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## ART 485-01, Senior Thesis, Spring 2003

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## **Senior Thesis, Spring 2003, Thursday 4:15- 5.45**

The senior thesis is a continuation of senior seminar. It provides art majors in the studio and architecture tracks with the opportunity to pursue individually designed creative projects, or research, undertaken with the approval and guidance of the art faculty.

Senior Thesis requirements include: a publication-quality artist statement, a thesis exhibition proposal, a body of work that focuses on depth and commitment to precise conceptual exploration, a multiple designed to function as an invitation to the thesis exhibit, and the active participation in weekly critiques with art faculty and peer group. Twice during the semester the student will present his/her work in a formal critique to all art faculty. Students must spend no less than 10 hours a week for 14 weeks on research and production. Most students spend more than this minimum.

**REQUIREMENTS TO PASS THIS CLASS:** Evaluation through commitment and production

**Commitment:**

Time: Studio art classes at Rhodes require a minimum of 138 work hours for three hours of credit. To achieve this you must average at least 10 hours of work for 14 weeks. This is a self-regulated condition. If you fail to spend the time, you will get an F for the course. Your weekly work schedule will be a part of your project proposal.

Attendance: You are required to attend all the critiques. Please do not schedule any other commitments during this time. You are required to attend art department lectures and openings. Your grade will reflect absenteeism.

Professional and committed participation in critiques: You must be prepared to accept and give constructive criticism during the semester. You must foster an active interest in your colleagues' work. All discussions will be professional in nature.

**Production:**

Project Proposal (including weekly work schedule): Students will write a proposal clearly stating the problems they wish to explore. The proposal is due Jan 18. Art faculty must approve all proposals. Your proposal is your contract. All proposals will be posted and made available to your peers.

A publication-quality artist statement due for senior show deadline.

Consistent and rigorous production:

Every student must bring a new piece or development to every critique, every week.

Completion and development of all work: At the end of the term, you must complete the work you set out to accomplish. The student should grow, change and develop in facility and in intellectual breadth and depth during the process. Indication of progress must include incorporating critique suggestion in revising work.

**Syllabus:**

Jan 16: Assignment

Jan 23: First Critique, Proposal due

Jan 30: Second critique.

Feb 6: Third critique

Feb 13: Fourth critique. Artist Statements are due.

Feb 20: Fifth critique.

Feb 27: mid-semester critique. Artist statement due. Publication quality. All art department invited.

You must leave your work up overnight. You should remove work from crit space by 12:00 noon Feb.28

March 20: Seventh critique

March 27: Eighth critique : Final deadline Artist statement due. Meetings with individual students. Bring three copies of artist statement.

April 3: Ninth critique: Final deadline Artist statement due in electronic form. Publication quality. Deposit it into Hamlett Dobbins folder in the Academic Vol., Faculty Folders

April 10: Tenth critique

April 24: Eleventh critique

May 1: Final critique, work selected for exhibit

Friday. May 2: Work delivered to gallery 9:00 am

Thursday. April 10: Finish Multiple project: invites for show

May 5: All work must be removed from studio

**Studio Space:** Studio space and equipment is available only for those students currently enrolled in a particular studio course.

Though we encourage you to work in the size you feel is necessary to achieve your goals, please keep in mind the physical limitations of our studio space and storage space. All professional artists must work within limitations with regard to budget, time, space, storage and facilities.

Also, please keep in mind; each studio accommodates 30 or more students per semester. Respect your classmates: keep the studio clean and allow storage space for your peers.

**Storage:**

There will be storage space made available to you for your current work. For example: In the painting studio, intermediate, advanced and senior painters may use the painting racks for storage. In the drawing studio, photographs and drawings may be stored in the flat files. You must label each storage area with your name and date. Normally, if your 2-dimensional piece is larger than 4' by 4', you must make other arrangements for storage.

3-D work can be stored in the left-hand corner of the east wall in the sculpture studio. Work must fit within the two lower level shelves neatly. Normally, if your 3-dimensional piece is larger than these shelves you must make other arrangements for storage.

If you have some very specific problems or concerns about this, please ask Professor Valgardson.

**Cleanliness:**

Please clean up after yourselves. Store work in a clean and orderly way. Your grade will be lowered for repeated infractions.

**Senior Seminar Studio Use:**

You may use the studios when there are no other classes in session. If you must use studio space during a class period (an emergency), you must ask the professor in advance for permission.

**Deadline: Sunday, May 5, 1pm**

If you do not collect your work after you have completed the course and have not been requested by the department to leave your work, then, due to space limitations, your work will be discarded. The department cannot be responsible for storing work of students in past courses.

## Writing your proposal for Senior seminar

The proposal for your senior seminar project should be a summary of your preparatory steps. You should determine a general topic for investigation, read and look at current art journals and monographs on your topic, explore the resources available for the project, consider the concepts and theories you might want to address, and work out the studio materials and techniques you intend to use. At each stage in this process, you should consult with the studio faculty (art history and other faculty members can be of great importance) so that you both clearly understand the direction in which you are heading.

The Proposal itself serves several purposes. First, it communicates your intentions to the Studio Faculty and Senior Seminar Class. Second, it serves as a plan of action, outlining the steps you will be following, the problems you expect to confront, and some sort of prediction as to what you hope to accomplish. And third, the approved proposal becomes an understanding between student and Studio Faculty and Senior Seminar Class, and serves as one of the bases on which the senior seminar project will be judged. Any major revisions in the proposed work require notification to, and approval by, the Studio Faculty and Senior Seminar Class.

### Parts of the Proposal

- 1.) You should begin with a short introduction that establishes the area that defines the specific interest, and conveys any information necessary to an understanding of the material that follows. The most common error here is a failure to get to the point.
- 2.) Clearly state the concerns to which your creative project will be directed. Then provide a rationale or explanation of your interest. You may want to explain why your project is worth doing.
- 3.) If possible, state what you want to accomplish. This paragraph should indicate the scope, format, and benefit of the project to you and your art.
- 4.) Discuss the background of the project. While you should not allow a historical summary to overshadow the importance of the proposed study, you do need to demonstrate that you are aware of the current state the field. Briefly explain what is already known and how your study will supplement or advance that knowledge.
- 5.) Describe the materials, techniques, working methods, and critical and theoretical methodologies you intend to use. Don't just state that you intend to read "several works" on an art movement; name them.

6.) Discuss any limitations to your study. Admitting such problems does not automatically invalidate your project; sometimes it reassures the reader that you have fully considered the problems and are prepared to work around them.

7.) The body of the proposal should not exceed 2 pages (times 12, double spaced), and one page bibliography (include any sources you intend to use.)

8.) Three hours of credit requires at least 10 hours of work per week. The student should submit a time schedule on a separate sheet of paper, to count as an addition to proposal. This time schedule is a weekly schedule of times that you have set aside to work on your senior seminar project. Remember fresh work is required each week, so schedule your week appropriately.

### Avoiding Common Pitfalls at the Proposal Stage

1.) Stick to the topic and resist the temptation to sound "properly positive and enthusiastic." Ask yourself if the reader really needs to consider each point in order to judge the adequacy of the proposal. If not, leave it out.

2.) Don't weight the proposal down with extensive irrelevant material. Concentrate on what you intend to do.

3.) Choose words that are as clear and precise as possible. Don't invent new words, use esoteric terms understood only by insiders, or hide your real meaning behind vague generalities.

4.) Read and re-read the proposal for grammatical and mechanical errors.

Proposals may be approved or returned for revisions and resubmission. Studio Faculty will offer specific comments and may ask questions concerning the scope of the project, methodology, and other issues. Students are encouraged to meet individually with Studio Faculty, in response to their comments, to work on the areas of the proposal that may need improvement or clarification.

### Extra Tips

1.) Consult with as many other people in your discipline (and outsiders as well) to insure that you consider different points of view.

2.) The questions and ideas to be explored should be explicitly stated in your proposal. Vagueness should be avoided, including unnecessary use of jargon.

3.) Create a realistic weekly time schedule and stick with it. This will ensure that you have time to complete all that you want to, without coming to the end with little time and much work still to be done. It is important not to feel rushed in order to insure your best effort.

4.) This proposal will turn into your artist's statement (and perhaps your M.F.A. application or a grant proposal). Reading other artist's statements will help you get a feel for how these statements are written.

5.) Try to finish your proposal early. Put the proposal away for a while before proofreading it for submission. Read your paper aloud; if it sounds awkward or poorly written, it probably is. Also, have a friend or two proof your paper for clarity and errors of spelling and grammar. You will be reading it out loud to the Senior Seminar class.