

Sally McDonnell Barksdale Honors College
Sample Syllabus
Second Semester

This is a recommended syllabus. You and your thesis advisor should adapt the syllabus to meet individual and discipline-specific expectations.

The senior thesis is above all a project that requires continuous independent research, reading, and writing on your part. There are no off-weeks!!! Because you are expected to do independent work throughout the entire semester, it will not be mentioned explicitly in the syllabus.

To make the senior thesis a success and actually enjoy the process, it is crucial that you establish a schedule that includes ample time for work on the senior thesis every week. The senior thesis is a class, and you should think of it as such in terms of time commitment.

In this semester you will complete the senior thesis. The final product will meet all the requirements for a scholarly paper: an explicit argument, a clear organization, error-free writing, and a full scholarly apparatus (both notes and a bibliography). You will achieve this goal in a series of steps (laid out below) based on the work that you did in the previous semester(s).

The second semester of the senior thesis process is even more intense than the first. You need to engage in *continuous writing*, and you need to continue the necessary independent research and reading. You cannot afford off-weeks (and really only very few off-days) until you will have submitted the final product!!! To bring the senior thesis to a successful conclusion and actually enjoy the process of revising, it is crucial that you make ample time for work on the senior thesis and never lose focus. Even more than in the first semester, the senior thesis needs to be your single highest priority.

The **MAJOR REQUIREMENTS** for the second semester of the senior thesis class are:

- 1) **FIRST FULL DRAFT of the THESIS** to Thesis Advisor (due **Friday, March 8**).
All the pieces of the thesis (except possibly the scholarly apparatus: title page, list of abbreviations, bibliography) should be submitted in this first full draft. It is understood that a particular chapter, or the introduction or conclusion, may not be very polished at this stage. Still, all the pieces need to be there to allow the advisor to suggest any necessary revisions.

- 2) **REVISED FINAL DRAFT to all three READERS** (due **Monday, April 1**)
This draft serves for the readers as basis for comments and suggestions for last revisions before the final version. This needs to be a complete and polished draft in order to enable the readers to give useful and productive comments.

- 3) **THESIS DEFENSE** (by **Friday, May 3**)
The thesis defense is a scholarly conversation between the thesis writer and the three readers. Usually the thesis writer will give a brief oral presentation (no more than 10-15 minutes that highlights the key questions and answers discovered in the production of the thesis. The readers will then ask questions of clarification or questions that concern the broader interpretations in the thesis for about 35-40 minutes. Guests (family, friends) may attend the thesis defense.

You, the student, are responsible for arranging the date and time of the thesis defense. Consult the three readers' schedules to find common days and times. Your thesis advisor may be able to help schedule a room in your department's building; or, you can contact Elizabeth Tolbert or Penny Leeton in the SMBHC to reserve a room in the Honors College.

RECOMMENDED SCHEDULE

Week	Dates	Activity
1	January 22-26	Student research and writing; regular consultation with thesis advisor
2	January 29-February 2	Student research and writing; regular consultation with thesis advisor
3	February 5-9	Student research and writing; regular consultation with thesis advisor
4	February 12-16	Student research and writing; regular consultation with thesis advisor
5	February 19-23	Student research and writing; regular consultation with thesis advisor
6	February 26-March 2	Student research and writing; regular consultation with thesis advisor
7	March 4-8	Advisor posts mid-term grade March 4; DRAFT DUE TO THESIS ADVISOR MARCH 8; thesis advisor provides feedback to student for final draft.
8	March 9-17	Spring Break
9	March 19-23	Student continues to revise draft
10	March 26-30	Student completes final draft
11	April 1-5	Final Drafts distributed to three readers by April 1; student begins scheduling thesis defense. Thesis advisor confers with 2 nd and 3 rd readers; significant concerns addressed with student
12	April 9-13	Student revises thesis based on initial feedback from readers. Thesis Defenses held
13	April 16-20	Thesis Defenses held
14	April 23-27	Thesis Defenses held
15	April 29-May 3	Classes End May 3, LAST DAY to hold defense.
16	May 6-10	Finals Week, Commissioning Ceremony Friday, May 10