Guidelines for Writing the Senior Essay

2018-2019
Dear History of Art Majors,

This document is designed to guide you in writing your senior essay, which is itself meant to be one of the most rewarding parts of your career at Yale. Of course, it can also feel daunting, especially in the beginning stages.

To that end, the guidelines below are meant to demystify the process and give you the parameters that should help you to produce an essay that is a fulfilling culmination of the skills and knowledge you have acquired as a major in the History of Art.

Granted I am a biased source, but my own memory of writing a senior essay as a Yale undergraduate many years ago is that it was a bit nerve-wracking at first, but in the end, surprisingly enjoyable.

All best, and happy writing,

Professor Bass
Director of Undergraduate Studies
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Dates and Deadlines

For all those writing a one-semester senior essay in Fall 2018:

**Wednesday, September 12 @ 12:00pm: Project statement due**

Complete the “Project Statement” form, print it out, have your advisor sign it, and then submit to me either in person or in my box in the department office.

Submit an additional copy to art librarian Lindsay King either as hard copy or scanned PDF attachment to (lindsay.king@yale.edu). Once she has received your statement, she will arrange to meet with you for an individual session at the library to help you with source material relevant to your project.

**Tuesday, September 18, 5:30-7:30pm in Loria 251: Senior Thesis Workshop I**

In this first meeting, we will workshop your project proposals and talk about how to refine your topic in a way that will make it feasible for you to carry out successfully. Food provided!

Please send me ONE image related to your project by email attachment no later than 9:00pm on Monday, September 17. I will compile all your images in a Powerpoint so we can all get a sense of the material on which you desire to work. Remember that art-historical research should always be driven by the artworks/objects themselves, so give some thought to the image that you send me.

**Friday, October 5 @ 12:00pm: Project outline and annotated bibliography DUE**

The outline should a) fully explain the topic of your essay and b) lay out your proposed method of research. It should be approximately 2-3 pages (double-spaced) in length.

The annotated bibliography should list the most important reference materials you are using. Each citation should be accompanied by a few sentences explaining why the source is helpful, what kind of information it contains, etc. Your bibliography can be single-spaced.

Submit TWO copies of your outline and bibliography, one to your advisor and the other to me. Ask your advisor whether he/she prefers submissions in hard copy or by email attachment. Please submit to me by email attachment.

**Monday, October 29, 5:30-7:30pm in Loria 251: Senior Thesis Workshop II**

Send me no later than 9:00pm on Thursday, October 25 the draft of an excerpt from the introduction to your essay by email attachment. We will workshop your drafts together.
and discuss strategies for clarifying your argument and thesis. We will also discuss how to prepare for the colloquium in which you will present your project to your advisors, attending faculty, and to each other. Food provided!

**NO LATER THAN Monday, November 12: Complete essay draft due**

A complete draft of your essay MUST be submitted to your advisor for critical comment no later than the deadline above, but your advisor may request a draft earlier, and this is entirely at their discretion. Please consult with your advisor about your draft and their desired due date.

**Monday, November 26, 5:30-7:00pm in Loria 251: Senior Thesis Colloquium Part I**

**Tuesday, November 27, 5:30-7:00pm in Loria 251: Senior Thesis Colloquium Part II**

5-minute presentations of your essay topic, followed by discussion with the audience. Food provided!

**Friday, December 7 @12:00pm: SENIOR ESSAY DUE**  
(No Extensions, No Exceptions!)

Submit two complete copies to the department office in hard copy, in my box. Your essay will be read and assessed by your advisor and by one other faculty member in the department.

**A LATE essay will result in a lowered final grade, and no late essay will be considered for a prize in the department.**
For all those writing a one-semester senior essay in Spring 2018:

**Friday, January 25 @12:00pm: Project statement due**

Complete the “Project Statement” form, print it out, have your advisor sign it, and then submit to me either in person or in my box in the department office.

Submit an additional copy to art librarian Lindsay King either as hard copy or scanned PDF attachment to (lindsay.king@yale.edu). Once she has received your statement, she will arrange to meet with you for an individual session at the library to help you with source material relevant to your project.

**Monday, February 4, 5:30-7:30pm in Loria 251: Senior Thesis Workshop I**

In this first meeting, we will workshop your project proposals and talk about how to refine your topic in a way that will make it feasible for you to carry out successfully. Food provided!

Please send me ONE image related to your project by email attachment no later than 9:00pm on February 3. I will compile all your images in a Powerpoint so we can all get a sense of the material on which you desire to work. Remember that art-historical research should always be driven by the artworks/objects themselves, so give some thought to the image that you send me.

**Wednesday, February 20 @12:00pm: Project outline and annotated bibliography DUE**

The outline should a) fully explain the topic of your essay and b) lay out your proposed method of research. It should be approximately 2-3 pages (double-spaced) in length.

The annotated bibliography should list the most important reference materials you are using. Each citation should be accompanied by a few sentences explaining why the source is helpful, what kind of information it contains, etc. Your bibliography can be single-spaced.

Submit TWO copies of your outline and bibliography, one to your advisor and the other to me. These must be submitted in HARD COPY to your advisor by the deadline, and to me by email.

**Wednesday, March 6, 5:30-7:30pm in Loria 251: Senior Thesis Workshop II**

Send me no later than 9:00pm on Friday, March 1 the draft of the introduction to your essay by email attachment. We will workshop your introductions together and discuss strategies for clarifying your argument and thesis. We will also discuss how to prepare for the colloquium in which you will present your project to your advisors, attending faculty, and to each other. Food provided!
NO LATER THAN Monday, March 25: Complete essay draft due

A complete draft of your essay MUST be submitted to your advisor for critical comment no later than the deadline above, but your advisor may request a draft earlier, and this is entirely at their discretion. Please consult with your advisor about your draft and their desired due date.

Monday, April 1, 5:30-7:30pm in Loria 251: Senior Thesis Colloquium I
Tuesday, April 2, 5:30-7:30pm in Loria 251: Senior Thesis Colloquium II

5-minute presentations of your essay topic, followed by discussion with the audience. Food provided! Attendance required on both dates.

Monday, April 15 @12:00pm: SENIOR ESSAY DUE
(NO EXTENSIONS, NO EXCEPTIONS!)

Submit two complete copies to the department office in hard copy, in my box. Your essay will be read and assessed by your advisor and by one other faculty member in the department.

A LATE essay will result in a lowered final grade, and no late essay will be considered for a prize in the department.
For all those writing a year-long senior essay:

**Wednesday, September 12 @ 12:00pm: Project statement due**

Complete the “Project Statement” form, print it out, have your advisor sign it, and then submit to me either in person or in my box in the department office.

Submit an additional copy to art librarian Lindsay King either as hard copy or scanned PDF attachment to (lindsay.king@yale.edu). Once she has received your statement, she will arrange to meet with you for an individual session at the library to help you with source material relevant to your project.

**Tuesday, September 18, 5:30-7:00pm in Loria 251: Senior Thesis Workshop I**

In this first meeting, we will workshop your project proposals and talk about how to refine your topic in a way that will make it feasible for you to carry out successfully. Food provided!

Please send me ONE image related to your project by email attachment no later than 9:00pm on Monday, September 17. I will compile all your images in a Powerpoint so we can all get a sense of the material on which you desire to work. Remember that art-historical research should always be driven by the artworks/objects themselves, so give some thought to the image that you send me.

**Friday, October 5 @ 12:00pm: Project outline and annotated bibliography DUE**

The outline should a) fully explain the topic of your essay and b) lay out your proposed method of research. It should be approximately 2-3 pages (double-spaced) in length.

The annotated bibliography should list the most important reference materials you are using. Each citation should be accompanied by a few sentences explaining why the source is helpful, what kind of information it contains, etc. Your bibliography can be single-spaced.

Submit TWO copies of your outline and bibliography, one to your advisor and the other to me. These must be submitted in HARD COPY to your advisor by the deadline, and to me by email.

**Monday, October 29, 5:30-7:30pm in Loria 251: Senior Thesis Workshop II**

Send me no later than 9:00pm on Thursday, October 25 the draft of the introduction to your essay by email attachment. We will workshop your introductions together and discuss strategies for clarifying your argument and thesis. We will also discuss how to prepare for the colloquium in which you will present your project to your advisors, attending faculty, and to each other. Food provided!
Monday, November 26, 5:30-7:00pm in Loria 251: Senior Thesis Colloquium Part I
Tuesday, November 27, 5:30-7:00pm in Loria 251: Senior Thesis Colloquium Part II

5-minute presentations of your essay topic, followed by discussion with the audience. Food provided! Since your submission deadline is not until the spring, you may make this first presentation more of a progress update, focusing on the development of your ideas and where you are headed.

Friday, December 7 @12:00pm: AT LEAST 15 PAGES DUE

Submit TWO copies, one to your advisor and one to me. You may send your 15 pages to me by email. Ask your advisor whether they prefer email or hard copy.

NO LATER THAN Monday, March 25: Complete essay draft due

A complete draft of your essay MUST be submitted to your advisor for critical comment no later than the deadline above, but your advisor may request a draft earlier, and this is entirely at their discretion. Please consult with your advisor about your draft and their desired due date.

Monday, April 1, 5:30-7:30pm in Loria 251: Senior Thesis Colloquium I
Tuesday, April 2, 5:30-7:30pm in Loria 251: Senior Thesis Colloquium II

You will present your essay topic again in this second colloquium, this time more formally. Same format as before, and again, food provided! Attendance required on both dates.

Monday, April 15 @12:00pm: SENIOR ESSAY DUE
(NO EXTENSIONS, NO EXCEPTIONS!)

Submit two complete copies to the department office in hard copy, in my box. Your essay will be read and assessed by your advisor and by one other faculty member in the department.

A LATE essay will result in a lowered final grade, and no late essay will be considered for a prize in the department.
How to Begin

**Topic:** The best research and writing always begins with passionate interest. Honing in on a topic should not be a strategic choice but one driven by your genuine desire to know more, by a question that you want to answer.

At the same time, you have limited time and pages, so once you have a topic in mind, the key to a successful and rewarding senior essay is focusing on an argument you can make and support within those limits, and developing a research path that is feasible given the background knowledge and languages you have at your disposal. For instance, if you do not read Chinese then it would be very difficult to write about a subject, or pursue a course of research, that required your knowledge of that language. If you have done no previous coursework or reading on seventeenth-century Italy, then writing about the art of that period from scratch is going to be an uphill battle.

If you are struggling to narrow your focus, always go back the objects and artworks that interest you. Ask yourself what draws you to them: subject, representational strategies, technique, materiality, historical context, theoretical implications, etc. Start to review the existing literature (your advisor can help point you toward key works in past scholarship) and consider what you can contribute to the discussion and whether you can master the background necessary to do so in the time frame. A bigger topic is not necessarily better. Taking on too much or a question that is too broad is exactly what you want to avoid!

**Library Resources and Individualized Guidance:** In order to make the most of the library and research resources available to you, make sure to meet with an art librarian for an individual consultation. To do so, first submit a copy of your Project Statement to Lindsay King (send an e-mail attachment to lindsay.king@yale.edu) on the same day it is due to the DUS at the beginning of the term. She will help you set up an appointment for an individual session, in which she or another art librarian will provide you with information regarding the library resources available to you, tailored for your specific needs. (She will need your Project Statement in order to identify what might be useful to you.) Come to the meeting prepared to talk about where you are in your research process and ask questions about finding books, articles, and images, as well as related topics such as primary source research and citation management.

Lindsay King, Associate Director for Access and Research Services
Robert B. Haas Family Arts Library, Yale University
T: 203-436-8052
E: lindsay.king@yale.edu

**Yale Resources:** You are fortunate to have access to numerous collections around Yale. Try to make the most of these. Consider subjects related to the objects at the Yale University Art Gallery and the Yale Center for British Art. Consult the variety of specialists that are available both among the faculty of the Department of History of Art, the experts at the YUAG and the BAC, and other departments across campus. And do not
be shy about discussing your research with your friends and fellow majors. Just talking about your research aloud is a great way to get out of your own head.

**Advance Planning:** The sooner you get organized and start planning ahead, the better. Take note of the deadlines and remember that there are no extensions and no excuses! Your senior essay is not going to feel rewarding if you leave too much to the last minute. The better you plan, and the more time you put into your research and writing, the more you will get out of this experience. It’s one of those commonplaces in life that is actually true.
Length, Components, and Format

Length:

One-semester essay: approximately 25–30 pages, double-spaced (12pt font), and NO MORE THAN 30 PAGES

Yearlong essay: approximately 50–75 pages, double-spaced (12pt font), and NO MORE THAN 75 PAGES

n.b. Captions, the list of illustrations, bibliography, and the illustrations themselves do NOT count toward the word limit. Only the body text and footnotes/endnotes are included in the limits above.

The Essential Components of the Senior Essay:

- A title-page that includes the essay title, your name, your college, and the name of your advisor
- A table of contents
- A list of illustrations and/or clear captions accompanying the illustrations
- The body text (page limits indicated above)
- Either footnotes at the bottom of the page or endnotes at the end of the essay (footnotes preferred)
- Good-quality illustrations of all artworks/objects mentioned in your essay either photocopied, scanned, or photographed. Do not photocopy the photocopies you have been working with, but rather make a new set for each copy of your paper. Be sure to PLAN AHEAD for the time-consuming task).
- A complete bibliography of all works cited.

Format:
Text should be double-spaced, in black ink, and printed single-sided. Use conventional font (e.g. Times New Roman or Courier) and 12pt font. Use the standard settings for page setup, i.e. margins of 1” on the top and bottom, and 1.25” on both sides of the page. You must include page numbers!
Notes and Bibliography

Notes:

Footnotes are recommended although endnotes are acceptable too. Footnotes are usually preferable because of ease of reference.

The notes should identify the specific sources you have drawn upon for the ideas and information in a sentence or paragraph in your essay. They should provide the information needed in order to locate the source you are citing, which means that you should provide the specific pages you have consulted.

In your notes, all references to works cited should appear in full form only once according to the style of The Art Bulletin, which is based on the Notes and Bibliography System of The Chicago Manual of Style, 15th ed. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2003). Detailed guidelines are available on-line at http://www.chicagomanualofstyle.org/home.html. You may also consult, Sylvan Barnet, A Short Guide to Writing about Art, 9th ed. (Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall, 2007), and see examples below.

Subsequent references should use a short form: last name of author, shortened title if more than four words, and page reference. Do not use op. cit. loc. cit. or ibid. To get the idea of the short form (which is pretty straightforward) see the examples listed below. For further examples consult, The Chicago Manual of Style, 15th ed.

Bibliography:

The bibliography should appear after the text and the illustrations. It should include all sources you have consulted, including works you have used but did not cite in your notes as well as every single source cited in your notes. Unlike footnotes, bibliographical references indicate the entirety of the article, book or document you have consulted.

Bibliographical references should be alphabetized according to the author’s last name. (If there is no author given, use the first word of the title, but ignore articles such as “the” or “a”.) If there is more than one work by the same author, list them alphabetically by title. In this case, there is no need to repeat the author’s name for each reference, but you may use dashes instead of the name, followed by the reference beginning with the title. The first line of each bibliographical reference should be flush left and the additional lines indented by 0.5”. (See the way the bibliographic references are listed below.)

Style for Notes and Bibliography
Use the style of The Art Bulletin, which is based on the Notes and Bibliography System of The Chicago Manual of Style, 15th edition. Detailed guidelines are available on-line at: http://www.chicagomanualofstyle.org/home.html
(For guidelines on notes and bibliographic citations go to chapters 16 and 17.)
n.b. You **must be consistent** throughout your notes and bibliography.

The list below provides examples of notes and bibliographic references. (These examples are adapted from *The Chicago Manual of Style* 15th edition and Sylvan Barnet, *A Short Guide to Writing about Art*, 9th edition.)

**Single-Authored Book:**

First reference to a work cited in notes:

Subsequent reference in short form:

Bibliographic reference:

**Single-Authored Book (edition which is not the first):**

First reference to a work cited in notes:

Subsequent reference in short form:

Bibliographic reference:

**Book with Multiple Authors:**

First reference to a work cited in notes:

Subsequent reference in short form:

Bibliographic reference:
Work in a Collection:
First reference to a work cited in notes:

Subsequent reference in short form:
Carr and Schuurman, “Religion and Feminism,” 30.

Bibliographic reference:

Article in a Journal:
First reference to a work cited in notes:

Subsequent reference in short form:

Bibliographic reference:

Newspaper Article:
First reference to a work cited in notes:

Subsequent reference in short form:

Bibliographic reference:
Book Review:
First reference to a work cited in notes:

Subsequent reference in short form:
Ben Ratliff, review of *The Mystery of Samba*, B15.

Bibliographic reference:

Website:
First reference to a work cited in notes:

Subsequent reference in short form:

Bibliographic reference:

Non-English Titles:
For non-English publications follow the capitalization of the particular language, not the English conventions.

French:
First reference to a work cited in notes:

Subsequent reference in short form:

Bibliographic reference:
l’Université de Québec, 1998.

**German:**

**First reference to a work cited in notes:**
Gabriele Krone-Schmalz, *In Wahrheit sind wir stärker: Frauenalltag in der Sowjetunion* (Frankfurt am Main: Fischer Taschenbuch Verlag, 1992), 87.

**Subsequent reference in short form:**
Krone-Schmalz, *In Wahrheit*, 87.

**Bibliographic reference:**
Illustrations and Captions

Illustrations:
Illustrations should appear either following the main text, or embedded within the text, in the relevant place in your discussion. Use photocopied, scanned, or photographed illustrations. Do not photocopy the photocopies you have been working with, but rather make a new set for each copy of your Essay. All illustrations must be identified with captions and/or list of illustrations and numbered consecutively.

When you refer to illustrations in your text, you should insert in parentheses a figure-reference such as: (Figure 1). Number the figures in the order that they first appear in your text. Make sure that the numbers given in your textual figure-references correspond with the numbers given to the actual illustrations.

Captions:
For each illustration, identify the work and specify the source from which your illustration is taken. Provide as much information as you can, whenever applicable and available. The information you can provide varies depending on the nature of the work, so that there are no strict rules, but try to be as informative as possible. For example, illustrations of works of performance art or architecture may in some cases not include dimensions or medium or other data.

Generally use the following order and punctuation, which follows the style of The Art Bulletin (note that there is no period at the end of a caption):

Figure number. Artist, Title, date, medium, dimensions. Name of Collection, City of Collection from Source

Make sure to identify the source. If the illustration is taken from a book then identify the source in the same way that you would specify the source of a quotation in a footnote. Otherwise, identify the source of the illustration in parentheses.

Note: dimensions could be given in inches (h. x w. x d) and/or in centimeters (1 inch = 2.54 cm).

Examples for Captions:
(These examples are adapted from The Art Bulletin)

Figure 1. Michelangelo, David, 1501-3. From Enrica Crispino, Michelangelo, trans. Silvia Silvestri, (Florence: Giunti Gruppo Editoriale, 2001), 45.
Figure 2. Parthenon, east frieze, detail. From Robin Osborne, *Archaic and Classical Greek Art* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998), 182, fig. 111.

Figure 3. Sandro Botticelli, *Primavera*, ca. 1482, tempera on panel, 6 ft. 8 in. x 10 ft. 4 in. (2.03 x 3.15 m). Galleria degli Uffizi, Florence. From Thomas Puttfarken, *The Discovery of Pictorial Composition: Theories of Visual Order in Painting* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2000), 66, fig. 33.

Figure 4. Baccio Bandinelli, *Hercules and Cacus*, 1525–34, marble, height 16 ft. 9 in. (5.05 m). Piazza della Signoria, Florence (photograph by author)

Figure 5. Roman sarcophagus, *Death of Meleager*, 3rd century CE, detail. Musée du Louvre, Paris (photograph provided by John Doe, Rome)


Remember, try to provide as much information as possible and adhere to the same style.
Fellowships and Prizes

Prizes Awarded by the Department of History of Art:

The Andrus Prize:
Awarded for outstanding essays on American painting, sculpture, and decorative arts.

The Deitz Prize
Awarded for outstanding essays in any topic in the History of Art.

The Ehrlich Prize
Awarded for outstanding essays in any topic in the History of Art.

Awarded by the Yale University Art Gallery:

The A. Conger Goodyear Fine Arts Award
Three prizes are awarded for outstanding essays on any topic in the History of Art.

Prizes Awarded by Others:

Alice Derby Lang in Classics
Awarded for outstanding essays in Classical Literature and Art, given by the Classics Department.

Asian American Studies Prize
The Asian American Studies Prize for the best essay in Asian American Studies, given by the American Studies Department.

Canadian Studies Prize
The Canadian Studies Prize for the best essay on a Canadian topic, awarded by the Canadian Studies Council.

Gala Prize
The Yale Gay and Lesbian Alumni/ae Association established the GALA Prize to be administered through the fund for Lesbian and Gay studies for the best senior essay in any area of gay and lesbian studies. Submit essays to the office of the Fund for Lesbian and Gay Studies, 143 Elm Street, Room B13 Call for deadline date.

Henry K. Hayase Prize
Awarded for the best student paper or senior thesis dealing with a topic relating to Asian American experiences in the United States.
**Justice Carlos R. Moreno Prize**
Awarded annually for the best senior essay focusing on the field of Latina/o Studies or on the Latina/o experience in the United States.

**Library Map Prize**
The Map Collection of Sterling Memorial Library awards a prize for the best senior essay making good use of maps. Submit essays to Fred Musto, Curator, Map Collection.

**Steere Prize In Women’s Studies**
The Women’s Studies Program awards a prize for the best essay accentuating women or gender roles or using feminist theory. Submit essays to the Women’s Studies Program.

**Williams Prize in East Asian Studies**
Submit essays with a faculty letter of endorsement, to the Williams Prize Committee, Council on East Asian Studies, YCIAS, Luce Hall.

**Wrexham Prize**
The Yale College Dean’s Office awards the Wrexham Prize to the best senior essay in the field of the humanities. A committee nominates the entries from the department of History of Art.