

Women's Studies Program
2008-2009

THE WOMEN'S STUDIES SENIOR PROJECT:

- is a one-semester, one credit project, typically done in the spring semester.
- The project requires two faculty members from two different departments on the committee (a director and a second reader). Ideally students will have taken classes with the director of the project, although not the second reader.
- The project should be based on the student's course cluster.
- The project is either a research paper between 30-40 pages or a performance or creative project ranging from film/video to performance to creative writing to music composition to other visual arts such as photography or painting.

If the Senior Project is a creative one, it **MUST** be accompanied by a 10-page paper in which the student discusses the critical context for this work in a summary and include an analysis of its content. For example, a photographic project would require the student to write an essay locating the work in genres, in photographic history and in relevant art movements.

The Committee and Timeline

- The committee must be constituted by the final day of exams, fall semester
- Once the committee is established, the student and faculty readers should schedule an organizing meeting to develop goals for the project and a timeline for completion. [see below for details on "Timeline"]
- This meeting is arranged by the student and should be held *early* in the semester.
- At this meeting, the student will submit a research proposal which will include the title, thesis, research questions, and a description of proposed research. The proposal should also discuss the feminist questions the project will address.
- Students should also include a timeline for completion.
- The student must meet with the committee at the end of the semester for a defense in which the faculty readers will discuss the completed project. [See below for more on oral defense]
- The grade will be determined by the committee at the end of the defense.
- All graduating seniors will present their research to faculty, students, friends and family at a special ceremony at the end of the semester. [See below for more on Senior Project Presentation]

****Important Note: The Institutional Review Board (IRB)**

If you are conducting surveys or doing research with human subjects, you must get approval or exemption from the Tufts Institutional Review Board. Research with human subjects can include surveys, interviewing, focus groups, and participant observation. The Tufts IRB is a panel of faculty and staff that reviews all research involving human subjects conducted by Tufts community members. The job of the committee is to ensure that research is carried out in a way that assures the protection and privacy of participants. Getting an exemption or an expedited review requires filling in forms provided on the IRB website, and we recommend you contact the

IRB office first to describe your project and ask what kind of review they recommend you request (i.e. what kind of paperwork you need to fill out). Receiving approval or exemption from the IRB is an essential part of conducting research with human subjects; without it you will not be permitted to begin your research. The process is straightforward and painless, however, and will help you develop and enrich your sense of ethical research practice and study design.

More information is available at <http://www.tufts.edu/central/research/IRB/index.htm>.

GUIDELINES FOR THE WOMEN'S STUDIES SENIOR PROJECT:

* **Director of the Project/Primary Reader:** Students should meet with the director of the project every two weeks. That is, there should be 3-4 substantive meetings with the primary reader during the semester. Such contact may be maintained by other means such as email communication, but with the proviso that the discussion is substantive and that students keep a journal print-out of the discussion undertaken in the email exchange.

* **Second Reader:** Students should keep their second readers apprised of progress and concerns throughout the semester; two meetings would be ideal, but are not required.

* **The Project:** A draft of the project is due approximately in the 11th week of the semester and must be given to both the primary and second reader of the Senior Project.

Readers comment on and recommend changes. Students must implement readers' comments and recommended changes to the draft. The revised document will comprise the final version of the Special Project. This final version will be discussed and graded at the oral defense.

The draft must be presented early enough to give readers adequate time for comment and for the student to implement the comments and produce the final draft, which is presented to the faculty committee one week BEFORE the oral defense. Students should work out a timeline with director of the project and the reader(s) for the exact dates for these stages.

* **Timeline:** All students are **required** to:

- schedule the senior project defense for the last 2-3 weeks of the semester. *It must occur no later than the last day of classes.*

- be sure that due dates set with the committee allow enough time for committee members to read the final draft, for the student to amend the final draft in accordance with their comments and requirements, and for them to have the finished, revised SSP or honors thesis in hand a week before the oral defense. *Do not give the committee the finished, revised project on the day of or even the day before the defense; give the committee a week to assess the final project before that date.*

Given these provisos, the following due dates are suggested as general guidelines:

Spring semester 2009:

- week of 30 March: final draft due to committee
- week of 6 April: committee returns draft with comments
- week of 13 April: revised final draft returned to committee members
- week of 20-27 April: oral defense scheduled–*at the latest*. (Last day of classes is Monday, April 27, 2009)

These due dates are approximations; you need to work out a concrete schedule with your committee that fits your specific needs—and theirs. However, the dates listed above are cutting it rather close. It would probably be wiser to set up a time line for the last stages of your project that starts even earlier.

* **The Project Defense:** On or before the last day of classes, the student and faculty advisors will meet for the final review and evaluation of the project. This one-hour meeting provides an opportunity for both student and advisors alike to assess achievements and areas for development. The faculty committee determines the grade based on the project at that time.

WOMEN’S STUDIES SENIOR PROJECT PRESENTATIONS

The oral presentation is a requirement for WS 193 *Senior Project*. Each presentation should be short and take no longer than ten minutes. The event is tentatively scheduled for April 28 during the late afternoon. Students are expected to stay for all of the presentations, which will then be followed by a small reception.

Students are encouraged to bring parts of their work to the presentation to share with people. Power point presentations are acceptable, but there must be adequate narration and explanation of the project by the presenter. That is, the presenter must articulate, apart from the computer presentation, about the ideas and approaches animating the SP.

Some general parameters for the presentation:

- Introduce your project as a whole. Identify/explain what part you will discuss/present today.
- You may want to mention how this project came into being. Is it a product of work you have done in the course clusters of the WS minor/major, or in other course work? Is it a new idea, a departure from but a direction based in grounds established by your studies?
- Explain how this piece of your work that you are presenting today relates to the whole finished project as you have conceptualized it; or how you hope it will contribute to the larger whole.
- Explain how this project is interdisciplinary and how it is a good example of work being done in the field of Women’s Studies.
- Plan to take questions.

Please contact the Director of Women’s Studies, Professor Modhumita Roy (x 72955; Modhumita.Roy@tufts.edu) if you have questions.