

OPTION I: Senior Thesis Option

Overview

The Senior Thesis option is available for those who wish to conduct extensive research on a topic that does not lend itself to an actual science or hands-on project. Students choosing to write a senior thesis will write a substantial paper. Students will also complete an oral presentation and maintain a process log. The depth of research is expected to be scholarly and extensive.

Thesis Paper

After selecting a topic of interest, and conducting some preliminary research, you will narrow the subject to a specific issue or question that you will research. You must formulate a thesis: a proposition or hypothesis which your paper then argues. A thesis needs to be specific and “arguable.” For example, your thesis might be: “Western movies and TV shows rose to prominence in the United States during the 1950s as allegories for the Cold War.” The paper should not resemble an encyclopedia entry for the topic. For example, “the Gilded Age was a time where new prosperities and opportunities were forming after the end of the bloody American Civil War.” That is not a feasible thesis statement as it is not open to reasonable debate. Good research questions are open ended and invite multiple points of view or alternative hypotheses.

A thesis paper is not simply an informative report or a survey of existing information regarding the topic. It is an argument. You need to work with your advisor to formulate your thesis statement. (Note: it is likely that this proposition will be refined as the research progresses.) Please note that your paper needs to blend information gathered with your own analysis.

The following guidelines apply to the thesis paper:

1. A minimum of eight written resources must be used and cited. You must also include one consultant interview as a resource. Only academically sound resources are acceptable. Encyclopedias and “wikis” (either hard copy or computer/Internet based) are not appropriate resources at this level. You are strongly advised to consult with your advisor early in the process to ensure that resources are acceptable. Care should be taken that sources present a variety of perspectives on the subject.

Internet Sources:

Peer-reviewed academic journal articles that are accessed online will satisfy this requirement if they are full-text. Abstracts or summaries will not count. Make sure you clear use with your advisor just to be sure!

2. At least two of the resources must be primary sources. Your advisor can waive this requirement if the specific subject matter of your thesis makes the use of primary sources impossible.
3. Research must be documented through the use of an annotated bibliography (minimum 8 annotations).

4. Progress meeting is **September 16th** – annotated bibliography and research notes are due. Your advisor will also review your progress log at this time. The log and notes should demonstrate that substantial research has been completed. Regular consultation with your advisor throughout the semester is highly recommended.
5. Before you actually begin to write your paper, you are required to develop a working outline. You must meet with your advisor to review/discuss your outline before beginning to actually write the research paper. Bring both your outline and your annotated bibliography to this meeting. The deadline for this meeting is **September 30th**.
6. The minimum length is eight (15) pages, double-spaced, one-inch margins, using Times New Roman 12 point font, in text citations - MLA style (9th Edition) unless your advisor requires a different style. Graphs, charts, tables, illustrations, etc. are not included in the minimum length (and must be included as appendices if used).). For details on layout and documentation see; **Purdue OWL**. Google Docs has some great new tools for citing information, and Mr. Noll will create a video to go over those features.
7. A transcript of at least one consultant interview must be used as a source, properly cited, and included as an appendix to your paper. Your transcript should demonstrate that you conducted a substantial interview (minimum 10 questions). Also include information regarding the academic qualifications of your mentor. (If the information from your consultant does not end up being relevant to your paper, then you need to still include the interview in the Appendix, with a 1-2 paragraph explanation of why it wasn't relevant).
8. An annotated bibliography is only required during the planning process as a tool to discuss your sources with your advisor. There should not be an annotated bibliography for your final paper.
9. The final paper needs to have an MLA **Works Cited** list. No sources that are not directly cited as in-text citations in your paper should be included in your **Works Cited** list. There is a 5 point deduction for every source listed that is not cited, and/or anything that is cited that does not have a corresponding entry in the **Works Cited** list.
10. A title page, outline, works-cited page, and necessary appendices are required, but are not included in the page minimum. For details on layout and documentation see; **Purdue OWL**. MLA 9th Edition now provides for Title Page formatting.
(Ask your advisor for samples if necessary.)

11. You are highly encouraged to consult regularly with your advisor regarding the progress of your thesis. Your advisor is there to assist you, but will not be tracking you down. This is a student directed learning experience; therefore you will need to take the initiative to schedule consultations with your advisor. You are responsible for meeting all deadlines; your advisor will not be reminding you!
12. Your rough draft is due to your advisor on **Thursday, October 27, 2022**. A rough draft is **NOT a partially done or incomplete paper**. The rough draft should be your final paper and include all of the final paper requirements. A rough draft is your final paper that had undergone initial editing and is being presented to your advisor to give you feedback and help you polish your paper before the final draft.
13. The final, completed paper with all of its components is due to your adviser on **Tuesday, November 22, 2022**, with a copy uploaded to the Google Classroom Page. The paper is close to 2/3 of your grade total.
14. **50 points will be deducted for each day the paper is late**. Your paper is considered late if it is not both given to your advisor AND uploaded to the Capstone Coordinator on Google Classroom for distribution to your Evaluation Team.

Oral Presentation

You will present your thesis proposition and argument to an audience of underclassmen, parents and teachers. But do not plan to simply read your thesis! Creatively present what you learned.

1. Your presentation is required to last 12 to 15 minutes. You should provide a clear explanation of your thesis statement and your research. Evaluation criteria include the degree to which you demonstrate understanding of the material, completeness, and whether the presentation reflects a semester of work.
2. Your presentation will be followed by 5 minutes of questions from the evaluators and the audience. Your ability to answer these questions will be included in the grade.
3. A slide presentation is required and additional visual aids are allowed. Visual aids will be evaluated based on quality, clarity, appearance, usefulness and the degree to which they enhance your presentation.
4. Presentations will be given on **Friday, December 9, 2022**.
5. The presentation will count as part of your total grade.

6. Google Slide or similar presentations must be given to the Capstone Coordinator no later than **Wednesday, December 7, 2022.**

***You are strongly encouraged to practice your presentations ahead of time, refining your speaking skills and assuring that your presentation fits within the time limit. You are also encouraged to dress professionally.

***While you are working on your project and your research, think in terms of your oral presentation: How will I explain this to an audience? Do I need to videotape or photograph any of the process? What visual and/or physical data will I need to show?