

SENIOR THESIS GUIDELINES

Approved by the Academic Policies Committee on
For implementation beginning Fall 2011

DEFINITION AND PURPOSE OF THE SENIOR THESIS

The senior thesis is the product of scholarly or scientific research or artistic work of high academic quality. The character of the work leading to the senior thesis is expected to be more advanced than normal course work and should involve an unusually high level of initiative, independence, organization, and effort. It is used by many departments as one criterion for selecting students who are awarded honors in the major. The thesis is also part of the scholarly record of the college.

The senior thesis may take any one of a wide variety of forms suitable to the discipline(s) concerned. In all cases, the thesis should demonstrate excellence, originality, and dedicated effort by the student.

Senior thesis work carries eight credits and ordinarily involves two sequential courses of four semester credit hours each, directed by a faculty adviser selected by the student. The adviser and the thesis subject are ordinarily in the student's major field.

ELIGIBILITY FOR THE SENIOR THESIS

Students must present a proposal for a senior thesis during their junior year. They will be registered for senior thesis work after completion of a minimum of 87 semester hours of college credit, registering for two consecutive four credit courses. To qualify for senior thesis registration, students must have a minimum GPA of 3.50 in the major field(s) and 3.25 overall. They should also be making normal progress toward completion of all requirements in the major(s).

When a student is double majoring and both departments require a thesis for honors, it is up to each department whether one thesis will be allowed to count toward both honors.

- ❑ Senior thesis registration entails: 1) the agreement of a faculty member in the student's major department to direct the senior thesis; and 2) the completion of the Statement of Intent for Senior Thesis which must be submitted to the office of the Associate Dean for Undergraduate Studies on or before the last day of classes of the preceding semester in which senior thesis work formally begins. In addition to the thesis director, the student is required to invite two or more faculty members to serve on the thesis review board. Theses are not automatically approved once submitted. Please allow 2 business days after the deadline for the Associate Dean to review and approve your Statement of Intent for Senior Thesis. If there is an issue with it, someone from the Associate Dean's office will contact you. Once approved by the Associate Dean for Undergraduate Studies, and having submitted the Senior Thesis registration form with your proposal, you will automatically have the thesis course placed on your schedule for the following semester. The Statement of Intent for Senior Thesis must be approved by all members of the thesis review board. A copy of this document must be submitted to the chair(s) of the department(s) involved.

In certain unusual circumstances, if it is in the best educational interest of a student, exceptions to the above guidelines may be made. In all such cases, it is necessary to demonstrate the educational validity of the requested exception. It is the responsibility of the student to present their case in written form using the Petition form and submit this form with the Statement of Intent for Senior Thesis form. In addition, written consent of the thesis review board and the department chair(s) is required in support of the thesis.

PROCEDURE FOR INITIATING A SENIOR THESIS

The choice of subject, thesis director, preliminary delineation of the nature of the project and its goals should be completed during the semester preceding that in which work is expected to begin. The members of the thesis review board should also be selected and recruited during the planning period. The completion of the Statement of Intent for Senior Thesis marks the end of the preliminary planning stage. A signed copy of the Statement of Intent for Senior Thesis is to be submitted to the thesis director and the office of the Associate Dean for Undergraduate Studies on or before the last day of classes of the preceding semester in which senior thesis work formally begins.

RESPONSIBILITY OF THE STUDENT IN PREPARING THE THESIS

It is the responsibility of the student to pursue the goals described in the Statement of Intent for Senior Thesis independently and to arrange for conferences with the director as well as with members of the thesis review board. It is the student's responsibility to submit a tentative version of the thesis to the director in sufficient time to allow review and revision. The director and student should work out a time schedule at the beginning of the project, including a due date for first submission of the finished-for-review-version of the thesis. It is the student's responsibility to arrange any necessary meetings of the thesis review board during the conduct of the thesis work and for evaluation of the thesis at its completion.

WORKING WITH THE LIBRARY

The student is encouraged to take advantage of Goucher librarian research skills for the thesis. The library offers "a personal librarian" to work with each thesis student, beginning prior to the first thesis semester if desired. Subject expertise is included in making a match between librarian and student when possible. The library does endeavor to contact each identified senior thesis writer to advertise this form of assistance. Known thesis writers are also given extended due-date privileges for materials borrowed from the college, as well as faculty-level support for interlibrary loans. In some cases it may be possible to purchase materials for the library collection in support of thesis research.

The Special Collections & Archives department has various types of primary sources, from original manuscripts to rare books and publications that may support your research. Appointments with the Curator of Special Collections and Archives may be made by email, phone, or just visiting the department on Level 4 of the Athenaeum.

SUBMISSION OF THE SENIOR THESIS

The senior thesis, in final form for evaluation, shall be submitted to the thesis review board no later than the last day of classes of the semester in which the work is to be completed. It shall be in a form that facilitates efficient evaluation by members of the board. The procedure for evaluating the thesis is expected to vary widely, depending on the nature of the final product described as "the thesis." Therefore, it is imperative that all parties agree as to the nature of the expected product, and that the student understands what is required for submission and evaluation. If the thesis is a manuscript, DVD, CD ROM or photographic slides, for example, an adequate number of copies shall be provided for evaluation by the thesis review board.

Copies are required for each member of the thesis review board. Two additional copies of the thesis must be submitted to the Associate Dean for Undergraduate Studies office with the attached Senior Thesis Completion Form with all the appropriate signatures. Theses that are

awarded an A will be cataloged in the college archives. Manuscripts should follow the standards of the academic discipline to which they relate. The copy submitted to the Associate Dean must be bound in a stiff-cover binder. DVDs, CD ROMs or photographic slides should be placed in a stiff-cover binder designed for that purpose. All formats should include a printed title page with the information that the work is a senior thesis, the name of the department and the date of submission.

RESPONSIBILITY OF THE THESIS REVIEW BOARD

The thesis review board is composed of the director and at least two other faculty members whose expertise is related to the thesis subject. The board will:

- approve the Statement of Intent,
- be available for consultation with the student,
- meet with the student midway through the work for a progress report, for clarification of the expected product, and for clarification of the evaluation process,
- examine the student's work at its conclusion,
- if necessary, be prepared to meet with the student in a final session after submission of the thesis for evaluation (e.g., if an oral exam or final oral report is appropriate).
- recommend a grade for the work to the director.

RESPONSIBILITY OF THE THESIS DIRECTOR

The thesis director shall:

- collaborate with the student in choosing the thesis review board,
- assist and advise the student in defining goals, shaping the work, and preparing the Statement of Intent,
- meet with the student regularly,
- work with student to set deadlines that encourage progress,
- function as chair of the thesis review board,
- with the advice of the thesis review board, determine the thesis grade,
- submit to the office of the Associate Dean for Undergraduate Studies a copy of the thesis destined for the College Archives, along with a signed copy of the Statement of Thesis Completion.

GRADES

A senior thesis project is a year-long project and therefore will not receive a grade until the end of the project. There is a required mid point evaluation which the student will receive feedback and be given an indication of the grade at this point of the thesis process.

If, by the end of the first semester, a student chooses to terminate the project, or if it is apparent to the thesis director that an acceptable senior thesis is unlikely, the senior thesis shall be converted to independent work and graded accordingly. To pursue this conversion a student must complete a petition form and have written consent for the conversion from the thesis director and the department chair(s). Both forms should be submitted to the office of the Associate Dean for Undergraduate Studies on or before the end of the add/drop period. Failure to convert will result in failing grade for thesis work previously completed.

SENIOR THESIS COMPLETION FORM

Note: This form must be completed by the thesis director and have all appropriate signatures.

The student is required to attach this form to the bound copy of the thesis that is submitted to the office of the Associate Dean for Undergraduate Studies.

To: Associate Dean for Undergraduate Studies

From: _____

Department of _____

Subject: Final Report of work done by: _____ Grade _____

Statement of work accomplished:

Signature:

Thesis Director

Examiner

Examiner

Department Chair

Date

I agree that my thesis may be added to the Goucher College Archives and accessible to users, subject to copyright and library regulations. The library has my permission to reproduce the thesis for archival purposes.

Student

Date

Senior Thesis Registration Form

Goucher College

In order to register for senior thesis credit, students must obtain the Associate Dean for Undergraduate Studies' permission each term. In signing up for the Senior Thesis please be aware you may not go above an 18 credit course load in a semester without the approval of the Associate Dean for Undergraduate Studies.

_____ Student Last Name

_____ Student First Name

_____ Middle Initial

_____ Student ID #

First Term

Year/Term: _____

Dept	Course Number	Credits	Student Signature	Associate Dean for Undergraduate Studies' Signature
_____	450	4	_____	_____

Second Term

Year/Term: _____

Dept	Course Number	Credits	Student Signature	Associate Dean for Undergraduate Studies' Signature
_____	450	4	_____	_____

Courses to be dropped from student schedule:

Term: _____ Course Number: _____

For SAS Office Use Only

Date: _____ Staff: _____