

SENIOR CAPSTONE FOR LITERATURE

Capstone Coordinator for Literature: Prof. Juan De Castro

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To complete the Senior Capstone requirement, Literature students have two options. They can complete an independent Senior Thesis under the advisement of a full-time faculty member of the department, or they can take the Senior Seminar and write a senior paper within a class environment. The Senior Seminar IS ONLY OFFERED IN THE SPRING>

Important Dates:

1. Deadlines for senior capstone proposal: 10/14 (Fall); 3/3 (Spring).
2. Deadlines for handing in senior thesis: 12/7 (Fall projects); 5/3 (Spring projects)

Choose One Option:

A. Senior Thesis (Fall or Spring) (4 credits)

The senior thesis is an independent research paper of at least 40 pages written in consultation with a full-time faculty member of the Literature Program. It should ideally deal with a topic the student is familiar with.

Preparation for independent senior work should start in the second semester of the junior year. These are the required steps:

Step 1:

- a. Choose a topic (ideally, within an area of literary study with which you already have some familiarity). The key to success is to find a topic that is appropriate for the time available, and for which both library resources and faculty advising are available. Therefore do research in the library and make a careful list of resources you can use before finalizing your choice.
- b. Identify possible advisors who are knowledgeable in the area you wish to pursue. Advisors are full-time faculty members in the concentration. Find someone who is willing to work with you. You should do this early. You MUST consult with your chosen advisor(s) when developing your senior work project. Failure to do so WILL result in your proposal being rejected. In this case, you will have to take the senior seminar. (Prof. De Castro will make the final decision as to your advisor.)

Step 2:

Start developing your proposal in the summer (if you plan to submit it in the fall and do the Senior Work in the spring), or during the Winter Break (if you plan to submit in the spring and complete it the following fall). Proposals should be 6-8 pages long (double-spaced) and contain the following:

- a. Working title of proposed research paper.
- b. Names of proposed advisors in order of preference.
- c. A description of the key idea being explored.
- d. A description of the methods of investigation to be employed.
- e. An argument about the relevance of the project to the field of Literature.
- f. A section describing the likely conclusions you hope to draw.
- g. Account of work already accomplished, such as initial research completed.
- h. An annotated Bibliography, in MLA format, listing and briefly describing relevant sources you will consult (both primary and secondary).

Think of the proposal as a first draft of an Introduction to your project.

Step 3:

Proposals must be submitted 1) in hard copy and by email to Juan De Castro (decastrj@newschool.edu – 80 Fifth Ave, Rm 525, 212-229-5100 x 2257) Capstone Coordinator for Literature, and 2) electronically to LangLiteraryStudies@newschool.edu, no later than six weeks after the start of the semester prior to the intended project: i.e., Project proposals are due October 14 for spring projects and March 8 for fall projects.

In other words, your proposal is due the semester BEFORE you write your thesis project. You may be asked to revise the proposal, in which case all final proposal revisions are due no later than twenty days after the initial deadline. (Students whose proposals are not accepted will have the option to complete the Senior Seminar as their Capstone.) If you have any questions about your project, contact Prof. De Castro.

Step 4:

Read widely in your chosen area, make careful notes towards the project, come up with a chapter/argument structure, and then work on the substance of the project, allowing sufficient time to do drafts for your advisor's comments, before making your final revisions.

Your advisor will help you keep the project to the right scope and length, design a structure that is most suitable, discover resources you may not find on your own, and act as editor, guide, and deadline setter.

If you choose to do a Senior Thesis, you are obligated to meet regularly with your advisor. Missing meetings will be seen in exactly the same way as missing class. It can mean failure. A written thesis should be 40-60 pages in length, including scholarly notes and a full bibliography, following MLA style.

ALL COMPLETED THESES/PROJECTS MUST BE SUBMITTED in hard copy and by email to your advisor two weeks before the end of the semester: i.e., on or before DEC.7th for fall projects, and May 3rd for spring projects. A second copy in paper and electronic form must be submitted at the same time to the Capstone Coordinator for Literature, Prof. Juan De Castro (decastrj@newschool.edu – 80 Fifth Ave, Rm 525, 212-229-5100 x 2257). His mailbox is in the fifth floor, 80 Fifth Ave. The Senior Thesis will be evaluated and graded by your advisor and by a second Literature professor.

B. Senior Seminar: Literature (ONLY OFFERED IN THE SPRING) (4 credits)

The senior seminar is a 4000-level class in which students research and write a paper, consisting of approximately 30 pages, in a setting that encourages discussion and sharing of ideas. The class is divided into three phases: 1) communal work in classes on methodology, writing, and, more generally, on questions raised by the writing of a paper 30 pages long or more. 2) individual work on the final project with weekly advice from the professor 3) communal sharing of research and class discussion of the course materials towards the end.

The topic of the senior work will be determined in consultation with Prof. De Castro. The deadline for the senior work will be indicated in the syllabus of the course.

Note: Senior Seminar is not offered in the Fall semester. Unless you register for the Senior Seminar in Literature in the spring semester (even if you expect to graduate the following fall), you will be required to do a Senior Thesis.