**Guidelines for a Proposal for a Literary-Critical**

**Honours Thesis**

**Acadia English and Theatre Department**

The Thesis Proposal is a formal written document of approximately 750-1,000 words (3-5 pages) that contains enough detail to allow the Honours Committee to assess whether the proposed project (i.e., The Thesis) is appropriate for the undergraduate level and whether it is manageable within the time frame specified. In essence, the thesis proposal is an announcement of the topic and scope of your thesis and an estimation of what the end result will look like. It also includes a preliminary bibliography and outline of the critical or theoretical contexts.

It is no longer necessary to submit a hardcopy: electronic submission to the Honours Co-ordinator is fine. **The proposal is due Monday October 3**.

The proposal should be organized according to the following format:

1. Give a title page with a working title.
2. Give as clear a thesis statement as possible near the beginning of the proposal. This will almost certainly be a *working* thesis that will take shape as the proposal (and then the thesis proper) develops: that is, the proposal is not cast in stone and the thesis proper may well evolve over time. You do, however, need a clear enough and narrow enough thesis statement to convey the specific scope and argument of the project. Identify what you envision the main points of the thesis to be, or the direction the whole thesis will (hopefully) take.
3. Indicate the theoretical *or* critical context (or contexts) within which the thesis will be developed and explain why this particular approach is appropriate. The student should be able to identify the most significant publications or theorists directly related to the topic, as well as explain briefly how the work of other scholars will pertain to her or his argument. See further Item 5, below. (NB: This critical context does not mean that you must write a deeply theoretical thesis – only that your research and thesis must be informed by the appropriate scholarship, whether that scholarship be, to cite three possible examples, feminist, psychoanalytical, or textual-critical; one *may* even combine several theories.)
4. Indicate how many chapters the thesis will likely have *and* what will be the focus of each chapter. Although specific ideas will undoubtedly evolve during the writing process, the proposal needs to suggest how each chapter will contribute to the overall argument. (Remember that the final thesis should be somewhere between **40-60 pages**.)
5. Identify major scholars or publications in the field by including a reasonably lengthy bibliography with the proposal. Note that is not necessary (or even prudent) to have read *everything* in the proposal bibliography at this stage – but you should be able to indicate that you have a sense of who or what *needs* to be read, and you should indicate which critics (or theories) you envisage following the most as your thesis unfolds.

Once the thesis proposal is complete, send an email to your Supervisor and the Honours Co-ordinator saying that you attach the thesis proposal. (Make sure to attach the proposal to the email!) This electronic submission supersedes the old paper submission system.

Once the proposal is received by the Honours Co-ordinator it will be circulated amongst the Honours Committee, who will review the proposal and offer feedback on the project. In rare cases, if the Committee feels it will be beneficial to the direction and progress of the student and the thesis, the Committee will request a revised version of the proposal. Should that happen, the Committee will set a new due date for the revised proposal.

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