis:**

A student will work with his or her supervisor until the thesis has been completed and formatted according to the *University Regulations for Honours Theses*.

### ***Quality:***

Second Readers will look for and assess the following aspects of the thesis:

- clear thesis statement(s)
- overall quality of the argument
- clearly developed, unified and coherent argument
- soundness of the scholarship
- consistency of style (either MLA or Chicago)

- correct use of grammar and punctuation.

**Quantity:**

The literary argument should be 40-60 pages; the creative writing project should be 30-60 pages. Students and supervisors are strongly encouraged to respect this length requirement.

**Elements:**

1. Title page
2. Approval page
3. Permission for duplication page
4. Acknowledgement page (optional)
  - If included, its tone should be formal
5. Table of contents
6. List of tables (if necessary)
7. List of figures (if necessary)
8. Abstract page
  - should state concisely and lucidly the objectives, the method of procedure and the findings or conclusions of the thesis. It should not exceed one page in length.
9. The thesis proper
  - should be divided into chapters and include an introduction and conclusion.
10. Appendices (if necessary)
11. Works Cited
  - The style manual to be followed with regard to scholarly presentation is either the *MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers* or *The Chicago Manual of Style*.

Writing the Thesis:

To guarantee eligibility to graduate at the spring convocation, the candidate should meet the following deadlines in the fourth year of the programme:

1. **By the last day of the December Examination period:** twenty to twenty-five pages of typed thesis draft must be submitted to the supervisor for assessment.

**N.B. If the December requirement is not met, the student will receive a failing grade for the first term in English 4060. This could affect acceptance into any post-undergraduate programmes for which the student is applying.**

2. **By the beginning of February:** The student must submit to the supervisor a complete draft of the remainder of the thesis.
3. **By the end of the third week in February:** The student should present to the supervisor

the final revised draft of the thesis. At this stage, a reader appointed by the Honours Committee should receive a copy of the revised draft. He or she will assess both the extent to which the argument is substantive and organized and the quality of expression as a whole. The reader may ask for revisions. The draft received by the second reader should be a complete version of the thesis that has been carefully proofread for grammatical correctness and argumentative consistency.

4. **By the third week in March**, in accordance with the university deadline, the final revised copy of the thesis, having been approved by both the supervisor and the reader, should be reproduced in finished form and **one** copy submitted to the Office of Research and Graduate Studies.
5. **By the university deadline at the end of April**, following acceptance by the University Honours Committee, **one** copy must be laser-printed and submitted to the Office of Research and Graduate Studies. As well, students must submit an electronic copy to the library's thesis submission site.
  - A \$100.00 prize is awarded each year for the best thesis.

Rev. JS 7 September 2010