

## **ENGLISH HONOURS**

### **499 GRADUATING ESSAY**

The graduating essay is a unique feature of the English Honours program. It is designed to allow you to develop an independent research argument of your own devising, with the one-on-one advice of a faculty member. The graduating essay allows you to be an independent thinker; it allows you to gain experience collaborating with a field expert; it gives you the ability to answer a bigger-scale question and to find your own voice. Many honours students have found this the most significant and enjoyable achievement of their undergraduate careers.

Because the graduating essay is a new experience for most undergraduates, **we encourage you to plan to complete it as a 20-25-page argument in one term (3 credits)**. Most students find that this is a challenging but doable scale that helps them to avoid the problem of too much unscheduled work (and the last-minute panic and mess that can ensue). If you have good reasons and a proven capacity to work methodically on a bigger topic, you may apply for approval to write a 6-credit (2-term) essay, but most students choose, enjoy, and learn well from the 3-credit graduating essay.

#### FIRST STEPS:

- 1) READ THE REGULATIONS AND GUIDELINES FOR THE GRADUATING ESSAY BELOW.
- 2) Find a supervisor, and with their advice develop a topic and prospectus.
- 3) Submit the approval form and the prospectus as described below.

If you have questions along the way, please contact an Honours advisor; we're here to help!

## ENGLISH 499 Approval Form

NAME: \_\_\_\_\_

STUDENT NUMBER:\_\_\_\_\_

E-MAIL: \_\_\_\_\_

My 499 graduating essay is to be:  3 credits

or  6 credits (by special permission of the Honours Chair & your Supervisor)

The subject of my graduating essay, English 499, is:

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

I have read and understand the regulations regarding the Honours graduating essay.

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Signature of student)

\* \* \* \* \*

I agree to supervise the completion of the above course.

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Name of supervisor)

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Signature of supervisor)

*Please attach the prospectus (200-250 words) for your graduating essay topic, signed by your supervisor.*

## **HONOURS GRADUATING ESSAY (ENGLISH 499) GUIDELINES & REGULATIONS**

**Getting Started:** Honours students are responsible for registering for 499, choosing the general area for their graduating essay, and finding a supervisor by the beginning of the term in which they plan to complete the essay. Feel free to consult with an Honours advisor and come to a workshop to get oriented.

**Finding a Supervisor:** You may choose a supervisor from any faculty member within the department whose interests align with your topic and who is willing and available to work with you. It is a **very** good idea to approach possible supervisors in the term or year before the term in which you intend to write your graduating essay. If the topic is interdisciplinary, you may choose to have co-supervisors, one from each area of interest; make this decision in consultation with the faculty involved. If you have difficulty finding a supervisor, please contact a member of the Honours Committee.

**Topic and Scope:** You should have an idea or ideas in mind before talking to possible supervisors, but you and your supervisor will work together to develop that topic and prospectus (your plan for the essay).

- A) **The three-credit graduating essay** is designed to be completed in one term and should be 20-25 pages long. (We mean it about maximum length!) It is the **default** option for the graduating essay.
  
- B) The six-credit (two-term) graduating essay is 40-50 pages in length. The six-credit graduating essay option **requires special permission** from the supervisor and from the Honours Chair.

**Building a Committee:** The student and the supervisor together should approach a faculty member (in rare cases, two faculty members) to be the second reader(s) with some expertise in the intended topic. For the 3-credit essay, the second reader(s) should be approached before the third week of the term in which the essay is being written. These individuals will normally be in the English Department, but they should at a minimum be full-time UBC faculty. Sessional lecturers may serve on such committees, but their duties **MUST** be concluded by term-end.

For the 6-credit essay such additional member(s) should be approached before the end of the first term, but ideally sooner.

### **Essay Deadlines:**

#### **499 (3 credits):**

Students should submit their graduating essay prospectus (200-250 words), approved and signed by their supervisor or supervisors, along with the graduating essay form, also signed by the supervisor, to the Undergraduate program administrator by the end of the third week of the term in which the essay is being written.

The first draft of the graduating essay, in a form fairly acceptable to the supervisor, must be submitted by the Monday of the tenth week of the term in which the essay is being written.

The final draft, amended according to the supervisor's and committee's directions, must be submitted by the Friday of the twelfth week of the term, that is, one week prior to the end of term in which the essay is being written.

#### **499 (6 credits) (with special permission):**

Students should submit their graduating essay prospectus (250-300 words), approved and signed by their supervisor or supervisors, to the program administrator by Monday of the 5<sup>th</sup> week of the first term.

The first draft of the graduating essay, in a form fairly acceptable to the supervisor, must be submitted by the Monday following the second term's midterm break.

The final draft, amended according to the supervisor's and committee's directions, must be submitted by the Friday of the eleventh week of the term, ie., 2 weeks prior to the end of term.

#### **Missed Deadlines:**

If a student fails to comply with any of the above dates, the supervisor, should they choose, may ask to be relieved of all supervising responsibilities, so it is extremely important for students to ensure that all of these deadlines are met.

These dates also apply to students who have been granted an extension on their graduating essay. Please note that students who are granted extensions on their graduating essays may have to pay tuition for 499 again unless the dean grants an exemption.

#### **WRITING THE GRADUATING ESSAY:**

Students are expected to meet at regular intervals with their supervisors, normally once every one to three weeks, to plan the timelines for submission of sections and drafts, to consult and advise on sources and bibliography, and to discuss the argument in progress. Failure to meet regularly with the supervisor is grounds for the supervisor to decline to continue in that role.

#### **The Oral:**

The oral examination follows acceptance of the graduating essay by the supervisor and the second reader or committee. This exam focuses on the materials and issues covered in the essay and aims to determine how thoroughly students understand, in the broadest sense, what they have written. The committee will determine and communicate to the student the mark for the course on the basis of both the essay and the oral after an *in camera* deliberation. The oral is normally no more than one hour in total.

#### **Copies:**

The student should **bring to the oral three copies** of the title page (a sample title page is attached) to be signed by the committee. After the oral, and after any required corrections and/or revisions are made, the student should attach each of these title pages to a clean copy of the graduating essay. One copy is submitted to the supervisor, one is submitted to the program administrator to be kept on file in the department Reading room (this copy must be bound or presented in a binder), and one copy is kept by the student.

#### **Form:**

Students should follow the regulations for the Master's thesis for formatting and citation. The graduating essay should be presented in accordance with the rules for documentation set out in the *MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers*.

(Sample Title Page)

THE REPRESENTATION OF ABORIGINAL WOMEN  
IN CANADIAN POPULAR HISTORY  
AND SCHOLARLY LITERATURE OF THE FUR TRADE

By

Kathleen McConchie

An essay submitted in partial fulfillment of  
the requirements for the degree of  
Bachelor of Arts (Honours)  
in the  
Department of English

We accept this essay as conforming  
to the required standard

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THE UNIVERSITY OF BRITISH COLUMBIA

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