

## SENIOR WORK REQUIREMENT AT LANG COLLEGE SPECIFIC GUIDELINES FOR STUDENTS IN CULTURE AND MEDIA

As of Spring 2006, Senior Seminar LCST 4900 is offered every semester and students may complete the Senior Seminar in either the fall or spring of the year in which they plan to graduate. The Senior Seminar is a class, and all assignments must be completed by the end of the semester. Students who do not or cannot do an independently advised project will opt for the Senior Seminar to complete their Lang graduation and concentration requirements. All majors must register either for Senior Seminar or for an Independent Senior Work that takes the form of either a written essay or an audio, film, video, or web-based project accompanied by a short paper.

### Selecting a senior work advisor

**Please Note:** Faculty Advisors for the independent senior work **MUST** be selected from the full-time faculty of the Culture and Media department. **(see the attached list of advisors on the last page, you must pick an advisor from this list)**

Students must pick an advisor from the list on the last page of this document. Students **CANNOT select an advisor that is not on this list unless they speak to the concentration Chair Ken Wark first. The chair will only grant an exception in the rarest of cases. Failure to follow these rules will result in a rejection of your senior work proposal and will delay your graduation by one semester.**

Students who want to make a film or video as part of their senior work **MUST** have had **TWO** practice-based courses in that area.

Procedures for independent senior projects from the proposal stage on are described below.

Choose One Option:

**A: Independent Written Essay**

**B: Independent Media Project (with written component)**

**C. Collaborative Media Project (must show necessity of doing a group project)**

### Writing the Proposal:

Consideration of the independent senior work should start in the second semester of your junior year.

Step 1: Pick a topic you wish to work on (ideally, an extension of a topic you already have some familiarity with) and find an advisor among the full-time faculty in the major who is willing to work with you.

Step 2: Start working on your proposal in the summer. Proposals should be 6-8 pages long (double-spaced) and contain the following:

- a. Working title of proposed research paper/creative project.
- b. Name of advisor.
- c. 2-page description of the key idea being explored.
- d. 2-page description of the methods of investigation to be employed.
- e. 1 page on the relevance of the project to the field of Media and Cultural Studies or one of its sub-fields.
- f. 1 page on work already accomplished, such as initial research completed.
- g. 1 page of Bibliography or relevant sources to be consulted.
- h. 1 page on likely results or conclusions that are desired from this work.

Proposals need to be worked on in consultation with your advisor, and then submitted to the chair of the department or designee by the official date of October 31 for Spring projects and March 9 for Fall projects. In other words, your proposal is due the semester BEFORE you do your senior work. Please submit 2 copies of your proposal to Leah Weich by the due date.

**Proposal for Collaborative Media Project:**

In rare instances, a maximum of three students will be allowed to work on a collaborative senior project such as a film or video (length no more than 30 minutes), a museum installation, or multimedia project. (Written theses will be single-authored only.) The group will follow the following steps:

Step 1: As above

Step 2: The group will work closely with an advisor to submit a 12-15 page proposal in which the overall project will be described. Moreover, each member will individually describe the particular role/function s/he will assume in the project, the research s/he will conduct and the technical expertise s/he will bring to the project.

Ideally, work on the proposal should start in the summer for the Oct 31 deadline and in the winter recess for the March 9 deadline.

Completed proposals should contain:

- a. Working title of proposed research paper/creative project.
- b. Name of advisor.
- c. 4-page description of the overall idea/genre being explored and why.
- d. 4-page description of the techniques to be employed by each member (written collectively or individually).
- e. 2 pages on the work's likely contribution to the genre being explored.
- f. 2 pages on work already accomplished, such as initial research completed.
- g. 2 pages of Bibliography of relevant sources or archives.

Approval for proposals will be communicated to students by November 15 in the Fall and April 1 in the Spring. Students must then work closely with their advisors to develop and write or produce their projects.

**C: Senior Seminar**

The senior seminar is offered in the Fall 2008 and Spring 2009 semesters. Students can take it to fulfill the requirements of a Senior Experience at Lang. This is the equivalent of a 4000-level class in which students research and write a 30-page paper in a supportive setting which encourages discussion and sharing of ideas.

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**Overall Criteria: Written Projects**

Relevance to the field: Culture and Media focuses on the specific role played by media in the shaping of culture (the meanings, values and practices that inform individual and social life). Your project should be able to highlight some aspect of this interplay, either through a medium-specific or a practice-specific analysis, but ideally combining the two. Courses taken in the concentration can provide a guide to relevant topics and approaches.

Contribution to the field: The purpose of having a concentration in a particular area is for one to be able to participate in the broader debates of that field. Your work should reflect an engagement with a key issue, debate or concept that is central to your concentration. You should demonstrate

both a knowledge of, and an original take on, the issue or concept you have chosen to explore. Alternatively, an original concept or idea can be related to previous relevant debates.

Approaches to the field: Culture and Media is an interdisciplinary major that combines methods and approaches from various disciplines. The first thing to remember here is that your work should reflect a rigorous use of primary and secondary sources relevant to your topic. Primary sources are oral histories, autobiographies, texts and films from the period being investigated and any other relevant information. Secondary sources are reflections, commentaries and evaluations of primary material. Some methods appropriate to work in Culture and Media are: ethnography (participant observation and interviews are the primary methods here); historical analysis (marxist, feminist, poststructuralist, postcolonial); representational/textual analysis (thematic or ideological/semiotic); content analysis (usually to generate quantitative data or work with data generated by others); political economy (appropriate for topics in globalization, media or any other cultural institution and how it functions).

\*Please note that the above are usually used in some combination.

\*\*It is important to remember that we do not privilege methods for their own sake, but rather for the close fit they have with the overall purpose of the proposed investigation. Think carefully about what it is that you are trying to prove or demonstrate and which combination of approaches best helps you to achieve your goals.

### **Production Projects**

If your Senior Work takes the form of a project such as a film or video, audio, installation or website, you are still required to have a written component of 4000 words in addition to all the elements (such as a script, research notes and sources, photographs, etc.) that accompany the project. The written essay provides a rationale for why you have undertaken this work, the theme or underlying idea, relevance and knowledge of the chosen genre, what is new about the project and what contribution it makes to Culture and Media.

Three types of Production Theses that can help students relate their projects to Culture and Media in their written component:

1. A documentary/education oriented production that is similar to a written thesis. Production is used as a tool to convey CS/M Methods as shown for the written senior thesis: ethnography, historical analysis, representational/textual analysis, content analysis.
2. Experimental/Narrative, where the production itself is a cultural artifact with specific cultural codes that need to be identified in the written component of thesis.
3. A mixture of genres that needs to be explained in the written component using both or either of the above.

A completed written thesis should be approximately 15,000 words (50 pages) in length. A completed paper that accompanies a media project should be 5,000 words (15 pages) in length.

List of Senior Work Advisors and their areas of Expertise

Television, Fan Cultures, Global Media, Popular Music .....Martin Roberts  
**(Martin Roberts is not on campus in Fall 2008 and Spring 2009 on sabbatical)**

Games, New Media Aesthetics, Cultural Theory .....Ken Wark  
American history and visual culture, film, audio.....Chris Johnson  
Media and gender, Print journalism, Ethnography .....Tuija Parikka  
European and American cinemas, histories of media as Technologies.....Deborah  
Levitt  
New Media, Popular culture, Contemporary media and Cultural theory.....Dominic  
Pettman **(Not on campus on Fall 2008 Spring 2009 on sabattical)**

Transnational cinema, Media and Identity, Immigration and Multiculturalism.....Sumita  
Chakravarty

## Guidelines for Senior Work Advisors

### AN OVERVIEW

Students complete a senior work project over two semesters. In the first semester, students write a proposal for approval by the concentration; and in the second semester, the approved project described in the proposal is actually completed. Projects should exhibit a culmination of a student's skills and experiences acquired through studying in a particular concentration. Although the purpose is to help students understand the nature of academic work in their respective fields, each project should be framed such that it could be reasonably completed in one semester. If you review the attached guidelines, you will have more detailed information about the expectations for students.

### ROLE OF THE SENIOR WORK ADVISOR

#### Senior Work Proposals

It is important that advisors comply with all deadlines regarding drafts and final submission of the proposal. Students requesting you as their SW advisor should contact you by the *third week* of the semester with some concept formulated for a project. If you are agreeable to advising the project, you should encourage the student to immediately begin writing a first draft of the proposal. The draft should be completed by the *fourth or fifth week* in the semester (and a revised draft by the *seventh week*). After you have approved the proposal, please refer it to Leah Weich, Associate Director of Advising, for distribution to the appropriate Concentration Chairperson. **The deadline for the proposal to be submitted to Leah Weich is October 31 in Fall 2008 and March 9 for Spring 2009.** The chairperson will inform the student about any required revisions, and provide confirmation of final approval; the chair must also approve the assigned advisor.

Once you have signed off on a proposal, you are committing to assist the student with revisions of the proposal (based on suggestions and feedback from the chairperson), as well as working with the student through the following semester until completion of the project. **Note: Final approval for advisor assignments is determined by the chairperson; even after signing the proposal, the advisor must be confirmed by the concentration chair.**

#### **Approval Criteria for Proposals**

As an advisor, you should endorse the proposal if and only if it satisfies the following criteria:

1. Proposals should be in the format stipulated in the "Senior Work Proposal Guidelines," and include all the components required by those guidelines. In addition, the proposal should be well-written be free of spelling and grammatical errors.
2. The proposal should exhibit an appropriate level of scholarship; it should display the format and tone acceptable to professionals in the specific academic field or specialization.
3. The proposal should be well-reasoned and thoughtful, and ideas expressed should follow from one another in a logical manner. The motivation and methodology for the project should be described with as much detail as possible

4. Proposed projects must be reasonably accomplished in one semester. One of your prime responsibilities as the potential project advisor is to help students contain their ambitions and focus on a project of appropriate size.

### **Senior Work Projects**

During the second semester, you are committed to meet with each senior worker **at least** 5 times during the term. In this phase of the senior work project, you are responsible for the following:

- Advising students on appropriate and effective ways to implement ideas delineated in the proposal (for example, practical advice about data collection and analysis, suggestions about translating concepts into creative expression, etc)
- Helping students to designate interim goals and preliminary deadlines to ensure completion of the senior work project on time
- Reinforcing the importance of following professional guidelines for manuscript preparation, and recommending corrections wherever deviations from these guidelines might occur
- Reviewing project drafts for overall quality and soundness, and submitting final grades to Leah Weich, Associate Director of Advising, by the stipulated deadline

*Fall Semester Deadline:*                   **December 9th**

*Spring Semester Deadline:*           **May 4th**

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## Senior Capstone Declaration Form

Complete this form and return to Leah Weich Friday, September 19th.

Student Name \_\_\_\_\_

Student ID # N \_\_\_\_\_

Declared Major/Program \_\_\_\_\_

Please indicate which senior experience option you have decided to complete (*Review guidelines for your specific major/program to confirm the available options*)

\_\_\_\_ Independent Senior Work Project (please describe the project on page 2)

\_\_\_\_ Collaborative Senior Work project (*please indicate names of partners*)

Partner 1: \_\_\_\_\_

Partner 2: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_ Senior Seminar

Please indicate the semester you expect to register for the seminar:

Fall 2008

Spring 2009

If you are registered in a senior seminar to fulfill your capstone requirement in Fall 2008, please indicate the course name/number below:

\_\_\_\_\_

Student Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Description of Senior Work Project:

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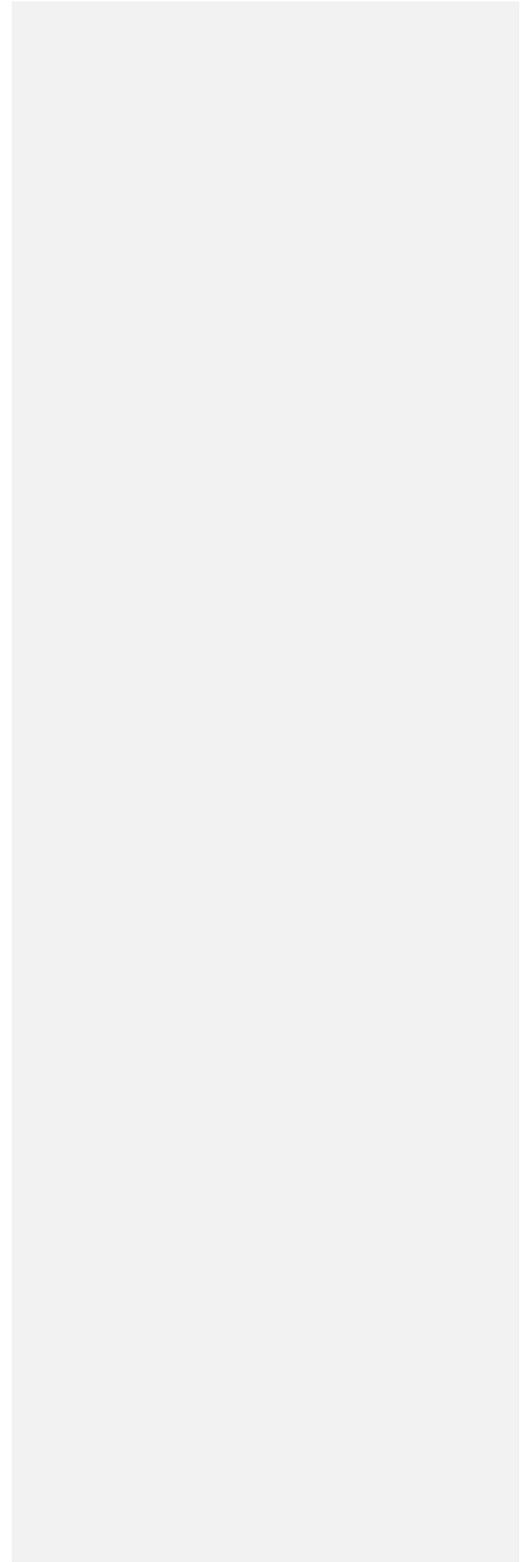
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**SENIOR WORK ADVISOR FORM**  
**Fall 2008**

**To be completed by the students undertaking individual or collaborative senior work projects**

STUDENT'S LAST NAME: \_\_\_\_\_ FIRST NAME: \_\_\_\_\_ STUDENT I.D. #: \_\_\_\_\_  
STUDENT'S LAST NAME: \_\_\_\_\_ FIRST NAME: \_\_\_\_\_ STUDENT I.D. #: \_\_\_\_\_  
STUDENT'S LAST NAME: \_\_\_\_\_ FIRST NAME: \_\_\_\_\_ STUDENT I.D. #: \_\_\_\_\_

TITLE/SUBJECT OF PROJECT:  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**To be completed by the Senior Work advisor:**

SENIOR WORK ADVISOR'S NAME:

NEW SCHOOL UNIVERSITY AFFILIATION?       YES; DIVISION:       NO

FULL-TIME NEW SCHOOL FACULTY MEMBER? \*       YES       NO

\*If you are NOT a New School Faculty member, has your advisee contacted the Associate Dean for approval?)

PHONE: (one of these telephone numbers should be a number where a message can be left) Work:

\_\_\_\_\_ Home: \_\_\_\_\_

E-MAIL: ADDRESS:

**Please read and check statement below then sign it:**

\_\_\_\_\_ I have read and discussed the Senior Work Proposal with the above named student, and *approve it to be forwarded to the Concentration Chair or designee for final approval.* If revisions are deemed necessary I agree to further develop the proposal with the student.

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_