

Bachelor's Essay Guidelines

Recommended Guidelines for Departmental Bachelor's Essay

The Bachelor's Essay is a 6 credit hour independent research project usually completed in the senior year. The Bachelor's Essay represents the culmination of the undergraduate career. This type of independent, in-depth research will help a student prepare for the rigor of graduate school and life beyond the classroom while enhancing knowledge in the chosen area.

The student must register for two full semesters of work (not including summer terms): 3 hours of 499 Research in the fall and 3 hours of 499 Research in the spring. Ideally, a student should begin planning for the essay in their junior year by identifying a topic of interest and a potential essay advisor. However, the "Application for Enrollment in Bachelor's Essay" form is not due to the Registrar's Office until early October of each academic year. On this form, the advisor, title, and short description of the topic to be studied are listed. Signatures are required from both the faculty advisor and the department chair before the form can be submitted to the Registrar's Office.

The Bachelor's Essay must be written in the language of the student's major or minor language (French or Italian). An electronic copy will be kept on file by the Department, and the abstract will be published (via a link) on the Department's web page.

Essay in French will be exempt from the required Capstone seminar.

The Bachelor's Essay should comprise a minimum of 40 pages of text (excluding notes and bibliography) in the chosen language. It must develop a clear and original argument. It should be of near publishable quality.

The student will follow MLA format, and the essay must include a title page, an abstract, and a table of contents, plus any necessary appendices. The pages must be numbered, and any chapter or section headings be included as well. The essay is to be written in Times New Roman, 12-point font.

The final essay will be presented (20 minute presentation) to the department at the end of the second semester. The oral presentation is to be made in conjunction with a PowerPoint (or equivalent) show. A question and answer period will follow the presentation.

DIVISION OF WORKLOAD

Broadly speaking, the research takes up the first semester, leaving the second semester free to devote to writing and revising. The first semester (3 credit hours) should be spent in:

- Developing the bibliography, becoming familiar with the literature, and submitting an annotated bibliography of at least 20 entries at the end of the first semester.
- Identifying some primary sources to incorporate into the research.

- Developing a thesis statement.
- Making an outline of the essay (with an abstract, if possible at this time).

The second (and final) semester (3 credit hours) should focus on the writing, with clear deadlines for the introduction, subsequent chapters, and their revisions. The completed essay will be presented to the department, and any necessary revisions will be made to the essay before a final copy is delivered to the library for binding. Drafts are essential before the final version, so revisions of each segment of the essay will be required (introduction, chapters, conclusion).

TIMELINE

First Semester

Early in the semester

- Have the project topic chosen
- Begin collecting sources and reading

By mid-semester

- Hand in an annotated bibliography with at least ten sources

By the end of semester

- Finish reading
- Write and hand in an annotated bibliography (contd.) of at least 20 sources with a detailed outline of the project with thesis statement

Second Semester

- Week 1: Begin writing
- Week 3: Hand in introduction of essay
- Week 6: Hand in 1st half of essay
- Week 9: Hand in 2nd half of essay
- Week 12: Complete revision
- Week 14: Oral presentation of Senior Project

This Guideline was approved on Tuesday, October 19, 2010.