CSS Senior Year Program, 2019-2020

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 did not line up a Senior Thesis Advisor last spring, move quickly now or you may lose the Thesis Advisor you have in mind. Even if you obtained a Senior Thesis Advisor last spring, take the initiative by contacting her or him before or during the first week of classes. Too many theses are weakened or even fail because of time lost in September and October.

The CSS requires Senior Thesis students to meet with their Senior Thesis Advisors regularly – normally, once a week for an hour 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 add a Thesis Tutorial during Drop/Add at the start of each semester (CSS 409 in the Fall and CSS 410 in the Spring).

See Richie Adelstein’s piece on “Thinking about Theses” attached in the document called “CSS Senior Thesis Guidelines”.

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

**Senior Thesis Proposal**

This 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 the CSS Administrative Assistant as an attached file no later than Wednesday, September 4th at 2:00 p.m.

**Senior Essay**

A Senior Essay consisting of a set of courses and a research paper may be completed through an individual research tutorial, or, with prior approval of the relevant instructor and the CSS Co-Chairs, as part of the requirement of an advanced seminar (usually in a Social Science or related discipline) that culminates in a long research paper.

Senior Essays can be completed either in the Fall or the Spring.
Senior Essay students will make presentations at the Senior Workshops in either the Fall or Spring, depending on when the Essay is being completed.

You must enroll in an Individual Tutorial (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 plan. Such an essay is constructed of elements of coursework and/or independent study. It should include a substantial amount of critical writing that brings out the scope and coherence of the project; this normally takes the form of an individual research tutorial. Your Senior Essay proposal should list the relevant course(s) to be taken and the general nature of the writing to be done. It should present a short (2-page) statement on the focus of the Senior Essay and the relationship between the written work and the course(s). Include the name of your Senior Essay Advisor.

For Senior Essays being completed in the Fall Semester, the proposal must be e-mailed to the CSS Administrative Assistant as an attached file no later than Wednesday, September 5th, at 2:00 p.m. For Senior Essays being completed in the Spring Semester, a preliminary proposal must still be e-mailed to the CSS Administrative Assistant by Wednesday, September 4th at 2:00 p.m., and the final proposal (including the name of the Advisor) by Monday, January 27th at 2:00 p.m. All Senior Essays must be approved by the CSS Co-Chairs.

**Senior Thesis and Fall Senior Essay Workshops**

Beginning on Monday, November 4th, through Thursday, November 14th, 2019, a series of evening Senior Thesis and Senior Essay Workshops will be held. Each student will make a brief presentation of her or his Senior Thesis Proposal or Fall Senior Essay Proposal, expanding on the Workshop Paper that will be distributed in advance to all interested participants. Senior Thesis and Fall Senior Essay Workshop Papers are due to CSS Administrative Assistant as e-mail attachments by Friday, November 1st. The Senior Thesis Workshop Paper, 5-7 pages in length, should provide: (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 it should also describe the research materials to be used and give a capsule bibliography.

The CSS Co-Chairs, the student's Senior Thesis/Essay Advisor, and all CSS Seniors 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 Senior Thesis and Senior Essay, to stimulate interdisciplinary critique and defense of the proposal, and to provide the Senior Thesis/Essay Student with wide-ranging advice at an early stage. These Workshops have proved extremely useful to everyone involved.

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

**All Spring Senior Essay students will give a presentation at a Workshop in the Spring.**

**Attendance at ALL the Workshops is mandatory for ALL Seniors.**
Important Deadlines for CSS Seniors 2019-2020:

- **Wednesday, September 4**: An updated Senior Thesis or Senior Essay Proposal is due by email to Martha. The proposal should be 2 pages and should contain the following information:
  - Whether you are doing a Senior Thesis or a Senior Essay. If a Senior Essay, the semester you will be doing the Senior Essay (Fall or Spring).
  - The name of your Senior Thesis or Senior Essay Advisor.
  - The tentative title of your Senior Thesis or Senior Essay.
  - Brief description of your research to date and expected research.

- **Friday, September 13**: Drop/Add Deadline for Fall 2019. By this date:
  - If you are doing a Senior Thesis, **you must request to enroll in the CSS 409 Tutorial**.
  - If you are doing a Fall Senior Essay, **you must request to enroll in the CSS 401 Tutorial**.

- **Friday, November 1**: Senior Thesis and Fall Senior Essay Workshop Papers are due to Martha by e-mail attachment.

- **Monday, November 5 - Thursday, November 14**: Senior Thesis and Fall Senior Essay Workshops will take place.

- **Friday, December 6**
  - Fall Senior Essays are due to Senior Essay Advisor and to the CSS Administrative Assistant by email attachment.
  - A rough draft of a substantial portion of the Senior Thesis (probably one full chapter) should be ready for initial evaluation by your Senior Thesis Advisor.

- **Monday, January 27**
  - Spring Semester Senior Essay proposals are due to Martha by e-mail.
  - A second substantial portion of Senior Thesis draft (usually a second full chapter) must be submitted to your Senior Thesis Advisor. It should be accompanied by outlines of the remainder of the Senior Thesis, and a brief statement of the research (if any) that remains to be done. At this time the Chair and the Senior Thesis Advisor evaluate whether or not the Senior Thesis is progressing satisfactorily. If the progress made to date does not point to success, the student will switch to a Senior Essay.

- **Wednesday, February 5**: Drop/Add Deadline for Spring 2020. By this date:
  - If you are doing a Senior Thesis, **you must request to enroll in the CSS 410 Tutorial**.
  - If you are doing a Spring Senior Essay, **you must enroll in the CSS 402 Tutorial**.

- **Tuesday, April 14**: Senior Theses are due at Honors College by 4:00 p.m., electronically submitted through WesPortal.

- **Wednesday, May 6**: Spring Semester Senior Essays are due to Senior Essay Advisors and to the CSS Administrative Assistant by email attachment. This includes Senior Essays from students who began a Senior Thesis but opted to complete it as a Senior Essay instead.

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