

Wittenberg Senior English Capstone Handbook

Spring Semester Senior Year:

ENGL 404 (Thesis / 4 Credits) OR 499 (Honors Thesis / 4 Credits)

&

ENGL 405 (Senior Exercises / 1 Credit)

Handbook created Spring 2024

Table of Contents

<i>Academic Catalog Course Descriptions.....</i>	<i>2</i>
<i>English Learning Outcomes</i>	<i>3</i>
<i>English Alumni Reflections on Capstone Experience & Advice for Future Seniors</i>	<i>3</i>
<i>The Senior English Capstone Overview: ENGL 405 and ENGL 404 or 499.....</i>	<i>6</i>
<i>English Senior Exercises (ENGL 405)</i>	<i>6</i>
<i>Course outcomes for English Senior Exercises</i>	<i>6</i>
<i>The 405 E-Portfolio Checklist.....</i>	<i>6</i>
<i>The Senior Symposium</i>	<i>10</i>
<i>English Senior Thesis (ENGL 404 or 499).....</i>	<i>11</i>
<i>Timeline and Process for Senior English Majors Enrolling in English 404 / 405</i>	<i>12</i>
<i>April—Junior year</i>	<i>12</i>
<i>September—Senior year</i>	<i>12</i>
<i>October—Senior year</i>	<i>12</i>
<i>December—Senior year</i>	<i>13</i>
<i>January—Senior year</i>	<i>13</i>
<i>April—Senior year.....</i>	<i>13</i>
<i>The Senior English Thesis (ENGL 404): Proposal Submission Form.....</i>	<i>15</i>
<i>The Senior English Thesis (ENGL 404): Annotated Bibliography</i>	<i>17</i>
<i>Senior Spring Semester Schedule (Combined 404 & 405).....</i>	<i>20</i>

404 Sections & Steps:..... 22

Academic Catalog Course Descriptions

ENGL 404. Directed Senior Thesis Workshop. 4 credits. (LO1) This capstone course requires students to undertake a major research project (20-25 pages) based upon knowledge gained in a previously completed 300-level literature course. Prerequisites: ENGL 270, ENGL 280, ENGL 290, at least 8 credits of 300-level literature seminars, and English major. Every year.

ENGL 499. English Major with Honors A student who has completed six English courses (including ENGL 270, ENGL 280, ENGL 290, and at least one literature seminar) and who maintains a GPA of at least 3.50 may submit an honors thesis proposal to the department for approval; if the project is approved, the student may enroll in ENGL 499 senior year and complete supervised individual research. The completed thesis must meet departmental standards for honors. Work may be distributed over two semesters.

ENGL 405. Senior Exercises. 1 credit. A suite of interconnected activities demonstrating understanding of and reflection on the learning goals of the English major. Includes oral presentation at the Senior Symposium and the preparation of an e-portfolio that includes a resume, reflective letter, and examples of student writing. Prerequisites: ENGL 270, ENGL 280, ENGL 290, at least 8 credits of 300-level literature seminars, and English major.

English Learning Outcomes

The English Department has designed a sequence of courses as requirements for majors that should allow them to:

- Write and speak effectively in a variety of forms and for diverse audiences and purposes
- Apply skills of close reading and analysis to a variety of texts and, in the process, articulate some of the complex ways meaning is made
- Describe and demonstrate a variety of interpretive strategies through which readers may approach a text, and, in so doing, become aware of their own interpretive strategies
- Trace genealogies within and between literary periods across a range of Anglophone traditions
- Demonstrate how literary texts both shape and are shaped by their historical and cultural contexts
- Conduct independent literary research, using appropriate resources and technologies
- Describe how their own work demonstrates each of the skills listed above

English Alumni Reflections on Capstone Experience & Advice for Future Seniors

"This is my second attempt at completing the thesis – yep, I failed it the first time...but I wouldn't go back and change a thing about my process. Something I wish I would've known when starting my thesis was to JUST. GO. FOR. IT. Instead of being debilitatingly anxious about a large project, I recommend diving into the deep end. Find the book(s) you love and want to dissect for your thesis and read/skim **all** of the literature and scholarship you can about it. Sometimes, reading those research articles helps narrow down your own guiding question.

From the first attempt at completing this course, I completely changed my topic to one that I truly loved, that I was passionate about, and that I knew could exceed the 20-25 page limit. Even at a 35-page final draft, I could still talk about this book for

hours on end on the page – I believe that is the key to being successful in this course – talk about a book and topic you LOVE, and fuels your soul.

Three things to note:

- 1.) This thesis is a longer, sustained version of a seminar paper. Your 300-level classes have prepared you for this longer piece of writing, so it's always good to go back and remind yourself of the fundamentals of those final seminar papers.
- 2.) Yes, you can complete a thesis over a recent publication (if it's been referenced in your English courses). My novel of study had exactly ONE (1) scholarly article, and I filled in the blanks with supplemental research, context, and close reading. If you choose to do a recent publication, just know that you're *beginning* that trend of research and scholarship for that novel. This does not necessarily mean more work, but deeper critical thinking of your topic.
- 3.) No, you cannot complete your thesis in a 2-week time period. Trust me, I've tried – and failed. If you want to end your journey at Wittenberg on a high note with a substantive and integral piece of work, follow the Handbook like a new religion, and ask questions early and often. Your thesis advisor is there to be supportive and help you in ANY way they can -- use it to your advantage! You've trained for this thesis for three years, you've got this!"—Miya Miller, Class of 2024

"The thing I learned/my advice would be that slow consistent work is still work and will get the project done. Don't panic—having something that isn't perfect is better than having nothing."—Kaleigh Dulin, Class of 2024

"This experience of writing my thesis has taught me how to actually break up large pieces of work into smaller more manageable pieces. For the most part in the past, I had a very all or nothing approach to my writing process. I either had to write the whole thing and every thought I've ever had in one sitting or none of it would get written. I would definitely encourage future seniors to create a set time that is your designated writing time each week. You can of course write outside of that time but try to stick with writing at that same time each week. I would also encourage them to establish a relationship with someone in the Writing Center. I had a few advisors that I would bring drafts to or organize ideas with throughout the semester and I found that incredibly helpful. I would recommend choosing an advisor who is not an English major. That way you can organize and figure out what YOUR ideas are without bias from another English student who may be familiar with the piece you're writing one. I think the skills I've gained and refined through this process will be helpful when I'm in grad school! The skills also will translate my career, especially the skill of being more assertive in my writing. Overall, even though it was a stressful and sometimes scary

task, it was well worth it, and I have definitely grown through this process! 10/10 would recommend!!!”—Hope Messer, Class of 2024

The Senior English Capstone Overview: ENGL 405 and ENGL 404 or 499

English Senior Exercises (ENGL 405)

Senior Exercises (ENGL 405) is a one-credit capstone course English majors take the spring semester of their senior year.

Designed to allow graduating seniors to demonstrate their mastery of foundational concepts and skills in the major, English 405 includes the following "exercises":

- Preparation of the Senior E-Portfolio
- A 20-minute oral presentation at the Senior Symposium
- The Senior Assessment Survey (to be completed in the final two weeks of the course—ungraded)
- Colloquia Requirement: Attendance at six colloquia is required by the end of the Spring semester senior year. Students who fail to attend six colloquia will have their ENGL 405 grade dropped a third of a letter grade for each colloquium short of the requirement. Students may check in with Christina Reynolds, the English Department's administrative assistant, at any time about their current number of credits or if they have any concerns about meeting this requirement.

Course outcomes for English Senior Exercises

Students completing ENGL 405 will:

- Reflect on their experience in the major and articulate how they can most usefully frame this experience for their future endeavors (Portfolio)
- Explain how they achieved departmental learning outcomes (Portfolio)
- Assess their own learning achievements and outcomes (Portfolio/Senior Survey)
- Present their senior tutorial or honors thesis research and be able to answer questions about this directed research from faculty and student attendees (Senior Symposium Presentation)
- Offer advice to the department on the major as a whole—what's working, what changes might help students better achieve our goals (Senior Survey)

The 405 E-Portfolio Checklist

The Senior E-Portfolio will include the following:

- **A brief (2-3 pages) description of the portfolio**, including a list of the English courses you have taken (number, title, semester, professor) and an explanation of why you chose each of the pieces you have included.
- **Vita or resume** (one class session will be dedicated to workshopping resumes)
- **Three written papers from English classes that showcase precise, vigorous writing and demonstrate a sense of voice, style, and format appropriate to the paper's purpose.**
 1. **A paper from an English class that best demonstrates your close reading skills.** The paper should offer a clear, intriguing thesis supported by textual evidence and may also include engagement with secondary sources and close readings by other critics. **Highlight passages (two select paragraphs up to two pages total in length) that best illustrate your close reading skills in yellow.** Your highlighted passages should offer interpretive insights gained through sustained analysis of textual detail such as diction, form, figurative language, and imagery.
 2. **A paper from an English class that best demonstrates your literary research and analytical skills.** The paper should offer a clear and insightful thesis, which situates the primary source in significant historical, social/cultural, or critical contexts and engages with secondary scholarship. The thesis should be supported by relevant and inventive passages—aptly selected and highlighted. **You should highlight passages (two select paragraphs up to two pages total in length) illustrating your literary research and analytical skills in blue.**
 3. **A paper, preferably from an English class, that best showcases your ability to write in varied forms and for varied audiences.** You might choose a writing sample in a creative genre (such as fiction, poetry, or creative non-fiction), a journalistic report, an essay on pedagogy, or another piece of writing that shows your range. This piece should demonstrate a clear sense of purpose and audience awareness.
- **Letter (2-3 pages) describing the value of the major.** This letter can take a variety of forms and can be addressed to a variety of audiences. The following are some examples of the direction you can take in this letter, by addressing it to:
 - a future employer—identify skills and aptitudes acquired in the major
 - a graduate school—identify courses that have prepared you for further study
 - your parents— identify why the English major was the right major for you
 - a prospective English major—identify what they will learn in the major and its value

The portfolio will be submitted and stored electronically for purposes of departmental assessment and for future reference as needed (future letters of recommendation, for instance).

Senior Portfolio Rubric

	Unsuccessful = 1	Less Successful = 2	Good = 3	Most Successful = 4	Raw Score (enter number for each line)	Multiplier	Final Score
Introduction	Claims are general and show little to no sign of reflection or relevant examples. Reverts to cliché or platitude.	Understanding of how the selections demonstrate learning goals are uneven or underdeveloped. Lacks examples.	Understanding of how the selections demonstrate learning goals is solid but general. Does not always draw attention to specifics.	Understanding of how the selections demonstrate learning goals is sharp, accurate. Consistently offers apt examples.		x3	0 /24
	Writing is marred by confused syntax or a pattern of errors or stylistic choices which impede reader comprehension.	Writing is passable but shows consistent evidence of a lack of good-faith proofreading and revision.	Writing is largely correct but general or wordy; there may be a few small errors or problematic style/formatting choices.	Writing is precise, vigorous and has a sense of voice, style, and format appropriate to the purpose.			
Historical and Social Context	Lack of thesis and/or no viable inclusion of historical and social contexts which might apply to the texts under review.	Thesis general or vague and highlighted historical and cultural examples of questionable relevance to the subject of the essay or the claims about it.	Offers a solid thesis and highlights multiple viable examples which situate the analysis in a place and time which shows relevance to the project.	Offers a clear and insightful thesis reflective of significant historical or cultural positions, supported by relevant and inventive passages—aptly selected and highlighted.		x1.5	0 /12
	Writing is marred by confused syntax or a pattern of errors or stylistic choices which impede reader comprehension.	Writing is passable but shows consistent evidence of a lack of good-faith proofreading and revision.	Writing is largely correct but general or wordy; there may be a few small errors or problematic style/formatting choices.	Writing is precise, vigorous and has a sense of voice, style, and format appropriate to the purpose.			
Critical Thinking and Research Sample	No evidence of a thesis or thesis is vague to the point of cliché. Absence of clear argument. Research limited and/or fails to apply to the focus of the essay.	Offers a thesis that is unclear or over-general; research may seem detached from the argument or simply pro forma. Argument may seem to lack context.	Offers a solid thesis supported largely by textual evidence; highlighted sections of research may be less well-integrated into the argument.	Offers a clear, intriguing thesis supported by textual evidence as well as by highlighted sections of research that offer theoretical, critical, or other key contexts.		x1.5	0 /12
	Writing is marred by confused syntax or a pattern of errors or stylistic choices which impede reader comprehension.	Writing is passable but shows consistent evidence of a lack of good-faith proofreading and revision.	Writing is largely correct but general or wordy; there may be a few small errors or problematic style/formatting choices.	Writing is precise, vigorous and has a sense of voice, style, and format appropriate to the purpose.			
Close Reading Passage(s)	Highlighted passage offers more of a description, summary, or paraphrase than an analysis.	Highlighted passage isolates textual material but interpretations are forced and do not consistently support the stated aims of the argument.	Highlighted passage offers analysis of some elements of the piece or passage, but connection to interpretation is underdeveloped.	Highlighted passage offers interpretive insights gained through sustained analysis of textual detail such as diction, form, figurative language, and imagery.		x1	0 /4
Writing in a Different Form for a Different Audience	Purpose and form are unclear; sense of audience is absent and relevance to the required learning goal unspecified.	Purpose or form is vague; sense of audience unclear or inappropriate to form.	Purpose and form are clearly understood; sense of audience is appropriate to form.	Purpose and form are clearly understood; an appropriate sense of voice appeals to intended, well-defined audience.		x2	0 /16
	Writing is marred by confused syntax or a pattern of errors or stylistic choices which impede reader comprehension.	Writing is passable but shows consistent evidence of a lack of good-faith proofreading and revision.	Writing is largely correct but general or wordy; there may be a few small errors or problematic style/formatting choices.	Writing is precise, vigorous and has a sense of voice, style, format appropriate to the purpose.			
Resume	Visual design seems random; organization is muddled and overall format shows signs of haste or underdevelopment.	Visual design is cluttered and confusing; shows inconsistencies in alignments or categories.	Visual design is simple but functional; categories and alignments are consistent.	Visual design is appealing and memorable but simple; makes excellent use of space and conveys emphasis visually.		x2	0 /24
	Little to no sense of audience and haphazard inclusion of experiences irrespective of their reflection on relevant skill sets.	Experiences may be simply listed with little eye to reflecting on skills and traits; audience or goal may be unclear.	Most experiences linked with skills and traits, but some do not demonstrate reflection on skills; may assume too much knowledge on the part of audience.	Experiences are clearly linked with desirable skills and traits; pitched to a clearly-understood, appropriate audience.			
	Writing shows a sustained pattern of careless usage and grammatical error. Lists show multiple parallelism problems and narrate experience in awkward ways.	Writing contains several errors, lacks parallelism, follows an inappropriate order or narrates experience wordily.	Writing may be wordy; lists occasionally not parallel; a stray error may mar the surface.	Writing, spelling, and parallel structure are efficient, perfect.			
Reflection on the Value of the Major	Claims are general and show little to no sign of reflection or relevant examples. Reverts to cliché or platitude.	Claims are general and not tied to specific examples; little reflection is evident but some still available.	Uses some examples to support claims; shows evidence of some reflection on key experiences of the major.	Uses specific examples to support claim; shows evidence of reflection on a range of relevant experiences.		x1	0 /8
	Writing is marred by confused syntax or a pattern of errors or stylistic choices which impede reader comprehension.	Writing is passable but shows consistent evidence of a lack of good-faith proofreading and revision.	Writing is largely correct but general or wordy; there may be a few small errors or problematic style/formatting choices.	Writing is precise, vigorous and has a sense of voice, style, and format appropriate to the purpose.			

The Senior Symposium

At the Senior Symposium (scheduled in late April), senior English majors will each give a 20-minute oral presentation based on either their thesis in progress in ENGL 404 or their honors thesis. The audience for each presentation will be a panel of three Wittenberg English professors, at least two other seniors who are also presenting during their session, and any other Wittenberg students who would like to attend. We assume that all senior English majors will attend panels other than their own. Majors can earn up to two colloquium credits for attending full sessions, one for each session of three presentations attended.

The faculty panel will have a chance to ask questions after the presentation and discuss ideas and reactions with the student presenter before assigning a grade.

English Senior Thesis (ENGL 404 or 499)

Pre-requisites for enrolling in ENGL 404: ENGL 270, ENGL 280, ENGL 290, 8 credits of 300-level literature seminars, and declared English major.

- **All senior English majors** will complete a senior thesis, a scholarly research project on a work or works of literature that merit extended study/preparation. The traditional senior thesis, for most majors, will be 20-25 pages (or 6000 words) in length and explore literature or topics that grow out of a 300-level literature seminar.
 - Note: Students interested in pursuing a non-traditional thesis research project should consult with the faculty facilitating ENGL 404 Thesis Workshop prior to submitting their proposal.

Course registration pathway for all majors *not* doing honors thesis: Enroll in ENGL 404 (4 credits) and ENGL 405 (1 credit) in the Spring term of your senior year.

Option: English majors seeking education licensure *may* opt to complete a slightly shorter senior thesis, similar otherwise to the traditional version described above, but supplemented by a packet of original teaching artifacts and instruction materials that complement the scholarly research project. Requirements:

- A 15-page (4,500 words) thesis-driven scholarly research paper
 - Topics for this senior thesis option will also grow out of coursework in a 300-level literature seminar.
 - The text(s) studied in these projects might or might not be linked to a text(s) the student will be teaching during his or her spring semester senior year.
- 5 artifacts of teaching, which may include lesson plans, video clips, learning outcomes/objectives, assessments, in-class assignments, and teaching philosophy or reflections. Licensure students are encouraged to submit documents prepared for their edTPA portfolio for this portion of their English Senior Capstone.

Course registration pathway: Same as above: Enroll in ENGL 404 (for 4 credits) and ENGL 405 (1 credit) in the Spring term of your senior year, while student teaching.

Students with a GPA of 3.5 or above may opt to complete a Senior Honors Thesis. See description of the Senior Honors Thesis for further details.

Course Registration Pathway. Enroll in ENGL-499 in the fall and/or spring of your senior year (for up to 8 credits), and ENGL-405 (1 credit) in the Spring term.

In exceptional cases, the department will consider variations on the above options, but such decisions will be made on a case-by-case basis and will require a formal petition.

Timeline and Process for Senior English Majors Enrolling in English 404 / 405

April—Junior year

In April of the junior year, English majors will meet with the chair of the English Department to review requirements for the Senior Thesis and Senior Exercises.

September—Senior year

In September of the senior year, English majors will:

- Attend a group meeting with department chair to review requirements of the Senior Thesis.
- Consult with former and/or current professors about area of interest to develop for the thesis.

October—Senior year

In early October of the senior year, English majors will:

- Submit to the English department chair a completed senior thesis form and a two-page thesis proposal that includes a preliminary bibliography (minimum of five sources) via email attachment as a Word document or .pdf.

By late October of senior year, all senior English majors will be notified as to whether the submitted proposal is approved, approved with revisions, or not approved. If the proposal is approved with revisions or not approved, the English major must submit a

new or revised proposal within two weeks. (This process continues until the proposal is approved).

During **fall registration**, senior English majors not completing an honors thesis will enroll in ENGL 404 and ENGL 405. English majors completing an honors thesis will enroll in ENGL 405.

December—Senior year

During the final week of the term, all seniors will meet with the ENGL 404/405 instructor(s), to review requirements for the Senior English portfolio and prepare students for the spring term. During winter break of their senior year, senior English majors will begin work on their senior portfolios—selecting appropriate papers demonstrating skills learned, etc. Over the holidays, it's a great idea to re-read your primary text and, if time allows, a good biography of the author.

January—Senior year

In January of the senior year, senior English majors begin work on their theses. ENGL 404 will have a once-a-week evening meeting time, with several sessions devoted to workshops for the ENGL-405 portfolio and the symposium presentation.

April—Senior year

In April, senior English majors present a 20-minute paper (approx. 10 double-spaced pages) based on their longer senior thesis in a senior symposium. (Reminder: the grade on that presentation and on the senior portfolio will constitute the grade in the 405 capstone course.). Final senior research papers are due at the time specified in the ENGL-404 syllabus; final papers are graded by the instructor of that course.

Proposed timeline change: Move up timeline and ask students to submit their thesis proposal by April of their junior year (instead of Oct. of senior year)

- Pilot change with rising senior licensure students in April 2025: Students will submit thesis proposals at end of junior year and then complete an Annotated bibliography or Literature Review

over the summer. The idea is to begin the Spring semester of their senior year with the bulk of their research completed. After assessing results with the pilot group, the department will make a decision about whether to make the change for all English majors going forward.

The Senior English Thesis (ENGL 404): Proposal Submission Form

DEADLINE: Submit via email to faculty facilitating ENGL 404 Thesis Workshop.

TURN IN (as Word .doc or .pdf) **VIA EMAIL:** the following:

1. This completed submission form, with
2. Your proposal (2 pages) and MLA-style list of 5 relevant sources that are scholarly, rigorous, and up-to-date, and
3. Electronic copies of your final papers in all completed 300-level English literature seminar courses, and proposed final paper topics for any 300-level seminar courses in which you are currently enrolled.
 - Reminder: Your proposed project for this 4-credit, senior-level course must be new and original. It should grow out of an advanced course (or two), but must not duplicate the work you completed in those courses.

Name:

Intended Graduation Date:

Licensure Candidate? Y / N (circle one)

If you answered Y, are you choosing the licensure thesis option? Y / N

List of ALL English courses taken (including those you are enrolled in now), with course numbers, dates, and instructors:

Of the courses listed above, from which ADVANCED (300-level) course does your proposed project most derive? (If it grows from more than one, be sure to list both and explain how, here):

Who was the professor in that course (or courses)?:

NOTE: Make sure you have consulted with the relevant professor(s) prior to writing your proposal and submitting your five sources.

Your 2-page research proposal with at least five relevant sources listed, in MLA style:

The Senior English Thesis (ENGL 404): Annotated Bibliography

Note: Please consult with your 404 course instructor. During the research process, students may opt to complete an Annotated Bibliography before composing the Literature Review (please see p. 17 of the Senior Capstone Handbook for a description of the Literature Review).

A **bibliography** is a list of sources (books, journals, websites, periodicals, etc.) one has used for researching a topic. An **annotation** is a summary and/or evaluation. Therefore, an annotated bibliography includes a summary and/or evaluation of each of the sources. (from The Purdue OWL:

https://owl.purdue.edu/owl/general_writing/common_writing_assignments/annotated_bibliographies/index.html)

Your Senior English Thesis Annotated Bibliography should include 10 to 20 scholarly sources.

Your **annotation paragraph** should include both your summary & evaluation of the source (5-7 sentences total):

Summary: Begin your paragraph with summary (approximately 2-4 sentences): This section typically includes the source's main points, intended audience, and purpose.

Evaluation: Conclude the paragraph with your evaluation (approximately 2-4 sentences): This section includes your assessments of the source and what it has to offer to your thesis project. Consider: potential limitations or biases; relevance to your research questions; and whether you might draw background information, examples, arguments, or approaches from the source.

Optional Template/Annotation Structure:

Summary: _____ [title of the work] by _____ [author(s) names] focuses on _____ [general summary of what the work is about]. The

author(s) intend to _____ [inform, persuade, express, etc.] _____ [intended audience]. The author(s) write, " _____," [give key quote] which shows that _____ [explain what quote means to you]. **Assessment:** While the source is limited in terms of _____, I find _____ useful for my project. For my purposes, I intend to use this source to _____.

Example: MLA bibliographic citation followed by annotation paragraph (which includes summary & evaluation of source):

Cunningham, Scarlett. "The Limits of Celebration in Lucille Clifton's Poetry: Writing the Aging Woman's Body." *Frontiers: A Journal of Women Studies*, vol. 35, no. 2, 2014, pp. 30–58. 2014, pp. 252–68.

In this article, Cunningham focuses on the trope of the aging body across Clifton's poetry. Cunningham works to temper critics' conclusions about the celebratory nature of Clifton's work by emphasizing the poet's recurring references to aging and the ailing body. She explores intersections between age, race, and gender and the forms of oppression placed on the Black and aging female body. Cunningham offers a unique angle on Clifton by tracing one trope across her career; however, this reading tends to overemphasize socially constructed bodily images and self-consciousness around the body, which potentially overlooks bodily relationships with spirituality in Clifton's oeuvre.

Senior Spring Semester Schedule (Combined 404 & 405)

Combined 404 & 405 Timeline (Adapted from Dr. Cynthia Richard's Spring 2024 Syllabus & Course Design)

	405	404
Week 1 / January	Introductions / Discussion of 405 Requirements	Introductions / Discussion of Thesis Projects
Week 2 / January	Resume draft due for peer workshop	
Week 3 / January	e-Portfolio Workshop: 3 papers, description, & rough draft of reflection due. Discuss: How has past work prepared us for the thesis?	
Week 4 / January		In-class writing & review example lit review sections (see OhioLINK's Electronic Theses & Dissertation Center)
Week 5 / February		Thesis Part I: Literature Review Due— Peer Workshop or Instructor Conference
Week 6 / February		In-class writing & review example close reading sections (see OhioLINK's Electronic Theses & Dissertation Center)
Week 7 / February		Thesis Part II: First Close Reading Due— Peer Workshop or Instructor Conference

Week 8 / February/March	FIRE Week / Spring Break	
Week 9 / March		Thesis Part III: Second Close Reading Due—Peer Workshop or Instructor Conference
Week 10 / March		In-class writing & review example introduction & conclusion sections (see OhioLINK's Electronic Theses & Dissertation Center)
Week 11 / March		Thesis Part IV: Introduction & Conclusion Due—Peer Workshop or Instructor Conference
Week 12 / April	Oral presentations draft due (20 mins.)	
Week 13 / April	Dress Rehearsal for Oral Presentations / Senior Symposium	
Week 14 / April	Revise/polish e-Portfolio reflection / Submit completed e-Portfolio	Final review of thesis paper
Week 15 / April		Final thesis due to instructor
Exams Week / May		Electronic copy of thesis filed to English Administrative Assistant

404 Sections & Steps:

One objective of the Senior Capstone is to be able to take a larger project and break it into smaller, manageable pieces. You'll compose each section of your project one piece at a time, and once you have the parts, you'll assemble the whole puzzle before the conclusion of the semester. See below for discrete steps (Adapted from Dr. Cynthia Richard's Spring 2024 Syllabus & Course Design):

- 1) **The Literature Review:** 4- to 5-page double-spaced paper (approx. 1200-1500 words). A literature review provides an overview of your secondary sources or what other scholars and critics have said about your topic/primary source. In this context, "the literature" refers to the research and scholarship previously published on a topic. Using your Annotated Bibliography, provide a comprehensive summary of key debates, themes, and possible gaps that you identify in the existing literature. (Gaps might include overlooked or understudied topics.) The literature review primarily consists of summary and synthesis but should also be framed in a way that shows your own take. Do you agree or disagree with how scholars have addressed the topic? How might your thesis either refute or extend from existing arguments? The purpose of the literature review is to lay out the existing conversation about your primary text. In the next steps, you will show how your thesis is intervening in the conversation. (See the Purdue OWL for more on organizing a literature review: https://owl.purdue.edu/owl/research_and_citation/conducting_research/writing_a_literature_review.html)
- 2) **First Close Reading:** 4- to 5-page double-spaced paper (approx. 1200-1500 words). Choose a key passage/section (or possibly two or more short, related passages) in your primary text to close read. Focus on formal elements, such as the use of language, literary and rhetorical devices, style, syntax, and tone. How does the passage help address your research question? If relevant, cite other critics and then either build from or complicate their interpretations. Keep in mind that though a close reading zeroes in on one part of the text, your reading should still consider the key passage in context with the whole work. Ultimately, this close reading will serve as textual evidence to support your overall claims about your primary source.
 - Licensure students will not submit the First Close Reading paper; instead, these students will submit the other sections (Literature Review; Second Close Reading; Intro & Conclusion) and prepare supporting instructional materials.

- 3) **Second Close Reading:** 4- to 5-page double-spaced paper (approx. 1200-1500 words). Choose an additional key passage/section (or possibly two or more short, related passages) in your primary text to close read. Like your first close read, focus on formal elements, such as the use of language, literary and rhetorical devices, style, syntax, and tone. For this second close read, make sure to incorporate secondary sources, including relevant historical or biographical information. As you cite other critics, make sure that your voice is the dominant one: show how you are responding to other scholars rather than letting them speak for you. Revisit your literature review and consider how you are entering the critical conversation. Ultimately, this close reading will serve as textual evidence to support your overall claims about your primary source.
- 4) **Introduction with Thesis Statement (approx. 3 double-spaced pages or 1000 words) & Conclusion (approx. 2 double-spaced pages or 500 words):** Re-read the three sections you've produced and then compose your introductory section, which will appear first before your literature review section. Your introduction should conclude with a one- to two-sentence thesis statement, which encapsulates your overall argument and provides a roadmap that tells readers what to expect from the rest of your paper. Your introduction should provide a comprehensive overview of your primary text for unfamiliar readers. Also consider how you might begin with a "hook," such as an evocative image from your text or a compelling question, in the opening sentences of your introduction. Your conclusion will tie together the key points of your discussion and may also consider the larger implications of your argument or open possibilities for future research directions.
- 5) **Final 6000-word thesis-driven paper.** In this last step, you'll assemble the sections of your paper into a complete product. Your paper should be organized in the following order: Introduction and Thesis Statement; Literature Review: Two Close Readings; and Conclusion. Add section headings, following MLA formatting, and any needed transitions. On its own page, include an MLA-formatted Works Cited page at the end of your paper.
- 6) **Submit an electronic copy of your final thesis paper to the English Administrative Assistant.**