

**Senior Thesis Packet
2018-19**

Contents

2017-18 Senior Thesis Due Dates	-----	2
3 rd Qtr. Defenses	-----	3
CPA Senior Thesis Overview	-----	4
Senior Year Materials	-----	7
<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Proposal handout, samples- Thesis statement, sample- Outline handout, sample- Rough draft guidelines		
Final Draft and Orals	-----	15
<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Senior Thesis Format and Grammar Checklist- Format Requirements- Sample Title Page- Examples of the MLA format- Evaluating the Final Draft- Notes to Interpreting the Evaluation- Orals Format- Advisor Comments Form		

2018-2019 Senior Thesis Due Dates

March 22, 2018	Senior Information Night for juniors and parents
May 2018	Faculty advisors paired with juniors
August 3, 2018	1 st Day of School
<hr/>	
Fri. Aug 17, 2018	Students must have met initially with advisor to discuss their ideas and texts (Students must initiate all meetings with their advisor)
Fri. Sept. 14, 2018	Students must have met initially with advisor to prepare for proposal
Tues. Sep 25, 2018	<u>Proposal due</u> to Humane Letters teacher for credit and feedback
Fri. Oct. 5, 2018	Students should have met with advisor to review proposal and prepare for thesis statement.
Tues. Oct. 23, 2018	<u>Thesis statement due</u> to Humane Letters teacher for credit and feedback
Fri. Nov 2, 2018	Student should have met with advisor to review thesis statement and prepare for basic outline
Tues. Nov 6, 2018	<u>Basic outline due</u> to Humane Letters teacher
Fri. Nov. 30, 2018	Students should have met with advisor to review basic outline and prepare for detailed outline
Tues. Dec 4, 2018	<u>Detailed outline due</u> to Humane Letters teacher – must include citations
Fri. Dec 14, 2018	Students should have met with advisor to review detailed outline and prepare for rough draft
Tues. Jan 15, 2019	<u>Rough draft due</u> to Humane Letters teacher - 10 page min. (deficiency notices issued & Lyceum writing time assigned)
Mon. Jan 28, 2019	Rough draft returned by advisor with edits (both grammar and ideas)
Fri. Feb 8, 2019	Students should have met with advisor to prepare for final draft
Tues. Feb 19, 2019	Complete <u>final draft due</u> to Humane Letters teacher (15-20 pages PLUS title page and bibliography) to determine if content is passable and meets format and mechanics requirements*
Mon. Feb 25, 2019	Final edits returned by advisor to student
Tues. Mar 5, 2019	<u>Revised final draft due</u> : student submits three paper copies to HL teacher and emails Mrs. Somsen an electronic copy
*Please note:	Passing the Senior Thesis is required for graduation. A student's ability to attend the senior trip or other school sponsored extracurricular events is contingent upon remaining in good academic standing for the Senior Thesis. Deficiencies will be given to seniors who do not comply with the thesis deadlines, and suspension of privileges and mandatory writing time may apply as well.

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 4, 2019.**

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: Upon receipt of this form, please sign and submit to Mrs. Somsen.

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.

Thesis Statement:

Unlike in a five-paragraph essay, the thesis statement in the thesis does **not** need to be in LSU form. There is ample room within the paper to accommodate a compound subject and/or predicate. The thesis statement should still be significant, unobvious, and arguable.

*Simply put, the thesis statement should clearly summarize the argument of the paper.

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 25th

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; sample proposals are on the next page.

Senior Thesis Proposal

Student name

Date

12th 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 proess: one typed paragraph double spaced

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?

Thesis Statement: due Tuesday, Oct. 23

In September, you should have met with your advisor for feedback on **refining** your proposal. This is in preparation for taking the next and most important step so far in the Senior Thesis project—writing your thesis statement.

The thesis statement serves as a focus 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 shortly after winter break).

The thesis statement does **not** need to be LSU. It must be a clearly stated, single sentence. This arguable claim should arise out of a close reading of your texts, not from a preconceived idea imposed upon the texts. 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.

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

Below is the format for you to use in typing up your abstract; a sample thesis statement is included on the following page.

Thesis Statement

Student Name

Date

HL teacher

Advisor

Thesis Statement _____.

Curricular Text, Author

Non-curricular, Author

Non-curricular, Author

At least one sentence per text explaining how that text contributes to the thesis statement.

Sample Thesis Statement

Jane Doe
October 20, 2018
Mr. Smith
Mr. Ferbrache

Works Selected:

- 1) *The Great Gatsby*, F. Scott Fitzgerald
- 2) *A Doll's House*, Henrik Ibsen
- 3) *Jane Eyre*, Charlotte Brontë

In order to function in relation to those who seek to diminish individuality, a woman must remain firm in her self-perception and understand that she is an individual regardless of whether or not the world recognizes her as such.

All of these texts portray female characters who embody different aspects of individuality as well as the challenges they face when they assert themselves. *The Great Gatsby* contrasts feminine perspectives of individuality with Myrtle Wilson, Jordan Baker, and Daisy Buchanan. Nora Helmer in Ibsen's *A Doll's House* undergoes a significant change to become an independent woman. *Jane Eyre* presents a strong-willed female character who rejects societal norms and acts as her own advocate.

Outline: Basic outline due Tues. Nov. 6 - Detailed outline due Tues, Dec. 4

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.)

Sample Basic Outline

Student Name
Advisor Name
HL Teacher Name
Nov. 6, 2018

Works Selected:

- 1) *Confessions*, Augustine
- 2) *The Future of an Illusion*, Sigmund Freud
- 3) *The Varieties of Religious Experience*, William James

Thesis: Religion gives humans the strength to both confront and accept life's hostilities.

I. The development of religion

- A. Humanity began in the State of Nature
- B. Religious beliefs helped humans understand the world and cosmos

II. Humans' search for Truth

- A. Life without belief is chaos
- B. Augustine sought something beyond humans to believe in

III. Religion is humans' beliefs to help understand how life functions

- A. The Divine versus the temporal realm
- B. Religious beliefs alleviate human fears
- C. Religious beliefs encourage action for the sake of the Good

IV. Religion is necessary to humans

- A. Religion helps humans confront hardships
- B. Religion helps humans accept their weaknesses

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 thesis and how your works relate to it.
 - A. List subtopics, questions, reasons for/against, ideas, points, themes, etc.
 1. Fill in with evidence *you must include your quotes
 - a. Make a tree or web of your main ideas, points, themes, etc.
 - b. Offer definitions of key terms (truth, human nature, love)
- 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. 15, 2019

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 st and 2 nd 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:

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. Works Cited

- a. Follow the MLA style for "Works Cited"
- b. If applicable, divide texts with left justified headings of "Primary Texts" and "Secondary Texts." All texts must be primary sources.
- c. Alphabetized entries

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 HL teacher: 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 19 to HL teacher for final revisions by advisor

Advisors will return edits to students by **Mon. Feb 25**

Revised final thesis due Tues. Mar 5 to HL teacher 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 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, reflecting an abiding sense of wonder and true depth of inquiry.

3 4 5 6 7 8 Pass

The student has completed the basic requirements of the Thesis.

1 2 No Pass

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:

Assessment (Underline one):

No Pass

Pass

Pass with Excellence

Committee- Advisor:

Reader:

Reader:

ESSAY (Underline 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: