The Department of Anthropology

Washington College

THE ANTHROPOLOGY SENIOR CAPSTONE EXPERIENCE (ANT SCE)

*Purpose of the SCE***:**

The anthropology senior capstone experience (ANT SCE) is an independent learning experience in the form of a thesis or project undertaken by seniors with the guidance and mentorship of a department faculty member. All senior capstone experiences must include anthropological methods and theory. A student who successfully completes the SCE will receive a grade of Pass or Honors, and will be awarded 4 credits. Discussion of a joint thesis, undertaken by a student with two majors, can be found below.

The Senior Capstone Experience in anthropology is a substantial research and writing project completed at the end of the student's course of study under the guidance of one or more Washington College faculty members. Involving active learning and integration of materials within the major, the project centers on a topic chosen by the student in consultation with faculty members in the department who agree to serve as a thesis advisor. The project must be approved by the advisor before being undertaken by the student.

A Senior Project may be a thesis or another project. Examples of a project are an oral history, a museum exhibit, an ethnographic film project, or a developed body of materials that can be used in elementary or secondary schools. Each project needs an accompanying written document that discusses how the project was researched and carried out and discusses the importance of the project in terms of anthropological theory. A thesis must have a substantial theoretical focus but may include any of the other forms acceptable as a project.

Students are expected to give some form of public presentation of their project work after the final draft has been completed. As determined by the Anthropology Department, the presentation may consist of a poster presentation or an oral presentation.

Goal of the SCE:

The goal of the senior capstone experience (senior thesis) in anthropology is the development of independent-minded research with the guidance of faculty advisors. Through regular meetings with their advisors, students are assisted in their research and are encouraged to maintain a realistic schedule. A senior thesis or project is completed during the fall and spring semesters of the senior year. The initial proposal should be formulated at the end of the junior year in the ANT 405 *Junior Seminar in Anthropology* with the thesis advisor's supervision. As noted in the Washington College Catalog, the SCE has the following expectations:

- Demonstrated student initiative
- Significant preparatory work
- Active Inquiry
- Integration of acquired knowledge and skills
- Culmination of previous academic work

Advisor of the SCE:

The Anthropology Department will assign your thesis advisor. We expect you to establish a more-or-less permanent appointment schedule with your advisor to discuss your progress on the thesis. We cannot promise successful completion of your thesis if you avoid these meetings. As you are conducting research, analysis and writing, feel free to discuss your thesis with any department faculty member. Each of us will be happy to offer whatever assistance we can. We look forward to working with you and we want you to succeed.

Thesis Guidelines:

A thesis should be approximately 30 pages of written text. Theses generally have five chapters: an introduction, three chapters of substance, and a conclusion. These are general guidelines that may be modified in discussion with the thesis adviser. For instructions on the format and style of the thesis follow the *Chicago Manual of Style* as found in Kate Turabian's *Manual for Writers of Term Papers, Theses, and Dissertations*.

We require that theses and projects be grammatically correct and free of spelling errors. All borrowed work must be fully acknowledged with in-text citations and a references-cited page. The only acceptable citation forms for anthropology theses are the AAA style (for cultural anthropology theses) or SAA style (for archaeology theses). Use a standard 12-point font agreed upon with your advisor. Your completed thesis will become part of the Miller Library's permanent collection, and added to the Library's on-line catalog. As a matter of pride you will wish to be sure that it represents your best work.

Below are some more specific guidelines for a senior thesis:

- 30 pages of text not including Title Page, Acknowledgements, Table of Contents, Figures & Illustrations, Works Cited, and Appendices.
- Layout:
    - Title Page with Student Name and Advisor Name
    - Abstract & Key Words
    - Acknowledgements
    - Table of Contents
    - Introduction with Research Question/Thesis Statement, Background & Context, Reason for Choosing this Research, Discussion of Field Site, Sample and Methods, Significance and Outline of the Thesis.
    - Two or three chapters of substance that focus on summarizing relevant literature, providing background and context, presenting your findings, discussion, importance, and significance of key issues in your research.
    - Conclusion with summary and significance.

Thesis Submission:

Please submit both an electronic copy and a hard copy to your senior thesis advisor. The final thesis is also submitted to the Miller Library as a single Word or pdf file by emailing to sce@washcoll.edu. Once you take this step your scholarship is available to the larger academic community!

Evaluation/Grading of the SCE:

Pass:

A student who works regularly with his or her advisor, meets deadlines (see the "Timeline" below) with acceptable chapters, and turns in a complete, well-written document that reflects the format described below by college thesis deadline is unlikely to run into difficulties. Missing completion deadlines and/or submission of an unsatisfactory thesis will almost certainly result in a failure to graduate on time.

Fail:

A grade of "Fail" is almost always a consequence of a student's failure to work consistently with his or her advisor or to accept the advisor's reasonable guidance, or of the submission of the completed thesis after the College's deadline (see "Timeline"). On rare occasions, a thesis is rejected because, despite advisor's guidance, it fails to meet standards of acceptable writing. The "Not Passed" grade is awarded by vote of the Department faculty.

Honors:

Students who earn honors on their senior thesis and a Dean's List (3.5) average in their major course work may be eligible for Departmental Honors (see Washington College Catalog chapter on Academic Policies and Regulations), a distinction that is noted both on the student's permanent record and in the commencement program.

To earn a grade of "Honors," a thesis/project must be exceptional (think A- or above). As a rough guide, it is one that would be worthy of submission to a scholarly journal in the appropriate field. That is, its subject or methods should be original and significant, and its conclusions fully supported and defended against reasonable challenge.

It should be well written, clear, interesting, integrative, grammatically correct, and it must provide insight into the subject and demonstrate graceful language. The "Honors" grade is awarded by vote of the Department of Sociology & Anthropology faculty. The following are more specific guidelines for an Honors Thesis:

- You must declare your intent to attempt an Honors SCE in the spring of your junior year. The deadline is the 3rd Friday in April of the year before you intend to graduate.

- Your advisor must agree to allow you to attempt to achieve an Honors SCE.

- Your Honors thesis must involve anthropological theory and methods, include at least 25 relevant peer-reviewed citations, and must involve learning something new. This means you must engage in some form of fieldwork and collect and analyze primary data.

- The Honors thesis must be 50 pages in length, not including the Title Page, Acknowledgements, Table of Contents, Figures & Illustrations, Works Cited, and Appendices.

- You must meet the Rough Draft deadline. This deadline is the Friday immediately following Spring Break in your senior year.

- Your final thesis must be submitted for evaluation by the second Friday in April in your senior year.

- You must conduct a fifteen-minute public oral presentation that is exceptional.

- The faculty of the Department of Anthropology must vote the thesis to meet Honor expectations.

Double majors

        Seniors contemplating a double major may undertake a senior thesis project satisfying the requirements of both majors only with the consent of, and under the guidance of, faculty teaching in the two disciplines on this campus. Generally, the student will work with one faculty member from each respective discipline, although in the case of an International Studies double major, the student may be allowed to work exclusively with one faculty member from the Anthropology Department. Generally, the student will enroll in 2 credits hours for the SCE in each major – earning a total of 4 credits for the SCE. The content of a dual SCE must meet requirements of both majors as discussed in consultation with the advisors. Students at Washington College may not undertake a triple major.

Timeline for Senior Thesis Completion:

Fall Semester of Junior Year:

Friday after Spring Break: Preliminary senior thesis proposal due.

Last Friday in March: Department assigns your Thesis Advisor.

Third Friday in April: Outline Due. Mandatory meeting with Thesis Advisor by this date. If attempting honors thesis, declare it at this point.

Summer Between Junior and Senior Year:

Summer   Read, take notes, conduct field research, interview! Work on your thesis if possible.

Fall Semester of Senior Year:

September   Meet with your thesis advisor to discuss progress.

October   Submit a detailed outline of your thesis/project with a substantial annotated bibliography.

December   Submit your first chapter of substance.

Spring Semester of Senior Year:

January   Submit your second and third chapter of substance.

Second Friday in February   Deadline for final thesis if you would like to submit to the Lambda Alpha National Senior Award (Lambda Alpha members only).

Friday after Spring Break   Submit fully formatted and complete Rough Draft. This is a hard deadline for those who would like editing and comments before the final draft is submitted for evaluation.

Second Friday in April   Final Thesis Submitted to Advisor

Last week of April   Poster presentation of thesis/project.

Last Friday in April   By College rule, no thesis may be accepted after this date.

Please note: If you do not meet the above departmental deadlines you may jeopardize your chances for receiving thesis honors.