CSS Senior Year Program, 2021-2022

Senior Colloquium
Senior Thesis OR Senior Essay
Senior 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 to satisfy the CSS capstone requirement.

Senior Thesis

If you have already obtained a commitment from a senior thesis advisor last spring, we recommend that you stay in touch with your advisor during the summer and up through the first week of classes. During the two semesters, students meet with their senior thesis advisors regularly, e.g. once a week, until completion of the thesis. If you do not yet have a confirmed senior thesis advisor, please contact the Co-Chairs who may be able to assist you in finding an advisor. This is crucial to do immediately because many faculty members already have a relatively full dance card.

During the Drop/Add period at the start of each semester, you will add the Senior Thesis Tutorial, usually CSS 409 in the fall and CSS 410 in the spring. If you are a double major standing for honors in CSS and your other major, you may be required by that major to enroll in a Senior Thesis Tutorial in that Department for one of the terms. Then you would enroll in CSS 409 or CSS 410 in the other term.

Senior Thesis Proposal

The senior thesis proposal should contain (1) the tentative title of the thesis, (2) the name of your thesis advisor, and (3) a brief statement of the central problem of the thesis and the general approach to be employed. The proposal should normally be about two pages. Please email an updated Senior Thesis Proposal to Martha as an attached file no later than Wednesday, September 8th at 2:00 p.m.

Fall Senior Thesis Workshops

In early November, a series of five or six evening Senior Thesis Workshops will be scheduled. Each senior will make a brief presentation of work to date on the thesis, expanding on a Workshop Paper that will be distributed in advance to all participants. Workshop Papers are due to Martha 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 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 advisor and all CSS seniors are expected to participate in the Workshops. Other CSS tutors along with any interested faculty and students are welcome to attend. The Workshops are designed to inform the CSS community about the proposed content of the senior thesis so as to stimulate interdisciplinary critique and provide the student with advice at an early stage.
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 at the start of the spring semester. Any student who has not made sufficient progress on the thesis to indicate expected 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 thesis tutorial (normally CSS 409), the student and the senior thesis 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, designating an individual tutorial with the thesis advisor who will submit a grade for that class when the senior essay is completed. If the thesis advisor and the student determine that completing the senior essay will require more than four weeks, the student will register for CSS 408, designating an individual tutorial with the thesis advisor who will submit a grade for the tutorial by the end of the spring semester. In that case, the grade of “X” will remain in the student’s academic history.

Senior Essay

A senior essay is a research paper, usually 30 to 40 pages, that is completed through an Individual Tutorial (CSS 401 or 402) with a faculty member. Senior essays can be completed in either the fall or the spring semester.

During the Drop/Add period at the start of the semester in which you are completing your essay, you enroll in an Individual Tutorial, either CSS 401 in the fall 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 develops the scope of the project. Your senior essay proposal should describe the general nature of the scholarship in a two-page statement stating the focus of the senior essay. Your proposal must include the name of your 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 8th, 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 8th at 2:00 p.m. For spring essays, a final proposal will be due by Monday, January 24th at 2:00 p.m. All senior essay proposals must be approved by the CSS Co-Chairs.
Important Deadlines for CSS Seniors 2021-2022:

- **Wednesday, September 8**: An updated Senior Thesis or Senior Essay Proposal is due by email to Martha. The proposal should be two pages and contain the following information:
  - If you are doing a senior essay, the semester in which you will be doing the essay (fall or spring).
  - The name of your senior thesis or senior essay advisor.
  - The tentative title of your senior thesis or senior essay.
  - A brief description of your expected research.

- **Monday, August 30 - Friday, September 17. Fall Drop/Add Period**:
  - Thesis Writers: You must request to enroll in a senior thesis tutorial, normally CSS 409.*
  - Fall Senior Essay Writers: You must request to enroll in an individual tutorial, namely CSS 401.*

  * NB: Tutorial requests require the approval of a Co-Chair as well as the students’ faculty advisor and the thesis/essay advisor. Since all signatures must be obtained by the end of the Drop/Add period, it is important that you submit your tutorial request EARLY in the period.

- **Friday, October 1**: Seniors in their final semester, i.e., students intending to graduate in December, must submit their major certification.

- **November (early)**: Senior Thesis Workshops scheduled. Senior Thesis Workshop Papers will be due to Martha by e-mail attachment several days prior to the first scheduled workshop session (TBD).

- **Friday, December 10**: Last Day of Fall Classes
  - Fall Essay Writers: Fall Senior Essays are due to your senior essay advisor and to Martha.
  - Thesis Writers: A rough draft of a substantial portion of the senior thesis, e.g. a chapter when relevant, are to be submitted for initial evaluation to your senior thesis advisor.

- **Monday, January 24**:
  - Spring Essay Writers: Spring Senior Essay Proposals are due to Martha by e-mail.
  - Senior Thesis Writers: A substantial portion of the senior thesis, e.g. a second chapter when relevant, must be submitted to your senior thesis advisor. A brief 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 are due to Martha at this time. The CSS Co-Chairs and the senior thesis advisor will evaluate whether or not the student is progressing sufficiently to continue with a senior thesis. If the progress made to date by the student does not indicate likely completion of a thesis by the Honors College deadline (see below), the student will be required to convert the thesis to a senior essay.

- **Thursday, January 20 - Wednesday, February 2**: Spring Drop/Add Period.
  - Thesis Writers: You must enroll in a senior thesis tutorial, usually CSS 410.*See note above.
  - Spring Essay Writers: You must enroll in an individual tutorial, CSS 402.*See note above.

- **Friday, March 4**: Seniors in their final semester must submit their major certification.

- **Thursday, April 14**: Senior Theses are due in WesPortal Honors College by 4:00 p.m.

- **Wednesday, May 4**: Last Day of Spring Classes
  - Spring Essay Writers: Spring Essays are due to your senior essay advisor and to Martha by email.

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