CSS Senior Year Program, 2020-2021

Senior Colloquium
Senior Thesis OR Senior Essay
Senior Thesis and Senior Essay Workshops

Think of your senior year program as a connected whole. The central elements are:

1. The Senior Colloquium, taken in the fall;
2. A sustained investigation culminating in the form of either a senior thesis or a senior essay.

**Senior Thesis**

If you lined up a senior thesis advisor last spring, please take the initiative to contact her or him before the first week of classes to insure that you have a commitment to work together on a thesis. Too many theses are weakened or even fail because of time lost in September. If you do not yet have a confirmed a senior thesis advisor, please contact the Co-Chairs who may be able to assist you in finding an advisor. It is necessary to move quickly because many faculty members already have a relatively full dance card.

The CSS expects senior thesis students to meet with their senior thesis advisors regularly – normally, once a week when classes are in session – until completion. This document details the events and deadlines that accompany a senior thesis. You are personally responsible for meeting these deadlines.

Please remember that you have to request to add the Senior Thesis Tutorial (CSS 409 in the fall) during Drop/Add which begins on August 24.

Senior Thesis Writers will make presentations at Senior Workshops in the fall.

**Senior Thesis Proposal**

The thesis proposal should contain (1) the tentative title of the proposed senior thesis, (2) the name of your senior thesis advisor, and (3) a brief statement of the central problem of the senior thesis and the general approach the student plans to employ. The proposal should be 2 pages.

Please email an updated Senior Thesis Proposal to Martha as an attached file no later than Wednesday, September 2nd at 2:00 p.m.

**Senior Essay**

A senior essay is a research paper (usually 30 to 40 pp) that is completed through an Individual Tutorial (CSS 401 or 402) with a faculty member.

Senior essays can be completed either in the fall or the spring.

Senior essay students will make presentations at a Senior Workshop in either the fall or spring, depending on the semester in which the essay is to be completed.
You must enroll in an Individual Tutorial (CSS 401 in the fall) during Drop/Add which begins on August 24 (or CSS 402 in the spring) with the faculty member who has agreed to supervise your senior essay.

**Senior Essay Proposal**

The senior essay must have a coherent theme and include a substantial amount of critical writing that brings out the scope of the project. Your senior essay proposal should describe the general nature of the scholarship in a short (2-page) statement stating the focus of the senior essay. Your proposal must include the name of your senior essay advisor.

For senior essays being completed in the fall semester, the proposal must be e-mailed to Martha as an attached file no later than Wednesday, September 2nd, at 2:00 p.m. For senior essays being completed in the spring semester, a *preliminary proposal* (including the name of the proposed advisor) must be e-mailed to Martha by Wednesday, September 2nd at 2:00 p.m. For spring essays, a *final proposal* will be due by Tuesday, February 9th at 2:00 p.m. All senior essay proposals must be approved by the CSS Co-Chairs.

**Senior Thesis and Fall Senior Essay Workshops**

In November, a series (probably five or six) of evening Senior Thesis and Senior Essay Workshops will be scheduled most likely via Zoom. Each student will make a brief presentation of her or his work to date on the Senior Thesis or Senior Essay, expanding on a Workshop Paper that will be distributed in advance to all participants. Workshop Papers are due to the CSS Administrative Assistant as e-mail attachments several days prior to the start of the first workshop, a date to be determined. The Senior Thesis Workshop Paper should be five to seven (5-7) pages in length and contain: (1) a detailed statement of the problem to be examined, (2) an explanation of its significance, (3) an account of the proposed methods of inquiry, (4) and a preliminary bibliography.

The CSS Co-Chairs, the student's senior thesis/essay advisor, and all CSS seniors are expected to attend the Workshops. Other CSS tutors, interested faculty, and students are encouraged to participate. The Workshops are designed to inform the CSS community about the proposed content of the senior thesis and senior essay so as to stimulate interdisciplinary critique and provide the student with advice at an early stage.

**All Fall Senior Essay students will give a presentation at these Workshops.**

**All Spring Senior Essay students will give a presentation at a Workshop to be scheduled in the spring.**

**Timeline for Identifying Problems with Senior Theses**

CSS students will not be permitted to continue their Senior Theses unless satisfactory progress has been made by the beginning of the spring term. Thesis advisors will be asked if their students have completed a significant body of writing. The student is required to submit a summary of the work accomplished to date along with an outline of the remaining part of the thesis and a statement of the research (if any) that remains to be completed to Martha by the first day of classes in the spring semester. Any student who has not made sufficient progress on the thesis to indicate successful
completion by the Honors College deadline will be contacted within the first few days of the spring semester.

Any student who has not made sufficient progress will be required to convert the Senior Thesis to a Senior Essay. Since such a student will generally have received an “X” for the Fall Tutorial (normally CSS 409), the student and the Senior Thesis (now Senior Essay) advisor have two options. If they determine that the Senior Essay can be completed by the end of the fourth week of the spring semester, the Fall Tutorial (CSS 409) will be changed to CSS 407 and the Senior Essay Advisor will submit a grade for that class when the Senior Essay is completed. If they determine that completing the Senior Essay will require more than four weeks, the student will register for CSS 408, and the Senior Essay Advisor will submit a grade for it by the end of the Spring Semester while the X will remain on the transcript for CSS 409 indefinitely.

*Attendance at ALL the Workshops is mandatory for ALL Seniors.*
Important Deadlines for CSS Seniors Class of 2021 - Revised 11/18/20

- **Wednesday, September 2:** Updated Senior Thesis or Senior Essay Proposal is due by email to Martha.
  - If you are doing a senior thesis, you must enroll in the CSS 409 Tutorial for the fall semester.
  - If you are doing a senior essay in the fall, you must enroll in the CSS 401 Tutorial for the fall semester.

  Note that Drop/Add begins on Monday, August 24 and ends on Friday, September 11. Tutorial forms require the approval of a Co-Chair as well as the students’ faculty advisor and thesis/essay advisor. All signatures must be obtained by the end of this period.

- **Friday, October 2:** Seniors in their final semester must submit their major certification by this date.

- **November:** Senior Thesis and Fall Senior Essay Workshops will take place. Senior Thesis and Fall Senior Essay Workshop Papers will be due to Martha by e-mail attachment several days prior to the first scheduled workshop session.

- **Friday, December 4 -- Last Day of Fall Classes:**
  - **Fall Essay Writers:** Fall Senior Essays are due to your senior essay advisor and to Martha by email attachment.

- **Friday, December 11**
  - **Thesis Writers:** A rough draft of a substantial portion of the senior thesis (e.g., a full chapter if relevant) should be ready for evaluation by your Senior Thesis Advisor.

- **Tuesday, February 9:**
  - **Spring Essay Writers:** Spring Semester Senior Essay Proposals are due to Martha by e-mail.
  - **Senior Thesis Writers:** A second substantial portion of the senior thesis (e.g., another full chapter if relevant) must be submitted to your senior thesis advisor. This should be accompanied by an outline of the remainder of the thesis and a brief statement of the research (if any) that remains to be done. At this time the CSS Chair and the Thesis Advisor will determine together whether or not the Senior Thesis is progressing satisfactorily. If the progress made to date does not indicate successful completion of the thesis, you will be asked to switch the thesis to a Senior Essay (information about this process is available upon request from Martha).

- **Tuesday, February 9 - February 22:** Spring Drop/Add. Prior to February 22:
  - **Spring Essay Writers:** You must enroll in the CSS 408 Tutorial for the spring.
  - **Thesis Writers:** You must enroll in the CSS 410 Tutorial for the spring.
  
  Note that you should request the CSS 408 Tutorial or the CSS 410 Thesis Tutorial during the Drop/Add period sufficiently in advance of the February 22nd end date to ensure that your Tutorial request can be approved by the co-Chairs in a timely fashion.

- **Friday, March 19:** Seniors in their final semester must submit their major certification by this date.

- **Wednesday, April 21:** Senior Theses are due to Honors College by 4:00 p.m., electronically submitted through WesPortal.

- **Wednesday, May 12:** Spring Semester Senior Essays are due to senior essay advisors and to Martha by email attachment.

  You are personally responsible for meeting these deadlines but feel free to ask us for support!