

Harding University English Department Senior Symposium: 2008-09 Guidelines

I. Harding University English Department Senior Symposium: Purpose

The Harding University English Department senior symposium is designed to test the ability of graduating seniors to research, write, and present a scholarly paper that validates their undergraduate credentials and predicts success at the graduate level or in the workplace.

II. Explanation of key terms and requirements:

By “**scholarly**” in this context we mean work that goes beyond good writing to reflect a knowledge of literary history, genre, language and research methods appropriate to the department’s curriculum and to the subject under discussion.

The **minimum length** for the project is 10 pages or 3,500 words, assuming standard margins and font size. The text may need to be cut for the oral presentation, which has a **time limit of 15 minutes**.

Although the term “**research**” should not be equated solely with a list of sources, and although not every topic will require a long list of sources, the works-cited page is a major determinant of mastery of the subject. Therefore, as a rule, no fewer than 10 secondary sources will be expected, and when appropriate, a works-cited page should include **tertiary sources**.^{*} The mentor will determine cases in which the presence of fewer than 10 secondary sources is satisfactory. Such cases include but may not be limited to a literary work of recent vintage (with very few available sources) or an especially original paper that makes good use of a few sources.

Students should take seriously the 15-minute time limit for oral presentations and realize that a penalty of up to **three points** can be subtracted from their presentation grade if they exceed the limit. The symposium supervisor will enforce this penalty after consulting with the timekeeper.

^{*}The term “tertiary” refers to a source that, though not directly about the literary work in question, offers ideas or information that may be applied to the work. For example, in a study of Cooper’s *Last of the Mohicans*, the student could cite Tocqueville’s *Democracy in America* to make a point about the novel and thus demonstrate greater breadth of knowledge.

In plain terms, the senior symposium paper should be the best work of the student and, as a test of someone leaving our program, **will be evaluated more strictly than essays written specifically for a certain class**.

III. The English 451 Class: 4:00 P.M. Wednesday (AS 314)

We have provided a regular class time for English 451 to facilitate full attendance at our orientation meeting at the beginning of each semester. We may have an additional meeting if the supervisor of the symposium sees fit. If held, this meeting will take place before the first symposium to allow students to share progress and ask questions. The fixed time can also provide slots for initial or additional individual conferences between students and the senior symposium supervisor.

IV. Guidelines for Students, Mentors, Other Faculty Evaluators, and the Senior Symposium Supervisor

The heart of the senior symposium process is the relationship between the student and the faculty member assigned to supervise the project. This faculty member, known as the **mentor**, will be assigned by the chair or by the supervisor of the symposium, if so directed by the chair. Whenever possible, students will work with professors of their choice, but the total number of students assigned to one mentor during a semester will be limited. The mentor guides the project and assigns one grade based on the finished paper and one for performance during the process.

A second faculty member will be designated to read the finished paper and assign a grade based on published criteria. This **second reader** serves only to evaluate, not to act as mentor to the student.

Three additional faculty members will evaluate the oral presentation of the paper.

Finally, either the department chair or a faculty member designated by and working under the chair will serve as supervisor of the symposium process.

What follows is a more detailed description of the responsibilities of mentors, students, second readers, evaluators of the oral presentation, and the supervisor.

What should students do to complete a successful senior symposium?

- Beginning with their first upper level class, choose paper topics with an eye to how expandable they are into longer or deeper essays.
- Learn advanced research tools to make searches for secondary material easier.
- Use text books in British or American literature survey courses as well as other relevant courses to help determine the most reliable, respected scholars in a given field.
- Attend and participate in all meetings of the English 451 class.
- Take advantage of the mentor during the process: make him or her a source of or a sounding board for ideas.
- Take seriously all deadlines set by the mentor.
- Create their own timeline to stay ahead of official deadlines.
- Show an ability to relate the subject of their papers to the appropriate issue or issues within the field of English studies.
- As a corollary to the previous point, whenever possible, make appropriate comparisons or contrasts of their subject to related entities. For example, compare the theme of their work or author to its treatment by other significant writers.
- In addition to pertinent secondary sources, try to use appropriate tertiary (background) sources to highlight philosophical or theoretical issues related to their subject. For example, in a study of Shakespeare's treatment of madness in *Hamlet*, they can cite a cultural studies book on the topic, or a 16th century source that deals with madness. Though not always necessary, use of tertiary sources shows superior ability to research and synthesize.
- Understand and avoid plagiarism, i.e., take meticulous notes, quote accurately, and paraphrase and document carefully, realizing that unacknowledged use of material can result in a failing grade.
- **New:** Submit a copy of their senior symposium paper to turnitin.com to prevent unintentional plagiarism. We recommend strongly that students submit a reasonably finished draft of the paper to turnitin and review the web site's report **before** the symposium essay's submission date (which is one week before the presentation). The official deadline for submitting a draft to turnitin will be the same as the due date for the final essay (again, one week before the presentation). Any student submitting a paper to turnitin after this deadline will be **penalized three points** on the process grade. Any student failing to submit to turnitin by the date of presentation will be **penalized up to six points** on the process grade. If any paper submitted to turnitin on the official deadline and before the presentation date is found by the mentor or second reader to contain intentional or egregious plagiarism, the student will not be allowed to present it and can receive a zero, meaning potential loss of credit for English 451. Students who fail to submit any draft to turnitin during the semester in which they are

enrolled in English 451 cannot receive a grade in the course. Students must take seriously their responsibility to meet deadlines and avoid sloppy research and attribution. See the appropriate portion in the section "What should mentors do?" for further details on the procedure.

- Provide three copies of the final draft: one each for the mentor, the second reader, and the senior symposium supervisor
- Realize that solid research and good writing serve as the best preparation for questions following the oral presentation, and that relaxed, honest answers based on an enthusiasm for the subject are enough to impress the evaluators. Perfect knowledge is not a requirement.
- **New:** Prepare to use PowerPoint or other A/V material, which is now required for the presentation.
- Submit the completed senior exit survey in order to receive a grade for English 451.

What should mentors do?

- Read or reread the primary source of the project.
- Be able to suggest at least some research material based on their own experience with the subject or on some preliminary study of it.
- Be familiar with the guidelines of the senior symposium as published in *The Resource Book for Literary Studies* or in another appropriate source.
- Be aggressive in setting that first meeting with the student.
- Make sure the student has a copy of these guidelines. **GO OVER THESE POLICIES IN THE FIRST MEETING.**
- Set and insist on firm deadlines for steps in the process. Suggestion: one of the first deadlines should be a preliminary bibliography, annotated if the mentor feels strongly that such a requirement will help the student.
- Suggest sources, especially background sources, early in the process.
- Insist on accountability for tasks assigned (if, for example, the agreed-upon list of works-cited sources is late, missing, or incomplete, penalize the student).
- Set a first draft deadline early enough to detect any major problems in the conception of the paper.
- In cooperation with the symposium supervisor, alert the second reader to the subject of the paper as soon as possible in order to facilitate the latter's preparation.
- Familiarize students with expectations for the oral presentation and suggest necessary cuts to the paper to meet the 15-minute time limit.
- Strongly suggested: Keep written records of meetings, deadlines, and final grades.
- **New:** Set up a **turnitin.com account** for all mentees and inform them of the policies concerning turnitin.com as well as the issue of plagiarism. These policies are found in the section "What should students do to complete a successful symposium." Mentors should set up accounts early and provide students with all necessary dates and passwords. **Responsibility to second readers:** Since the mentor has access to the turnitin account, he or she should provide a copy to the second reader of any turnitin report that suggests plagiarism. **Mentor discretion:** Because of the seriousness of the penalties involved, the mentor has the discretion to mitigate the harshest penalties. If necessary, the mentor should consult with the second reader and/or the symposium supervisor as part of the mitigation process. **Example of mentor discretion:** If a student waits until the official deadline (one week before the presentation) to submit a draft to turnitin, and evidence of inadvertent plagiarism is indicated, the mentor may allow the student an extension to correct the problem. An extension should not be granted in the case of obvious intent to deceive or other egregious forms of plagiarism, but if the problem is less severe, then it is reasonable to allow time to fix it. In such a case, the second reader, who will have a copy of the offending draft, should be notified of the turnitin report, provided a copy of that report, and given a chance to see the corrected essay as soon as possible. Other scenarios warranting mitigation of penalties might occur. If mentors have any doubts about how to handle those scenarios, they should see the symposium supervisor. The important principle is a proper balance between fairness to students and an appropriate rigor of standards.
- Direct the student to provide three print copies of the final draft: one each for the mentor, the second reader, and the senior symposium supervisor.
- **NEW:** Work with the student as necessary to prepare required A/V materials for the presentation.

What is the role of second readers?

- They balance the mentor function by serving as independent readers. It is not the purpose of second readers to offer suggestions; they evaluate the final product.
- Though second readers will be assigned, whenever possible, to papers in their area of expertise, they are not obligated to be experts. Assuming proper notification of the paper's subject, however, second readers should do as much reading as possible in order to provide the best possible evaluation.
- When asked, consult with the mentor on issues of evaluation or plagiarism.
- They open questioning after the oral presentation of the paper. Second readers are asked to find questions that will allow students to demonstrate poise and knowledge and to extend their thinking on subjects with which they have become familiar. Second readers are not allowed to give advance notice of their questions, but at the same time they should not expect students to know everything about their topic.

What is the role of oral presentation evaluators?

- These three faculty members do not read the senior symposium paper. They base their evaluation partly on the content of the paper as they hear it read and also on criteria of effective presentation as enumerated on the evaluation sheet provided by the department.

What are the duties of the Senior Symposium Supervisor?

- Set the cap for English 451 at 16 students in order keep the number of symposium dates and the number of presentations per session manageable.
- Conduct any meetings of the English 451 class, including the week-one orientation.
- Meet with all participants within the first two weeks of the semester of the project, making sure to outline the following: all pertinent dates, the nature of the mentor-student relationship, the expectations for the project, etc.
- Help students secure mentors in a timely manner.
- Obtain second readers as soon as possible after mentors are set.
- Keep the department chair informed of all developments and report to him or her as required.
- Set the dates for each symposium session.
- Reserve the appropriate room (s) for all symposium dates.
- Supervise the printing of the programs.
- Make sure that all student readers are supplied with audio-visual material as needed.
- Secure the needed faculty evaluators of the reading and make sure they are supplied with evaluation sheets.
- Stay in touch with all mentors during the semester to help them monitor the process and to help prevent problems.
- Be responsible for securing a timekeeper for all Symposium sessions and enforcing any penalties for exceeding the time limit.
- Evaluate the symposium each year, including the procedure for selecting mentors, second readers, etc.
- Keep electronic and written records for each year, including all grades and whatever other reports may be required by the department. Records should include copies of each symposium paper within the last five years.
- Work with Dr. Hammes to update the "Senior Symposium" material on the departmental web site.
- Work with teachers who incorporate instruction on the Senior Symposium to maintain consistency in how students are being prepared.
- At the behest of and in cooperation with the department's assessment coordinator, conduct occasional surveys of the student symposium participants for assessment purposes.

Fall 2007 Senior Symposium Papers

Titles may be shortened or altered for considerations of space.

- Brown, Jaime. "Emma: The Search for Miss Taylor's Replacement."
- Cao, Rui. "The Mother-Daughter Relationship in *The Joy Luck Club*: A Search for Cultural Identity."
- Caldwell, Heather. "A Study in the Development of Children: The Effects of Mother Goose."
- Cantrell, Carrie. "The Genesis Creation Account: Fairy-Story or Fact According to J.R.R. Tolkien."
- Cox, Joel. "Browning's 'Childe Roland': Regression, Redemption, and the Necessity of Doubt."
- Cozzens, Katie. "Romantic Interplay in Keats' 'The Eve of St. Agnes.'"
- Crow, Jordan. "The Fall of God Through Man: Mark Twain's 'The Diary of Adam and Eve.'"
- Harris, Jennifer. "Replacing Ruth: The Theme of Substitution in *Ever After*."
- Merrill, Jennifer. "Checking the Body to Amend the Soul: Vehicles of Grace in Marlowe's *Dr. Faust*."
- Miller, Jennifer. "Comparing Methodists, Quakers, and the Church of Christ in *Uncle Tom's Cabin*."
- Shank, Nathan. "Redefining Omniscience: Narratology in Melville's *Moby Dick*."
- Smith, Kinsey. "Color and Opulence in Browning's 'The Bishop Orders His Tomb at St. Praxed's.'"
- Wagner, Nathan. "Anderson's Use of Silence and Speech in *Winesburg, Ohio*."

2006-07 Senior Symposium Papers

Titles may be shortened or altered for considerations of space.

- Allison, Casey. "The Failed Exodus: Leah Price's Fate in *The Poisonwood Bible*." Fall.
- Arnold, Jordan. "Postmodernist Romance and Clashing Caricatures in Byatt's *Possession*." Spring.
- Bassing, Megan. "Flannery O'Connor's *Wise Blood*: Spiritual Stereotypes .and Hazel Motes." Fall.
- Beckett, Jayci. "John Donne's Treatment of Women in *Songs and Sonnets*." Spring.
- Bradley, Evan. "Grotesque Humor in *The World According to Garp*." Fall.
- Camp, McKenna. "Stowe's Use of the Mulatto Character in *Uncle Tom's Cabin*." Fall.
- Chen, Xiaohua. "The Misuse of Science in 'The Birthmark' and 'Rappaccini's Daughter.'" Spring.
- Chester, Caitlin. "James Joyce's 'Araby.'" Fall.
- Clanton, Megan. "Finding the Rock from Ripples: An Analysis of the Lady of the Lake." Spring.
- Cooley, Erin. "Agoraphobia and Patriarchy in *One Hundred Years of Solitude*." Spring.
- Dow, Julie. "Oedipus and the Search for Meaning in *The Crying of Lot 49*." Spring.

Edwards, Bethany. "Postmodernism and the Tao in Le Guin's *The Left Hand of Darkness*." Spring.

Jia, Yiquin. "The Role of Opposites in Hawthorne's 'Rappaccini's Daughter.'" Spring.

Johnson, Carole. "The Truth About 'Petticoat Government': Female Dominance in Irving." Fall.

Keller, Julie. "Qur'anic and Biblical Interpretation in the Joseph Narrative." Fall.

Kiser, Karyn. "The Horrors of Intention and Action in Conrad's *Heart of Darkness*." Spring.

Kurtz, Paul. "Visual Imagery and Divine Presence and Grace in 'O'Connor's Endings.'" Spring.

Lanius, Elizabeth. "Symbolism and Prophecy in Salman Rushdie's 'The Prophet's Hair.'" Fall.

Prestridge, Carolyn. "Angel Clare and Tess as Spokespersons for Thomas Hardy." Fall.

Reed, Jessica. "The Development of Stephan Daedalus as a 'Priest of Eternal Imagination.'" Spring

Russell, Bethany. "Nymphet Nomenclature: The Significance of Names in Nabokov's *Lolita*." Fall.

Stutzman, Emily. "*Gentillesse*: Morality Observed in 'The Franklin's Tale.'" Spring.

Thomas, Ian. "The Freudian Paradigm in James Dickey's *Deliverance*." Spring.

Thornton, Andrea. "The Linguistics of Theism in Tom Stoppard's *Jumpers*." Spring.

Threm, Holly. "Hemingway's Use of the Same couple in Complementary Tales." Spring.

Ware, Darrick. "The Tyranny of Time: Kurt Vonnegut's Use of Time in *Slaughterhouse-Five*." Fall.

Willhite, Brian. "'Blow, Man, Blow': Kerouac's Journey from Novelist to Jazz Poet." Fall.

Witcher, Stephanie. "A Critique of Evangelicalism and British Rule in *The Moonstone*." Fall.