

CLAS 495 – Fall 2009

Senior Thesis Seminar

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Course Description

The senior thesis seminar is a synthesizing and unifying course devoted to important issues of scholarly analysis, criticism and history in the field of Classics, and to the aims and methods of research and writing. It is designed to serve as a capstone to the student's major. Senior standing or the permission of the department chair is required to register in the seminar. The major requirement of the senior thesis seminar is the completion of a long, thoughtful, scholarly paper. You may develop a paper written for a previous class – recognizing that you will need to deepen the research and the thinking – or you may begin a new project. All papers will be coordinated with the instructor of the seminar; usually another faculty member will serve as the advisor and second reader. You will follow a schedule with intermediate deadlines, and you must ensure that you have completed all assignments in a way satisfactory to you and to your readers. Departmental expectations are high for both form and content. Be sure that you work closely with your advisors and that you follow the required format exactly.

Learning Outcomes

To complete this course successfully students must:

- ✓ apply principles of critical analysis to texts, artifacts, sites, etc.;
- ✓ evaluate sources using advanced critical reading and thinking skills and qualitative secondary sources;
- ✓ demonstrate critical thinking skills by analyzing sources material and employing interpretive strategies;
- ✓ discuss/present research, both formally and informally;
- ✓ produce a 30 page documented essay demonstrating advanced critical reading, analysis, research and writing skills.

No Required Course Texts

Online Resources

- ✓ Diana Hacker's *Research and Documentation Online*: <http://www.dianahacker.com/resdoc/>
- ✓ Zotero: www.zotero.org
- ✓ Departmental Writing Guide: www.unca.edu/classics/writing_guidelines.html

Assignments

All assignments should draw upon class discussions, research, your own experiences, and your own creative ideas. All sources should be appropriately cited and referenced in a consistent style (e.g. MLA, Chicago).

Every student will enter the class at a different stage, and will progress at a different pace. However, everyone will turn in every assignment, even if it appears to be retrograde, on the assumption that what has been done can be improved. You are expected to keep informed

about all assignments. Failure to hand in any of the assignments on time will result in a failing grade for that assignment, a "0." Exceptions to this policy will only be made under dire circumstances and then with adequate documentation.

Thesis Prospectus

Introduce your topic in a 500-1000 word proposal. Include a Working Bibliography and citations for anything you quote. Include a bolded research question at the end.

Method of Evaluation: CLAS 495 Rubric

Working Bibliography

Compile a list of at least 20 scholarly books and journals pertaining to your topic of interest. Rely on the library catalog for books, print journals, and media; use the library's electronic databases for studies in literature: JSTOR, Project Muse.

Related Resources: For help with MLA style, see *The MLA Handbook, A Research Guide for Undergraduate Students* (Baker and Huling), *A Writer's Reference* (Hacker), the companion site to the Hacker book (<http://bcs.bedfordstmartins.com/writersref6e/Player/Pages/Main.aspx>), www.zotero.org, and the Son of Citation Machine: <http://citationmachine.net/>.

Method of Evaluation: Graded for completeness and for correctness of citations.

Annotated Bibliography

Choose 20 scholarly sources from your bibliography that relate to your topic. These may be sources you plan to use to support your argument or sources you plan to refute with your argument. Then, provide detailed annotations, each around 100 words for a total document of around 2000-2500 words.

Method of Evaluation: Graded for completeness and for correctness of citations.

Thesis Refinement (if necessary)

On the basis of your preliminary research, rewrite your thesis prospectus. Clarify your research focus and question. Include an updated Working Bibliography and citations for anything you quote. Include a bolded research question at the end.

Method of Evaluation: CLAS 495 Rubric

Partial Paper Draft (3500 words)

Include a main idea that is original (a "thesis"); argue your main idea by marshalling evidence from the text. Use a consistent citation form, textual references, quotes, paraphrases, and parenthetical citations. You may write any portion or all of your paper, but the text you submit must be at least 3500 words.

Method of Evaluation: CLAS 495 Rubric

Complete Paper Draft (6000 words)

Include a main idea that is original (a "thesis"); argue your main idea by marshalling evidence from the text. Use a consistent citation form, textual references, quotes, paraphrases, and parenthetical citations. The text you submit must be at least 6000 words. This draft should be carefully edited and ready for publication. The department will read this version.

Method of Evaluation: CLAS 495 Rubric

Final Paper Draft (6000 words)

Include a main idea that is original (a "thesis"); argue your main idea by marshalling evidence from the text. Use a consistent citation form, textual references, quotes, paraphrases, and parenthetical citations. This draft should incorporate any necessary changes, revisions, and edits required by the senior seminar director, your thesis advisor, and the department. This draft will be kept by the department and must be carefully polished.

Method of Evaluation: CLAS 495 Rubric

General Grading Standards

A	The A essay is an excellent piece of writing. It presents a focused thesis that is clearly supported throughout the essay. It is structurally sound, with smooth and apt transitions between sentences and paragraphs. The essay logically moves toward its stated purpose, and is appropriate in language and style for its audience. The writing is clear and controlled, and the language is often sophisticated, effective, and interesting. The essay is original, forceful, and compelling. It is free of spelling, typographic, and/or other grammatical errors.
B	The B essay is a good piece of writing. It clearly and adequately presents a thesis that is almost completely supported throughout the essay. The language is effective. The essay is clear, focused, and mostly free of spelling, typographic, and/or grammatical errors. It may contain shortcomings, such as occasional monotony in expression, lack of originality, ambiguity in purpose, or some lack of precision and economy in use of words.
C	The C essay is a fair piece of writing, acceptable college work. It meets only the minimum requirements of the assignment. There is likely a thesis, but it is either too broad or too narrow, or not adequately supported throughout the essay. There are likely transitional flaws. Language is adequate, but flawed with awkwardness and/or imprecision. There are likely spelling, typographic, and/or grammatical errors in most paragraphs. It may rely on predictable arguments and obvious support or hasty generalization. It lacks originality, significant purpose, or development.
D	The D essay falls below acceptable college standards. It may partially address the assignment, but lacks any expected insight as to the goal of the essay. Frequently, its writer has not understood the assignment and therefore does not address or respond to a definite purpose. It may express a thesis, but it is likely inappropriate for the assignment. Paragraphs do not exhibit coherent organization or development. The language of the essay is flawed. It likely contains some of these problems: monotonous sentence patterns, imprecise use of words, rambling organization, and repetition of ideas. Sentences are poorly constructed, and spelling, typographic and/or grammatical errors appear frequently.
F	The F essay is an unacceptable piece of writing. It has a multitude of flaws. It may have no thesis or support. There may be flaws of organization and development. It likely includes an unacceptable number of spelling, typographic, and/or grammatical errors. The essay shows no real understanding of the assignment. An essay that receives a failing grade does not automatically mean a failing grade in the course. It does mean, however, that performance on the particular assignment is markedly below college standards and that prompt improvement needs to be made.

Final Course Grade

Your final grade is determined by your performance on a number of different tasks.

Prospectus (500-1000 words)	5%
Working Bibliography (20 sources)	10%
Annotated Bibliography	10%
Prospectus Refinement	0%
Partial Paper Draft (3500 words)	20%
Complete Paper Draft (6000 words)	30%
Final Paper Draft (6000 words)	25%

Grade Scale (used for final course grade)

A (93-100)	A- (90-92)	B+ (88-89)	B (83-87)
B- (80-82)	C+ (78-79)	C (72-77)	C- (70-71)
D (60-69)	F (59 and below)		

CLAS 495 Rubric

CRITERIA	A (4)	B (3)	C (2)	D (1)	F (0)
Essay Purpose Thesis (controlling idea), claim(s), ideas, focus, content	An original, focused thesis; filled with independent thinking	A focused thesis; mostly contains independent thinking	Recognizable thesis; thesis may be too broad or narrow; contains some independent thinking	Contains thesis but purpose is not always clear; little independent thinking	No clear purpose and/or often does not respond correctly to the assignment; fails to meet criteria including length
Development Paragraph structure, paragraph focus, general strength of the rhetoric	Thesis is imaginatively, logically and precisely developed; strong analysis guides development; paragraphs are well structured and focused	Examples support the thesis in an orderly and logical fashion; ample analysis guides development; paragraphs are structured and focused	Thesis is sufficiently developed; adequate analysis guides development; paragraphs are structured but may not always be focused	Thesis is insufficiently developed; some analysis guides development; paragraphs are often inadequately structured and focused	Little/no development and/or often does not correspond to the assignment; fails to meet guidelines including length requirements citations, etc.
Organization Overall structure, introduction, conclusion, transitions	Well organized; contains artful transitions between sentences and paragraphs; an inviting lead draws the reader in; a satisfying conclusion wraps things up	Clearly and logically organized; transitions are often formulaic; introduction and/or conclusion work but may not be compelling	Organized; may contain predictable, mechanical sequence; transitions are sometimes weak; intro and/or conclusion may be minimally satisfying	Some evidence of organization; organization may not be followed clearly; transitions are frequently weak; intro and/or conclusion may be weak;	No apparent principle of organization; no apparent rationale for paragraphing; may not correspond to the assignment given
Source Materials Support, textual references, citations, details, examples, quotes	References to materials are significantly related to purpose; source materials support the controlling idea and provide rich details and examples	References to materials relate to purpose; source materials support the controlling idea and provide details and examples	References to materials are appropriate but may not always be related to purpose; source materials may not contain adequate details and examples	Few references to materials; references may seldom relate to purpose; source materials may often lack adequate details and examples	No references to or references are irrelevant; may not correspond to assignment given; may not contain proper citations, textual references or style
Sentence Structure Sentence fluency, paper flow, sentence clarity, sentence variety	Artful sentences that vary in length and structure create compelling writing and forceful rhetoric	Sentences vary in length and structure; sentences sometimes need to be recast for clarity of style	Very few errors in sentence structure; some variation in length and structure; a number of sentences need to be recast	Errors in sentence structure; little variation in length and structure; many sentences need to be recast	Frequent sentence structure errors; some errors may indicate a failure to understand the basic grammar of the sentence
Diction Word choice, voice, audience, clarity of language	Concrete, specific words used correctly; diction is distinctive and mature; no colloquialisms, clichés or trite expressions; language anticipates the audience's needs	Word choice is generally accurate; writer goes beyond automatic word choices to more precise and effective choices; language meets the audience's needs	Word choice is generally correct; range of words limited; some wording is abstract and imprecise; language sometimes not to audience's needs	Vague, ordinary words; relies on clichés and jargon; language often does not meet the audience's needs	Words that should be within the range of college students are misused or confused.
Conventions Grammar and mechanics; paper formatting, bibliography, works cited, overall style and	Free of spelling, grammatical and mechanical errors; no style mistakes (includes formatting, page numbers,	Few spelling, grammatical and mechanical errors; minor style mistakes (includes formatting, page numbers,	Some spelling, grammatical, mechanical, and style errors; errors in syntax, agreement, pronoun case and reference,	Major grammatical, mechanical, and style errors (sentence fragments, run-on sentences, reference,	Frequent grammatical, mechanical, other basic errors make comprehension difficult; incorrect

form	heading, header, and citations)	heading, header, and citations)	spelling and punctuation	spelling and punctuation)	form/style
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Plagiarism

The Classics Department defines plagiarism in this widely accepted fashion: Plagiarism involves representing someone else's ideas or words as one's own. All definitions, terminology, concepts, and patterns of organization taken from an outside source must be identified and given credit in any essay or exam you write – whether it be for the Classics Department or any other department. When outside reading is undertaken for an assigned paper you are responsible for recording accurate reading notes so that later, should you wish to incorporate some of the ideas or phrasing encountered in your reading, you may properly and adequately identify the source. Facts of general knowledge (the location of a city, the title of a work, the participants in a battle, etc.) need not be footnoted. However, facts that are *not* in the area of general knowledge must be credited to the source. Ideas, interpretations, terms, and patterns of organization taken from an outside source may be either directly quoted (in which case the exact words should be placed in quotation marks) or paraphrased. Paraphrase is recommended whenever possible in order to avoid a disproportionate amount of direct quotation in your paper. *In either case – whether you are quoting or paraphrasing – credit must be given to the source.* The Classics Department considers plagiarism a serious breach of academic honesty. Professors in the department have the authority to give students a failing grade for the course because of a single instance of plagiarism or other form of cheating. At the least, the following minimal steps will be taken:

The student *will* receive the grade of zero for the particular work in which plagiarism or cheating is involved

The incident *will* be reported to the Department Chair

As required by university policy, the incident *will* be reported to the Provost who will determine whether any other punishment should be taken. Additional penalties may be imposed at the Provost's discretion. They may include cancellation of scholarships, suspension, and expulsion.

Student Absences

I recognize that unexpected occasions may arise when a student must be absent from class. Although such absences are not encouraged, the following policy will prevail:

- *Two* absences will be tolerated in a Monday Night Full-Term class
- Each absence beyond the two allotted will result in your final term grade being lowered a full letter grade. Thus, if you miss 4 classes, for example, the highest grade you can earn for the term is a “C.”

Students remain responsible for all material covered in missed classes, including reading assignments, announcements and changes of schedules. Should any further unexcused absences occur, however, the instructor has the option of lowering the final course grade by one letter grade for each hour missed. *Failure to attend class in a responsible and committed manner may thus be grounds for failure in the course.*

ADA Policy

If anyone has a disability that requires special accommodation for quizzes, writing, or tests, please be sure that you are registered with the Advising and Learning Support Center, 219A University Hall; Ethan S. Fesperman is the Asst. Director and the phone is 232-5050. You should let me know **at the beginning of the semester** what accommodations you will need.

Withdrawals, Late Withdrawals and In Progress (IP) grades

If your progress is such that your successful completion of the course seems very unlikely, it would be best to withdraw from the course and take it again. October 21 is the last day to withdraw. Late withdrawals are only granted in dire circumstances. These are not automatic. They require the approval from the instructor, necessitate a formal procedure, and involve other school officials, who may deny the request. If your thesis is very close to completion at the end of the semester, in the judgement of the instructor and your advisor or the departmental committee, you will be given the grade IP and finish the thesis the following semester.

Course Schedule and Topic Outline (Syllabus)

This schedule is subject to change but with advance notice from the instructor.

Week 1 (8/17) Introduction of course; individual presentation of thesis and status

Week 2 (8/24) Thesis Prospectus

(1st copy due **Sunday, Aug. 23**, 2nd copy due **Sunday, Aug. 30**, both by 5pm via email)

Week 3 (8/31) Joint review and discussion of scholarly article

Working Bibliography due **Friday Sept. 4** by 5pm via email (at least 20 sources)

Week 4 (9/7) LABOR DAY: No Class Meeting

Week 5 (9/14) Annotated Bibliography due **Sunday, Sept. 13**, by 5pm via email.

Week 6 (9/21) Conferences (no class)

Sign up for an individual conference, which will be held in my office (NH 127B). We will discuss your prospectus and any need for refinement, and the next steps in writing.

Week 7 (9/28) Flex week: content and class days determined by need

Week 8 (10/5) Partial Draft due in class (3500 words): bring two copies, one for me, one for peer review, which we will do in class

Week 9 (10/12) FALL BREAK: No Class

Week 10 (10/19) Conferences (no class)

Sign up for an individual conference, which will be held in my office (NH 127B). We will discuss your Partial Draft and the next step in the paper development: the Complete Draft.

Week 11 (10/26) Flex week: content and class days determined by need

Week 12 (11/2) Conferences (no class)

Sign up for an individual conference, which will be held in my office (NH 127B). We will discuss your Complete Draft and what needs to be done before submitting the Final Draft on heavy bond paper.

Week 13 (11/9) Complete Draft due Wednesday before class (6000 words)

Week 14 (11/16) Thinking about the Future: Publication, Jobs, Graduate School, Teaching

Week 15 (11/30) Final Draft due Monday in class (6000 words); general summary of all participants of experience and insights gained. Celebration(?!)

Submit to instructor printed on heavy bond paper and in electronic form