

CAPSTONE FOR WRITING: The Senior Thesis Class

The What:

The Capstone in Writing is an opportunity for all graduating seniors to develop an original project in a rigorous environment and hone their skills over the term in a final work. The Senior Thesis Class is a series of four-credit intensive seminars taught by Lang full-time faculty, grouped by genre, and restricted to the smallest possible number of students.

All Writing students who intend to graduate must submit a proposal for admission to the thesis class in their primary genre.

All students will take the Thesis Class in their primary genre: **Fiction, Poetry, Journalism, or Non-Fiction only**. (Playwriting is a capstone option only through The Arts Program).

Each class will be designed as a collaborative small-group environment—capped, ideally, at twelve students. In a collective of advanced writers, students will pursue individual projects in a shared genre. Projects can be portfolio-driven (students can revise a portfolio of work in their primary genre culled from previous writing courses) or entirely new (a cycle of poems; set of short stories; part of a novel; series of nonfiction articles or book). No matter the genre, each thesis class will examine issues of craft, form, content, and process. Projects should aim to be ambitious, and final manuscripts polished work that exemplifies the skill and craft of an accomplished writer—approximately 30-40 pages for all genres.

The Proposal:

All students will write a proposal (not to exceed 1,000 words; 4 pages, doubled-spaced), outlining the body of work to be completed in the Thesis Class. You should think of this proposal as a thought process, not a final decision regarding your project. It is really intended to get you to try to express your plans for the capstone and to give the faculty a chance to respond with comments.

For **Fiction** proposals, you should pitch your proposed project, focusing primarily on the plot and, secondarily, on such matters as narrative point of view and style. Tell the plot in blow-by-blow fashion. You may write an extended story or a group of linked stories.

For **Non-Fiction** and **Journalism** proposals, you should write a prose summary covering the theme or argument of your piece, as well as the parts that will make up the body of the work. Specify your sources for the piece, drawn on personal experience or research. Include a note about the relevance of your work to contemporary audiences.

If you are planning a senior project in **Poetry**, you should discuss the book or chapbook you intend to write. How will your project, whether a collection of poems or a single long poem, be structured as a book? Importantly, you should comment on your own poetic style and practice, perhaps describing it with reference to established schools of poetics.

Formatting:

- The title for prose project and poetry collections should be on a separate page. Use the “Heading 1” style for the title. Center it on the page and in the bottom right corner put your name, “Submitted for the baccalaureate degree at Eugene Lang College,” and the semester and year (e.g. “Fall, 2013”). Each should be on a separate line.
- All senior theses in writing should use the Times New Roman font and 11 point size. (Exceptions may be made in the case of poetry when font size variations are deliberately made to suit the poem.)
- For prose projects margins should be 1” on all sides. Prose projects should be double spaced. The beginning of each paragraph should be indented five spaces.
- For all projects, please include a heading with your surname and the page number on each page, located at the upper right corner of the page. For instance: “Poindexter 12”
- In creative nonfiction projects any quoted material should be cited using MLA style.

Recommenders: Each student will be asked to provide the names of two faculty: 1) a professor who taught an Advanced Writing Seminar and 2) their Faculty Advisor.

Writing Sample: Either from Advanced Workshop or new work. (5-10 pp.)

Deadline for Proposals:

Spring 2014 Graduates: October 25, 2013

Fall 2014 Graduates: April 1, 2014

(The proposal, with the writing sample, and the names of your recommenders, should all be included in one single Word or PDF document. The file name should include your **full name** and **primary genre**.)

You may register for Senior Thesis in the appropriate genre after you have sent the proposal to Katherine Delgado. You will not receive permission or clearance to register (but only students who have written the proposal will be permitted to stay in the class).

Submit all materials, in one single Word or PDF document, by email to:
 Katherine Delgado
 Senior Secretary, Writing Department
delgadok@newschool.edu
 212-229-5100 x 2203

Direct questions to the Capstone Coordinator, below.
 Colette Brooks
 65 W. 11th St
 Room 257
brooksc@newschool.edu

Readings:

At the end of the semester all students will present their work in a public reading at the College.

After You Submit the Proposal:

Your proposal will be read by a full-time faculty member in your genre of writing who will send you some comments and suggestions for refining and developing the proposal. Every student in a Senior Thesis must have written the proposal and received a response. Based on the comments, you should revise your abstract of the thesis and bring both the comments and your revised proposal to your Senior Thesis class. **You must also bring the portfolio of your work you have collected in your workshop sequence culminating in the Advanced class.** These will be your raw materials for the senior project.

Full-Time Writing Faculty and their Areas of Expertise:

Colette Brooks – Nonfiction

Rob Buchanan – Journalism & Nonfiction

Heather Chaplin – Nonfiction & Journalism

Alexandra Chasin – Fiction

Siddhartha Deb -- Fiction & Nonfiction

Jennifer Firestone – Poetry

Mark Greif – Nonfiction

Elizabeth Kendall – Nonfiction & Journalism

Andrew Meier - Nonfiction & Journalism

Albert Mobilio – Fiction

Robin Mookerjee – Poetry & Fiction

Mark Statman - Poetry

Wendy Walters – Poetry & Nonfiction