

**Senior Thesis Packet  
2017-18**

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## 2017-2018 Senior Thesis Due Dates

April 18, 2017	Senior Information Night for Juniors and parents
August 4, 2017	1 <sup>st</sup> Day of School - Pairing of students with <b>advisors</b> announced
<hr/>	
Fri. Aug 25, 2017	Students must have met initially with <b>advisor</b> to discuss their ideas, texts, and proposal
Tues. Sep 12, 2017	Proposal due to <b>Humane Letters teacher</b> - 2 copies
Fri. Sep 29, 2017	Students should have met with <b>advisor</b> to review proposal and prepare for abstract (including working thesis statement)
Fri. Oct 20, 2017	Abstract due to <b>Humane Letters teacher</b> , including working thesis statement (possible deficiency notices)- 2 copies
Fri. Nov 3, 2017	Student should have met with <b>advisor</b> to review abstract and prepare for basic outline
Tues. Nov 7, 2017	Basic outline due to <b>Humane Letters teacher</b> - 2 copies
Fri. Dec 1, 2017	Students should have met with <b>advisor</b> to review basic outline and prepare for detailed outline
Tues. Dec 5, 2017	Detailed outline due to <b>Humane Letters teacher</b> - 2 copies
Fri. Dec 15, 2017	Students should have met with <b>advisor</b> to review detailed outline and prepare for rough draft
Tues. Jan 9, 2018	Rough draft due to <b>Humane Letters teacher - 10 page min.</b> (deficiency notices and contracts)- 2 copies
Fri. Jan 26, 2018	Rough draft returned by <b>advisor</b> with edits (both grammar and ideas) - Students should have met with <b>advisor</b> to review rough draft and prepare for final draft
Tues. Feb 13, 2018	Complete final draft due to <b>Humane Letters teacher</b> (15-20 pages) to determine if content is passable and meets format and mechanics requirements* - 2 copies
Mon. Feb 26, 2018	Final edits returned by <b>advisor</b> to student
Tues. Mar 6, 2018	Revised final draft due: student submits <b>three</b> paper copies to <b>HL teacher and emails Mrs. Somsen an electronic copy</b>

**\*Please note:** A student's ability to attend the senior trip or other school sponsored trip is contingent upon his/her handing in a passable final draft by Feb 13. Passing the Senior Thesis is required for graduation. Should the student's rough draft handed in Jan 9 suggest significant difficulties, the student may be prohibited from participating in school sponsored activities until they are remedied.

### Third Quarter Thesis Defenses

Some students may have their thesis completed and ready to defend before the fourth quarter. Therefore, students wishing to defend their thesis in the third quarter may request to do so by completing the following form and having it approved by their advisor and the Senior Thesis Coordinator, Mrs. Somsen. Approved thesis defenses will be scheduled before the Senior Trip.  
\*The final draft of the thesis **must** be complete before a student may submit this form.

Senior Thesis Third Quarter Defense Request Form- **Due to advisors by Mon, Feb 5, 2018.**

Printed Student Name \_\_\_\_\_

Printed Advisor Name \_\_\_\_\_

To the student: Do you feel well prepared to orally defend your written thesis? If so, sign and date below:

\_\_\_\_\_ Student Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date

To the advisor: Is the student's thesis complete, and do you feel this student is well prepared to orally defend his/her written thesis? If so, please sign and date below:

\_\_\_\_\_ Advisor Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date

If not, please explain what the student needs to work on for a fourth quarter defense:

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Advisors: Submit this form to the Thesis Coordinator, Mrs. Somsen, by Fri, Feb 9, 2018.**

## CPA Senior Thesis Overview

### **Purpose:**

Students will develop a claim (thesis) that analyzes some aspect of a question or theme of importance based upon their close reading of original texts. Students should avoid developing a final thesis before completion of their readings; there should be no single objective approach to answering the essential **question of the thesis**. This is **not** a research paper; it is an analytical essay. Students are being asked to logically develop and assertively present their own thinking on a topic of personal interest derived from the chosen texts.

### **Process:**

Students should begin by choosing two-four texts that they want to read. Themes, ideas, connections, etc. will reveal themselves through the process of close reading; therefore, the student must not begin with a preconceived idea or agenda. A student may have a broad, working idea; but s/he must hold that idea loosely as s/he chooses and reads subsequent texts, so as to be open to the new ideas those texts suggest. Sometimes the most interesting thesis papers are those in which seemingly disparate texts are successfully compared on a deeper level. Students should plan to have individualized seminar meeting with advisors at least once after each text has been read and/or in preparing written benchmarks such as the proposal, abstract, and outline. After the first semester of senior year, students will complete a rough draft that intertwines the ideas from all of the texts. The Thesis should not be two-four separate essays loosely bound together; rather, it should reflect a unified essay. Students will likely **substantially rewrite** their essays before submitting the final draft at the end of third quarter and discussing it in an oral defense during fourth quarter. \*All aspects of the thesis will be reviewed by the advisor and the HL12 teacher.

### **Selection of Texts:**

A minimum of two and a maximum of four primary texts will be chosen by students with thoughtful guidance from the advisor. One text must be from the CPA curriculum, and one must be from outside of the curriculum. In general, texts should be from the traditional Western canon, although alternative texts of merit will be considered on a case by case basis. **If a student wishes to include a text that is not on the list of pre-approved texts, the text must be approved by the Senior Thesis Director.** The Thesis Director will review all text selections before students begin work. Books/articles of criticism, biographies, commentaries, technical manuals, etc. may **not** be used as primary texts. Secondary sources may be used with permission from the Thesis Coordinator, but should be used sparingly and only to offer clarification or brief background to definitions, concepts, technical processes, etc. Students should remember that thesis support must come from direct textual evidence from primary sources.

### **Journals:**

Students are expected to keep a writing journal/notebook while reading their primary texts. Journals should include a listing of questions or ideas that occur to the student while reading - not simply a synopsis of the texts. Journals should include the student's own thinking (analysis and evaluation). Also, journals should include notes taken during meetings/seminars with the advisor. Advisors will review journals as part of the thesis evaluation.

## **Proposal:**

The proposal should be a typed ½ - 1 page description of the texts that will be used and the general nature of the ideas to be explored. Students should develop a rationale with their advisors for why the specific texts were chosen. The rationale should include answers to the following:

- Why do I choose this idea/field of inquiry? Why does it motivate me?
- Why is this inquiry so essential?
- What questions are implied or contained within this exploration?
- Which of the great ideas is the focus?

\*Simply put, the proposal should offer the reader an understanding of **what** topic one will pursue, **why** the topic is significant, and **which** texts one will use to complete this endeavor.

## **Abstract:**

The abstract states the working thesis and how each of the books contributes to that thesis. The abstract is for several purposes: first, to determine that the claim of the thesis is significant and that it can be developed within 15-20 pages; second, to see if the essay will be unified, that is, one essay based upon two-four works rather than several separate essays; third, to focus the senior's thinking so that s/he can begin to work on an outline for his essay.

\*Simply put, the abstract should summarize one's significant findings for the reader, including the thesis statement.

## **Outline:**

The purpose of requiring an outline is to enable the student to begin resolving the task of how s/he will integrate two-four texts in a unified essay. The student is primarily responsible for discussing the outline with the advisor. Successful outlines are organized by topic rather than texts.

\*Simply put, the outline should provide a structure for one's paper, including a clear and logical order of the topics.

## **Rough Draft:**

Due shortly after winter break, the rough draft should reflect a sound effort of a **minimum of 10 pages**. The advisor will read the draft and make recommendations to the senior. It will be included in the third quarter writing grade in Humane Letters. Much revision should be expected after submission of the rough draft, yet the draft should contain: **introduction with thesis statement, examination of all explored topics, quotes to substantiate claims, and should be free from major grammatical errors.**

## **Final Draft:**

Due before spring break, the final draft must be passable for the student to go on the Senior Trip or any other school trip. The final draft will be evaluated by the whole oral defense

panel. Guidelines and a checklist for detailed format requirements are included in this packet and will be distributed prior to the final draft submission. No Senior Thesis will be accepted that does not follow the format guidelines.

### **Oral Defense:**

Following the submission of final drafts, a panel of three faculty members, including the advisor, will be convened to conduct a dialogue with the student about his/her thesis. Members of the CPA community at large are invited to attend and may participate in the discussion if time permits. Generally, defenses will last no more than one hour.

### **Grading:**

In keeping with CPA's philosophy of grading, letter grades will not be given for the Senior Thesis. Grades will be assigned according to the following outline:

**Pass with Excellence** – the student has completed all requirements of the Thesis with distinction and has exceeded the standards in terms of written and oral analysis, and Sense of Wonder/Depth of Inquiry.

**Pass** – the student has completed the basic requirements of the Thesis.

**No Pass** – the student has not met the basic requirements of the Thesis and will not be able to graduate from CPA until these are met.

Final grades will be determined by a panel of three faculty members that will include the advisor, and two other adjunct readers who elect to read the thesis and attend the defense. The final evaluation of the thesis will take into account the paper itself, journals, timely completion of work, quality of discussions with the advisor during the course of the year, and the student's performance during the defense. The evaluation meeting usually immediately follows the oral defense and does not include the student.

**Proposal:** due Tuesday, September 12th

The proposal for your Senior Thesis is due on Tuesday, Sept 12th. The purpose of the proposal is to set forth an overall working idea for your project, relating the two-four great books that you have chosen to write on. One of them must be curricular; one must be from outside the curriculum. Any others may be from outside the curriculum but still a Great Book (see list below).

The working idea should be significant enough to address in a 15-20 page essay, but you should allow the texts you have chosen to speak to that idea in a variety of ways as you go on refining it. Examples of working ideas might be: the nature of friendship; the relationship between the rights of an individual and the common good; the nature of evil, time, beauty, etc. You'll notice that all of the above are simply topics. We do not expect you to have a thesis statement or to make a particular claim about your idea at this point. You may find it useful to express your working idea as a question or as a series of questions around a topic. Again, use the working idea as a lens to let themes, ideas, and connections reveal themselves to you as you read, journal, and discuss your discoveries with your advisor.

To discover a list of great books in the Western canon, visit the following websites:

Western Canon, Harold Bloom:

<https://ebooks.adelaide.edu.au/l/literature/bloom/complete.html>

Thomas Aquinas College: <https://thomasaquinas.edu/a-liberating-education/syllabus>

Mortimer Adler's Reading List: <https://thinkingasleverage.wordpress.com/book-lists/mortimer-adlers-reading-list/>

If a text you want to read for the thesis is not included in a reading list by any of these authorities, you must get approval from the Thesis Coordinator, Mrs. Somsen.

Below is the format for you to use a guide in typing up your proposal; a sample proposal is on the next page.

### Senior Thesis Proposal

Student name

Date

12<sup>th</sup> grade HL teacher, section

Advisor

*Curricular Text*, Author

*Non-curricular Text*, Author

*(Third Text)*, Author)

*(Fourth Text)*, Author)

**Working idea and rationale for selection of texts, as well as the question(s) students is seeking to answer through the thesis process: one typed paragraph**

## Senior Thesis Proposal – Sample #1

Name  
Date  
Advisor

*Confessions*, St Augustine  
*The Sound and the Fury*, Faulkner  
*Relativity*, Einstein

My thesis will explore the nature of time. Each of these books view time in a very different manner. Augustine refers to time as something that God created that essentially differentiates humans from God. He also inquires about the existence of time and the ways it is organized. Einstein looks at time through a scientific lens. He uses mathematics and physics to show that time is not absolute. He asserts that without a reference point, time has no meaning. Einstein also defines time as the same as clocks. In *The Sound and the Fury*, Faulkner manipulates the order of time to write a beautifully tragic novel. One of the narrators, Benjy, does not follow a chronological stream of thought. Rather, he makes connections between events through other means. He exists in a world where time does not affect him. In contrast, Quentin, another narrator, is entirely constrained by time. Quentin recalls many of his father's philosophies about time and clocks. He wonders at how limiting time is and what one's relationship with time ought to be. Reading these books, I am most interested in time as it is represented and understood by humans. Exploring the role of time and clocks leads to the question of how a human's perception of time motivates his or her actions. It also begs the question of whether or not clocks represent time accurately.

## Senior Thesis Proposal – Sample #2

Name  
Date  
Advisor

*Nichomachean Ethics*, Aristotle  
*Civilization and Its Discontents*, Freud  
*The Plague*, Albert Camus

The working idea I am exploring is the nature of human connection. While isolation is the deficiency of human connection, relationships are the excess of human connection. I am hoping to understand the nature of human connection by studying how love and separation affect each other. Human nature is the nature in which humans behave collectively. My senior thesis will explore different aspects of the human connection to discover how and why people interact. Aristotle's *Nichomachean Ethics* illustrates the nature of relationships in detail. *The Plague* reveals aspects of human nature by demonstrating how relationships crumble and thrive under separation. Freud's *Civilization and Its Discontents* exhibits certain hostilities a group may have toward an individual. I am choosing to explore the nature of human connection because it is personally relevant. The goal of examining human connection is to better understand myself. Human connection particularly interests me because it encompasses everybody; it is abundant in human nature and links us together. Thus, exploring the nature of a group is important to understand an individual. The nature of human connection gives rise to the following questions: Is love universally weak or strong? What does it mean to 'love thy neighbor'? Is love a sacrifice? Why is human companionship instinctual? Are relationships forms of habit? How do habits affect human connection? Does free will exist if a group of people behave collectively? What is

social behavior? Is love worth dying for? If love is perceivably grand, why can it have negative effects? What is the role of identity in a relationship?

**Abstract:** due Friday, October 20

By Friday, Sept 29, you should have met with your advisor to discuss your books, journals, and ideas for refining your proposal. This is in preparation for taking the next and most important step so far in the Senior Thesis project—writing your abstract.

The abstract serves as a focusing statement for your Senior Thesis. It pulls together your thinking about your topic in preparation for writing an outline in November. The outline, in turn, will help you write a unified rough draft (due January 9, shortly after winter break).

The abstract should be 1-2 typed, double-spaced pages. It should pose the central question(s) that you hope to address, and it must include, clearly stated in a single sentence, the **working thesis of your essay**. This arguable claim should arise out of a close reading of your texts, not from a preconceived idea imposed upon the texts. The abstract should go on to indicate how each of your books relates to your thesis, how they speak to your questions, and how reading them together has illuminated your understanding of your working ideas. Part of the purpose of presenting your thinking in this way is to ensure that your claim remains significant enough to write about, yet specific enough that it can be developed within 15-20 pages. Again, looking ahead to the outline and rough draft, you should think of writing the abstract as a step towards producing a unified essay dealing with two-four texts, rather than several separate essays loosely stitched together.

We will read and return them with comments over the following week. Your abstract must be approved before you may proceed developing an outline.

Below is the format for you to use in typing up your abstract; two sample abstracts are included (but remember to double-space yours).

#### Senior Thesis Abstract

Student Name

Date

HL teacher, section

Advisor

*Curricular Text*, Author

*Non-curricular*, Author

*Non-curricular*, Author

Abstract: 1-2 typed, double-spaced pages. Please underline your thesis.

## Sample Senior Thesis Abstract #1

Student Name

Date

Advisor

### Works Selected:

- 1) *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, Nietzsche
- 2) *The Gay Science*, Nietzsche
- 3) *The Maculate Muse*, Henderson
- 4) *Dionysus: Myth and Cult*, Otto

While there exists a vast abundance of theses and theories on tragedy throughout the history of philosophy, theories on comedy are all but nonexistent. Comedy faces this supreme neglect because people have thus far failed to recognize it as a necessary element of life. It is all too easy for people to view comedic plays—even at their very inception with those of Aristophanes—as little more than simple buffoonery and thereby refuse to take them seriously. Philosophers have, on the other hand, provided countless theories on the particular purpose and effects of *tragedy*. In *The Birth of Tragedy*, for example, Nietzsche joins in the ever-expanding fray of attempts to uncover the early origins and eventual functions of tragedy in ancient Athens. Yet, in spite of these numerous attempts, few have proceeded to venture a comparable theory of the purpose and importance of comedy, which is a gross injustice considering its crucial role in societies and its liberating function for its individual audience members since its very birth. In ancient Greece, especially, comedy played a prominent role alongside tragedy in the religious festivals of Dionysus, festivals which Walter Otto outlines as having a similarly freeing effect in his text *Dionysus: Myth and Cult*. Nevertheless, people have thus far failed to look into and formulate theories on comedy in part because its characteristic use of innuendo and obscenity tends to cause people to feel uncomfortable or uneasy. Jeffrey Henderson addresses precisely this topic in *The Maculate Muse* by outlining the role of obscenity and explaining how its function in early Aristophanic comedy mirrors the overall function of comedy in general. While comedy

does bring about feelings of pleasure and joy, to which anyone who has ever witnessed a comical work of art or a comedian's stand-up routine can attest, it also does so much more; and yet, people all too often tend to view the genre of comedy as little more than a source of pleasurable emotion, which likely contributes to the fact that it receives little to no recognition for its truly liberating and cathartic function that Aristotle assigns solely to tragedy. This failure at recognition prevents people from seeing the greater, more vital role that comedy's liberation plays in life—one that leads to the bursting abundance of joy and affirmation that Nietzsche later begins to sketch out in *The Gay Science*<sup>1</sup> and subsequent texts. Unfortunately, however, people do not tend to acknowledge the deeply essential aspects of comedy that lie beyond the comical stock characters and their clownish antics. Despite this neglect, comedy's function is nevertheless a fundamentally necessary part of life, for it brings about a vital release of emotional tension by attacking or destroying the restrictions set by strict, rigidly imposed societal boundaries and thereby aims to liberate its audience from its socially repressive confinement.

## Senior Thesis Abstract Sample #2

Student Name  
Date  
Advisor

### Works Selected:

- 1) *Intentions*, Oscar Wilde
- 2) *The Picture of Dorian Gray*, Oscar Wilde
- 3) *The Decameron*, Giovanni Boccaccio

For many, especially those individuals belonging to the *higher* classes, the Victorian era was a time defined by secrecy and hypocrisy. High society thrived on a mixture of laughter and outrage, and no one indulged this obsession with scandal better than Oscar Wilde, the Irish intellectual who would become one of London's most notorious personalities. Possessing both the biting wit of a cynic and the optimistic wonder of a child, Wilde was a champion of the aesthetic movement and exalted beauty above all else. To disregard the writings of Oscar Wilde as merely frivolous or sophistic is to miss much of the message contained within his entertaining works. With a life that could have been pulled straight out of his own writings, Oscar Wilde was himself all too much a product of his times who desperately wished to escape.

Consumed by contradiction, England was a country torn between two worlds: an isolated island in a world becoming more globalized by the year; a reactionary aristocratic class, perched atop the shaky foundation of a population forced forward by the industrial revolution; a time that revered beauty and morality, just as the horrors of European Imperialism were in full swing. Victorian London was a society filled with strict social mores where one's displayed honor and public appearance were of the utmost importance, and anything that might be considered "obscene" was to be regulated and thus hidden from the public's eye. Living somewhere between a Machiavellian and Shakespearean nightmare, the aristocrats of this time concealed their true selves, replacing it instead with an artificial self of their own creation, acting out roles of their own devising on a stage that spanned the entirety of Victorian society. The disconnect

between reality and appearance affected all facets of social interaction: with the true self concealed, truly open and honest communication becomes next to impossible, and it becomes incredibly difficult to divulge the true thoughts and intentions lying behind the mask of public persona. Oscar Wilde's writings reflect the chaotic order of this environment with a style that is—to turn one of his own phrases back onto its creator—“chaos illuminated by flashes of lightning” (Wilde, *Int.* 16). Rife with contradiction, hyperbole, and paradox, it is often unclear whether Wilde's words are meant to be taken earnestly, satirically, or both at once. In any case, He made use of a particular tool that many authors before him used, including Boccaccio and even playwrights as far back as the age of Attic tragedy and comedy. Oscar Wilde employs the use of obscenity to fracture social restrictions and thus as a form of subversive social protest, forcing his audience to recognize, confront openly, and reconcile with the faults of society.

**Outline:** Basic outline due Tues. Nov. 7 - Detailed outline due Tues, Dec. 5

You must pass the abstract in order to proceed to the next step: writing an outline. Students who have not passed may be referred to a writing consultant for further discussion before submitting a revised outline.

The **basic outline** is a simple frame for your thesis and includes the thesis statement and a logical order for developing its ideas. The basic outline should **not** be arranged by texts, but rather by topics. It does not need textual evidence (which will be required for the detailed outline.)

The outline's purpose is to build on the abstract, requiring you to arrange and connect specific ideas and text from two-four great books to develop a unified argument. The **detailed outline**, thus, presents the thesis statement, parts of the argument, and specific citations systematically and in some detail (3-4 typed, single-spaced pages). Labels and indentations indicate order and relative importance (I, A, 1, a, i); these sections and subsections reflect logical relationships, such that topics of equal generality appear in parallel headings at the same "level" (I, A, etc.) of the outline. It is optional to write the outline in topics rather than complete sentences. Headings may be expressed in grammatically parallel form if this is helpful to you. The introduction and conclusion may be sketchy at this stage or omitted from the outline, but they will need to be present in the rough draft, due shortly after winter break.

Suggestions for getting started building an outline:

- I. Start with your abstract (your thesis and how your works relate to it).
  - A. List subtopics, questions, reasons for/against, ideas, points, themes, etc.
    1. Fill in with evidence
      - a. Make a tree or web of your main ideas, points, themes, etc.
- II. Reread journals/annotations, highlighting key ideas.
  - A. Add these to your tree or web as necessary.
  - B. Are there any places where something seems to be missing?
- III. Group ideas as they relate to your thesis according to one of the following principles:
  - A. Organize by space or time (chronological)
  - B. Organize by emphasis:
    1. General to Specific
    2. Specific to General
  - C. Problem to Solution
  - D. Climactic Organization: ideas unfold in order of increasing drama or importance.
    1. Most familiar to least familiar.
    2. Simplest to most complex.
  - E. Thematic blocks: either preceded or followed by synthesis.
- IV. Think about your audience
  - A. Which of the above principles will make the most sense to others?
  - B. Which ideas might need more background to explain what you mean?

## **Rough Draft** due Tues, Jan. 9, 2018

The rough draft must be at least 10 typewritten, double-spaced pages, with any **block quotations single spaced**. The rough draft will be reviewed by the advisor and the HL teacher. Some guidelines for revision follow.

### Content:

1. Does the essay express and explain a claim, rather than simply being a statement of facts or narration?
2. Is the thesis or main idea of the essay of sufficient **importance**, rather than something trivial or patently true?
3. Is the thesis of the essay focused and clear?
4. Do the thesis and arguments proceed from the texts or are they imposed on the texts?

### Organization:

1. Does the essay have an introduction, a body, and a conclusion?
  - a. Does the introduction sufficiently orient the reader to the basic issue(s) of the essay?
  - b. Does the conclusion remind the reader of the main thrust of the essay and drive home its main point(s)?
2. Is the essay sufficiently based upon all three texts? Is it a unified essay rather than three separate essays?
3. How well integrated are the ideas? Are the connections among ideas clear? Are there sufficient transitions? Could the reader get lost?
4. Are individual paragraphs sufficiently focused and coherent? Is there a topic sentence for each paragraph?

### Evidence:

1. Is there sufficient evidence presented from all three texts?
2. Does the writer select and integrate passages well to illustrate or support his/her points?
3. Does the writer provide sufficient **analysis**?
4. Does the writer vary the ways in which s/he presents quotations?
5. Are parenthetical citations provided for quotations?

### Mechanics

Macro-revision (content and structure) and micro-revision (grammar, punctuation, spelling, capitalization) will be reviewed by the **advisor**. Students should expect to revise each component of the Senior Thesis as part of the process to produce a thesis of high caliber.

## Senior Thesis Format and Grammar Checklist

Senior \_\_\_\_\_

Advisor \_\_\_\_\_

*Advisors are asked to review the final draft by filling out the following checklist before the submission is accepted. Return this form to the **student**.*

### **Format:**

Title Page	<input type="checkbox"/> Correct	<input type="checkbox"/> Incorrect _____
Bibliography	<input type="checkbox"/> Correct	<input type="checkbox"/> Incorrect _____
Page Numbers	<input type="checkbox"/> Correct	<input type="checkbox"/> Incorrect _____
Block Quotations (Chicago)	<input type="checkbox"/> Correct	<input type="checkbox"/> Incorrect _____
Citations (MLA)	<input type="checkbox"/> Correct	<input type="checkbox"/> Incorrect _____
Font	<input type="checkbox"/> Correct	<input type="checkbox"/> Incorrect _____
Margins	<input type="checkbox"/> Correct	<input type="checkbox"/> Incorrect _____

### **Grammar and Mechanics:**

Paper is devoid of:

Sentence fragments	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
Run-on sentences	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
1 <sup>st</sup> and 2 <sup>nd</sup> person pronouns	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
Unclear pronoun referents	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
Pronoun/antecedent agreement errors	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
Capitalization errors	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
Typos or spelling errors	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
Punctuation errors	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
Subject/verb agreement errors	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
Verb tense errors	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
Contractions	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
Colloquial expressions and teen talk	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No

\*Is the student's final essay passable in order for the student to go on the Senior Trip?

Yes       No

If you checked "No" please explain what errors the student must correct to be eligible:

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## Format Requirements

### 1. Title Page

- a. The title must be centered on the page, 16 point font, Times New Roman.
- b. In the bottom **right** hand corner:
  - Student Name
  - Advisor Name
  - Date

### 2. Page Format

- a. Times New Roman font
- b. 12 point font size
- c. One-inch margins on all sides
- d. Double spaced
- e. Numbered pages - **top right** hand corner header with student's last name followed by the page number. e.g. Smith 3

### 3. Citations

- a. Follow MLA style for parenthetical citations. (refer to *Little, Brown Handbook* )
- b. Block quotations should follow the Chicago Style: **single spaced**, indented on the left (This is so a student will not use too many pages simply to quote).

### 4. Bibliography

- a. Follow the MLA style for "Works Cited," but use the heading "Bibliography" to include all texts used.
- b. All relevant books/sources used to write the paper should be listed, even those texts not cited in the paper.
- c. If applicable, divide texts with left justified headings of "Primary Texts" and "Secondary Texts."
- d. Alphabetized entries (alphabetize entries within the headings in "c" above if they are used).

### Other:

The Thesis must NOT be underlined in the paper, unlike a typical five-paragraph essay.

Introductions and conclusions should not be labeled as such. Section headings, in general, should be avoided. Students should use clear topic sentences and transition statements to indicate changes in topic.

Upon meeting format requirements, three hard copies of the final draft are due. Three copies of the final draft should be turned in to the advisor: one for the advisor, two for additional readers. Also, an electronic copy of the thesis must be emailed to the Senior Thesis Coordinator.

[Sample Title Page (please forgive the page number)]

Title

Student Name  
Advisor Name  
Date

## Senior Thesis Examples of the MLA Format

### **In-text parenthetical citations**

Parenthetical citations must include just enough information for the reader to locate the appropriate source in the bibliography and the place in the source.

Typically, an MLA parenthetical citation will include the name of the author and the page number in the text: e.g. (Augustine 32). Usually it will be placed at the end of the sentence in which the quotation appears.

For dramas, the citation will include the author, act, scene, and line number[s]—all in Arabic numerals—no Roman numerals: e.g. (Shakespeare 3.2.147-54).

When citing the Bible, the titles of books longer than four letters are abbreviated, and include the chapter and verses: e.g. (Gen. 3.18-20). Note that books of the Bible are not underlined or italicized.

If more than one text from the same author is being used, a shortened form of the title should be included to indicate which text is being used: e.g. (Austen, *Pride* 178).

If a text typically has section numbers, cite by book or chapter and section number: e.g., a citation to Plato's *Republic* would appear as (Plato 3.406a).

### **Sample Works Cited entries**

#### Works Cited

Camus, Albert. *The Stranger*. Trans. Matthew Ward. New York: Vintage International, 1989.

Dostoevsky, Fyodor. *Crime and Punishment*. Trans. Constance Garnett. New York: Bantam Classic, 2003.

Wilde, Oscar. *The Picture of Dorian Gray*. New York: Barnes and Noble, 2003.

**For more information/samples, refer to Purdue OWL**  
<https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/747/01/>

## Evaluation of the Final Essay

### **Final draft due Tues. Feb 13 to Advisors for final revisions**

Advisors will return edits to students by **Mon. Feb 26**

**Revised** final thesis **due Tues. Mar 6 to advisors** for final submission, **\*three copies**

### **Overview**

1. Does the essay make sense?
2. Does the essay display originality?
3. Is the essay well organized?
4. Does the essay demonstrate that the senior possesses textual expertise?
5. How many and what kind of repeated mechanical errors are there (both grammar and punctuation)?

**Essay- these questions are directly used by the faculty panel to evaluate the written thesis**

### Organization:

Is the paper three loosely connected essays, or a genuine attempt at integration? Does the introduction adequately introduce the subject and focus the reader? How well are the ideas from the texts woven together? Do the ideas naturally connect to one another? Does the paper have good transitions? Does the essay have a conclusion to remind the reader of the basic thrust of the argument?

### Style:

Does the student demonstrate a good command of the language? Are the sentence structures varied or simple and stilted? Does the student employ an advanced vocabulary? Does the writing exhibit awkward or colloquial phrasing?

### Use of textual evidence:

Does the student refer to the texts frequently enough? Does the student use quotations to simply recount the plot of a text, or are quotations used to lend authority to the student's argument? Does the use of quotations include student analysis? Does the student favor one text more than others, or is use of textual evidence balanced? How appropriate are the quotations to the analysis? Does the student offer appropriate analysis for block quotations, or do block quotations appear to be used to merely take up space?

### Depth/complexity of ideas:

Does the student take appropriate risks in the analysis? Are the ideas plausible, banal, intriguing, unsupportable, unconnected, unique, surprising, etc.?

### Mechanics: grammar and punctuation

An advisor might circle and note grammatical and mechanical errors to the degree she/he is able. Advisors, however, are not editors. It is up to the student to ensure that his final product is free of mechanical errors.

## Evaluating the Oral Defense

**Defense: these questions are directly used by the faculty panel to evaluate the written thesis**

### Ability to give articulate explanations:

Did the student exhibit confidence? Did the student ask clarifying questions of the panel when he did not understand the question being asked? Did the student directly address questions, or were responses aimless and circuitous? Were his responses clear, specific, and articulate, or vague and sloppy? Were the student's responses overly brief, adequate, elaborate, or wordy and redundant? Was his language appropriate or colloquial? To what extent did the student communicate his understanding of his thesis and of the ideas it raises?

### Depth of inquiry/understanding:

How engaged by his subject did the student appear? Was it clear from the discussion that the student understood the texts clearly and developed an expertise concerning them? Did the student reference the texts to support arguments? Was the student willing to rethink ideas in her thesis? Did the student make connections between the thesis and ideas outside the immediate concern of the thesis? Did the student refuse to extend ideas beyond the thesis? Did the student voluntarily think beyond the thesis or did the student need to be led to new or different interpretations? Did the student develop clear arguments or get trapped in circular thinking? Were there lengthy, uncomfortable pauses in the conversation in which the student seemed lost for a response?

## Notes to Interpreting Senior Thesis Evaluations

A great many factors are considered when determining an overall “grade” for the Senior Thesis: depth/complexity of ideas; effective use of textual evidence; organization/style (including attention to grammatical and mechanical detail); and clarity of thinking and elegance of presentation during the defense. The **commentary** of the evaluators concerning each of these areas is most important; however, a numbering system has been included as a shorthand notation. The numbers are not to be interpreted as percentages. Selecting a number grade for each area of evaluation, moreover, ought simply to help guide us to the following narrative grades. The numbers represent a range of achievement that could be interpreted as follows:

- |             |                             |  |
|-------------|-----------------------------|--|
| 9 10        | <b>Pass with Excellence</b> | The student has completed all requirements of the Thesis with distinction and has exceeded the standards in terms of written and oral analysis, reflecting an abiding sense of wonder and true depth of inquiry. |
| 3 4 5 6 7 8 | <b>Pass</b>                 | The student has completed the basic requirements of the Thesis.  |
| 1 2         | <b>No Pass</b>              | The student has not satisfactorily completed the basic requirements of the Thesis.   |

The initial evaluation takes place immediately following the oral defense. The “Chair” is the Advisor and will fill out the “panel evaluation” form, which is submitted to the Senior Thesis Director. The Advisor is responsible for making a final panel determination when the readers are split. The manner in which the thesis is completed is very important to the evaluation process, and the Advisor is asked to provide additional information concerning: 1) the timely completion of work, 2) the quality and thoroughness of notes/journals, and 3) the student’s attitude during thesis discussions. Advisors should email their written evaluations within **one week** of the oral defense to the Senior Thesis Director. Any change in the final grade should be submitted to the Senior Thesis Director.

The Senior Thesis represents a great deal of effort on the part of the student, and as such the final evaluation is considered carefully and seriously. The intent is to offer a fair and honest appraisal of the student’s work. If you have questions about any aspect of the grading system, please direct them to the Senior Thesis Director.

## Orals Format

The senior oral defense is the opportunity for the student to discuss his/her essay and ideas with the community at large. A panel of three members from the community will read the Thesis and spend one hour engaged in collegial dialogue with the student. The panels consist of: 1) the Advisor (also the Chair) and 2) two faculty Readers.

Students should be dressed professionally for the defense, not in their school uniforms. Professional attire represents the student's engagement in conversation with intellectual peers.

Students should bring a copy of their Thesis as well as their primary texts.

Traditionally, the room for the defense has been arranged with Advisor and Readers in a panel facing the senior, with the Audience seated to one side; alternatively, the four participants may sit around the four sides of a table or arrangement of tables, with the audience arranged around them further back. The formal arrangement and atmosphere of the defense ensures that the students take the process seriously and that an overall quality is maintained.

Following the defense, the panel briefly discusses in private an overall evaluation of the student's performance (about 30 minutes) and agree on an evaluation. The Advisors are asked to provide the most comprehensive evaluations, including how the student related to the overall process, while Readers are asked to comment more specifically on the defense and their overall impressions of the essay without necessarily providing detailed commentary. The Chair settles any disputes. Advisors also complete a separate form called "Advisor Comments" which gives the advisor an opportunity to comment on the student's attitude and effort throughout the process.

The **hour-long oral defense** discussions are generally organized as follows:

Introductions, led by Advisor	5 minutes
Opening question by the Advisor	5 minutes
Questions from the panel (in no strict order)	
Advisor questions	15 minutes
Reader questions	25 minutes
Audience questions (if time permits)	10 minutes

Of course, the defense is meant to be a discussion and these time guidelines are not meant to restrict the participation of any panel member. This time schedule helps keep the defense on task and also helps panel members in terms of their preparation.

Although the word "defense" implies some sort of attack (and the students often view it this way), the defenses are purely intended as a forum in which the students expand their thinking and understanding of their topics through Socratic dialogue. It is our intention to encourage the students to think, not to attack their work.

The schedule of defenses should be posted in a location(s) accessible both for participants and for the community-at-large.

**Students will receive their thesis evaluation and advisor comments along with their second semester grades.**

## Senior Thesis Panel Evaluation Form

Student:

Defense Date:

Title:

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**Assessment (Mark one):**

**No Pass**

**Pass**

**Pass with Excellence**

Committee- Writing Consultant:

Advisor:

Reader:

**ESSAY (Mark one number for each category): Writing Consultants note critical comments.**

Organization: ( 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 )

Style: ( 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 )

Mechanics: ( 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 )

Use of textual evidence: ( 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 )

Depth/complexity of ideas: ( 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 )

**ORAL DEFENSE:**

Ability to give articulate explanations: ( 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 )

Depth of inquiry/understanding: ( 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 )

Other comments:

Student \_\_\_\_\_

Advisor \_\_\_\_\_

### **Senior Thesis Advisor Comments**

Please describe the overall attitude and approach of the student throughout the thesis process. Was the student open to discovering new ideas, or did he or she approach the assignment with preconceived notions? Was the student open to suggestion? Did the student complete work on time? Was the student genuinely invested in the process?

**Advisor Comments:**