

The Senior Project in Literature

Welcome to your senior year and to the beginning of your senior project in Literature!

This document is intended to offer an overview of what is expected of students undertaking a senior project in the Literature program, and to acquaint you with the possible forms or “genres” that a senior project in our program may take.

General Information

Requirements and Structure of the Senior Year

1. Course Requirements

Students undertaking a senior project in Literature should enroll in both the senior project and the senior colloquium in both semesters of their senior year. In the first semester of your senior year, you will take LIT 401: Senior Project I and LIT 405: Senior Colloquium I; in the second semester, you should enroll in LIT 402: Senior Project II and LIT 406: Senior Colloquium II.

You will usually take an additional 2–3 courses alongside the senior project, and must ensure that you have completed requirements for graduation in both the program and the college. Where possible, you should consider taking courses in the program or elsewhere in the college that will complement your senior project by providing you with skills and knowledge that will assist and extend your research. Consult with your academic advisor if you need guidance on course selection or if you are unsure whether you’ve met the requirements to graduate.

2. Preliminary prospectus and revised prospectus

In addition to the research and writing you will undertake during your first semester, a preliminary prospectus will be due on the first Friday following fall break. A revised version of your prospectus will then be due later in the semester, in time to be consulted and discussed at your Midway Board. A prospectus is a provisional description of the nature and scope of a project as a whole. What your prospectus should ideally include will depend on the subject and genre of your project; you should discuss this with your Senior Colloquium professor and your advisor. For example, a prospectus may need to list primary texts; articulate a coherent and well-defined topic; specify a genre and include, where appropriate, models of the kind of work you hope to pursue and/or the approaches you might adopt; justify any plans for alternate formats; and assemble a list of key secondary readings that you have completed and/or plan to

complete. You will work on crafting both the preliminary prospectus and the revised prospectus in LIT 405: Senior Colloquium. Consult the colloquium syllabus for more information.

3. Midway board

By the end of your first semester, you should have produced at least one chapter or equivalent piece of writing, in sufficiently good shape that you can share it with someone not yet familiar with your project. You should also have developed a revised prospectus that outlines the nature and scope of your project as a whole. With your advisor, you will select one member of the faculty to serve on your midway board, which will be held to discuss this first piece of writing and your revised prospectus, described above (please be aware that your first choice for a board member cannot be guaranteed). Midway boards are scheduled by your advisor, in consultation with you and your additional board member.

Midway boards are not graded and even an unsuccessful board will not prevent you from enrolling in the senior project in the second semester. They do, however, provide important feedback and your performance here forms the basis of your final critique sheet for the first semester of the senior project. Your performance at the midway board, and the state of your project at this point, will often be considered as part of your final grade as boards assess the process undertaken and the extent to which the material you have produced represents sustained work over the course of the year.

You should plan to circulate midway board materials (sample chapter and revised prospectus) to board members at least one week prior to the board.

4. Final Submission

Before 5pm on the day your project is due, you should submit the following copies of your senior project:

- **Library copy:** Students completing written projects should bring one (1) unbound copy of their senior project to Ludlow on the day of the deadline. The library copy should be submitted in a 10" x 13" manila envelope with your name clearly printed on the outside. The pages should be loose; please do not clip them together or bind them in any way (the library staff will do this for you when they prepare your project to be bound and shelved). If you have not completed a written project, refer to the instructions in the Student Handbook (they are also usually circulated by the Dean of Studies office in advance of the deadline).
- **Board copies:** You will need to submit separate copies of your senior project to each of your board members. Consult with your board in advance as to whether this should be

submitted by email as a pdf or as a printed and/or bound document. Different faculty may have different preferences on this.

- **Online submission:** You will also need to submit a digital version of your senior project on or before the deadline. The link for submission for each year will be circulated to you in advance of the deadline.

5. Senior Project Board

Your senior project board will be held at some point between the deadline for submission and the end of the semester. Boards will usually consist of your advisor, your midway board member, and one other member of faculty. They are scheduled centrally, and you will receive notice of the date based on your availability and that of your board members through the division's administrator. Boards cannot be rescheduled or deferred.

Senior project boards will usually ask you to reflect on your process and to discuss your senior project both in detail and in broad conceptualization. You should come prepared with a copy of your senior project, and have reread it recently enough that you can recall details and engage in a lively conversation. Many boards will consider your performance at the board as part of the final overall grade for your senior project.

At the beginning of your board, you will be asked whether you would like to take the senior project Pass/Fail or for a letter grade. At the end of your board, the board members will ask you to step out of the room so they can confer on grades and feedback. You will usually be given your grade and/or told whether you have passed at the conclusion of your board.

Assessment Criteria

Whatever format the senior project takes, excellent work in literary studies shares a number of key elements. Work across all categories and formats will be assessed against these basic criteria:

- The production of a sustained body of work, which reflects a year of focused work on a single project. Boards will usually attend to both the final product and the process undertaken over the whole year in considering this criteria.
- Broad and deep knowledge of your field of inquiry, including a strong grasp of relevant primary literature, as well as sufficient reading in critical, historical, theoretical, interdisciplinary, and/or other secondary materials (as appropriate to the project). You should display fluency in at least one and possibly more intellectual domains,

appropriate to your topic, which means your reading should be targeted to such domains and not develop in a purely scattershot manner.

- The development of an original perspective on a text, concept, body of work, or other appropriate subject matter. Originality in this sense may encompass originality of interpretation, but it may also be shown through originality of voice or perspective in some other sense. One key component of this originality may be the development of critical autonomy, including the capacity to develop a critical and independent relationship to the ideas of other critics and theorists.
- Capacity to support claims with evidence appropriate to the nature of the project, and/or to justify choices with reference to the textual material available. In general, Literature senior projects take close and careful attention to literary and other texts as their primary form of evidence, and sophistication in literary analysis is a highly valued skill, but other forms of evidence may be appropriate depending on the nature of the project.
- The rationale of the project. You should be able to clearly articulate the logic that governs the project's conceptualization and construction, your selection of texts, methods and theoretical frameworks, and your choice of a specific genre and format.
- A logical and well-organized structure, appropriate to the topic and genre chosen, which supports the unfolding of your argument or otherwise allows readers to better grasp the nature and logic of the project as a whole.
- Clear and engaging written expression, appropriate to the chosen genre and taking into account the intended audience of the project.

Length

The length of your project should reflect sustained work over a full academic year, and under no circumstances should a senior project in Literature be shorter than 40 pages (or equivalent in a different format).

Students writing a critical project typically produce around 60 pages of writing by the end of their senior year, plus a bibliography of sources consulted. There is, however, no upper limit on Literature senior project lengths, and more precise expectations around length should be established in consultation with your advisor, taking into account the nature of work to be undertaken, in the opening weeks of the first semester of the project. Please be aware that there is no simple correlation between the length of your project and your grade; grades are awarded based on the quality, not quantity, of your project, and assessed according to the criteria outlined above.

If you choose to undertake a different “genre” or to work in a different format the length should represent an equivalent amount of work but may vary depending on the specifics of the project

you undertake. For further details, see the descriptions of senior project genres below and consult with your advisor.

Timeline and Key Dates (for students beginning a project in fall 2026)

First day of fall classes: Monday, Aug. 31

Submission of prospectus: due to Colloquium professor and advisor first Friday after Fall Break

Completion days: Monday, Dec. 14 –Friday, Dec. 18 (Students will usually schedule a midway board with their advisor and one other faculty member during or before the fall completion days. Midway writing—usually a chapter and revised prospectus—should be circulated to board members at least one week before your board.)

First day of spring classes: Monday, Feb. 1

Spring Recess: Saturday, March 20–Sunday, March 28

Senior Projects due by 5pm: Wednesday, May 5 (see Student Handbook for information on submitting the senior project)

“Genres” of the Literature Senior Project

Senior projects in Literature may take a variety of forms. In general, they should all represent a sustained engagement with literature in some form and/or a sustained application of the methods associated with literary studies.

What can I write about?

Senior projects in Literature encompass work on any aspect of literature or literary culture, from antiquity to the present day, written anywhere in the world and in any language. Literature may be studied in translation, so long as appropriate attention is offered to the process of translation itself and so long as claims made about the text acknowledge its status as a translation.

In addition to work that directly engages literary texts as such, projects in Literature may deploy the methods of literary studies to engage other kinds of texts and other objects, including new media, popular culture, and mass media, as well as philosophical and political writing. Projects may attend primarily to the operation of language and discourse in society in general, or engage specifically with literary uses of language. They may attend to oral literature, multimedia and multimodal texts or performances, as well as written texts. They may engage literary texts alongside and in conversation with non-literary texts, and may seek to make claims about specifically literary matters or about more broadly social, political, cultural, or historical questions. Projects may also make theoretical claims or interventions without specifically taking a text as their primary focus.

Critical and Scholarly Senior Projects

A critical senior project in Literature is, first and foremost, an exercise in developing an original interpretation of a work or body of works of poetry, prose, drama, biography, or literary criticism, or some other literary phenomenon. The depth of research gives you a chance to experience the excitement of scholarly work—the actual ardor of literary sleuthing—and often leads to the re-evaluation of your own critical ability. A real discovery related to a little-known or, contrariwise, canonical work, a deeper perception of its contextual complexities, and a more nuanced engagement with the text and texture of the novel or poem is what makes this undertaking both worthy of your time and worth the amount of credits awarded for it.

A critical senior project will typically be based on wide reading in literary primary sources and scholarly secondary sources, which in many cases can also serve as models for your own writing. A common format for a critical senior project is a 60-page paper consisting of two or three chapters, plus a long introduction, conclusion and bibliography, though projects may be

longer or shorter and the structure may vary depending on the needs of the project. Precise expectations are developed in consultation with your advisor early in your senior year.

The methods for producing a senior project of this type are varied and will be determined by your own interests and the work you do with your advisor. They typically include **some combination** of the following approaches (though this list is by no means exhaustive):

- **Close readings** of individual literary texts. Note that although many, if not most, critical senior projects take close readings as one of their primary methods, most projects will enrich their analysis with additional methods that situate the text(s) in other contexts or frameworks.
- **Comparative and intertextual** approaches, including comparative textual analysis; the investigation of intertextual links, references, and allusions; and the comparison as well as deconstruction of translations.
- Original **archival work**, including work with modern, ancient, or medieval manuscripts; periodicals; rare books, author's libraries, or marginalia; historical archives; author archives; and more. This may produce work that tends towards the historical, or work that involves forms of genetic, textual, bibliographic, and manuscript criticism, which deepens literary critical work by engaging with textual variants or writers' drafts and notes. Some excellent work is possible by reading non-literary archives with a literary critical eye.
- **Theoretical work**, drawing on literary theory, philosophy, intellectual and cultural history, social theory, and other relevant disciplines. A thesis may be solely theoretical, developing a novel theoretical claim via close engagement with the thought of others, or it may (more commonly) draw on theory to support and deepen your analysis of texts.
- **Historical research**, drawing on published histories and literary histories, usually with a goal of situating the literary texts within a broader historical context, or showing literature's role as an active participant in historical movements, events, or phenomena. Archival work may be a useful complement to such research.
- **Interdisciplinary research** that situates or reads literary works through their relationship to other disciplines.
- **Cultural studies and media studies**, especially in those forms that draw on literary critical or literary theoretical methods to approach popular or media texts.
- **Book history and material culture**, in which you might study the material conditions of textual production, situating literary composition within contexts and networks of material craftsmanship and technical skill or of textual reception and transmission. Projects in this

area may require the acquisition of specialist knowledge—printing practices, ink and paper production, paleography, codicology—in order to study, for example, medieval or early modern manuscript culture. Projects may alternatively require a broader conception

of literary form, paratextual analysis, and publication context in the study of phenomena like serialization, the emergence of word processing, and the commercial and institutional dynamics of literary publication.

- **Data analysis and collection** in relation to specific features of a given literary field, or some other quantifiable
- Projects on **the history of literary education**, in which you would research how a certain topic or work has been taught in secondary or higher education, through research into past syllabi, textbooks, and the like. You might ask: when did a certain work enter the curriculum? Why? What is the relationship between its place within it and the process(es) of canonization of certain works rather than others? Has the way in which the work has been taught, the methodologies taught through it, the focus on certain aspects rather than others changed? How and why? (Students with experience or training in ethnography, could also adopt an ethnographic approach to literary education, though this would require IRB approval.)

Preparation

A wide range of Literature courses prepare students to write a critical or scholarly senior project. You should take courses that support your interests, both in terms of the subject matter you hope to pursue and the methods and approaches to literary studies that may be of interest to you.

Students planning to write a critical senior project should feel comfortable writing a 10-page paper in literary studies, and should ideally have experience writing papers of 20 pages or longer. Taking a junior seminar with a requirement of a 15-20-page final paper (reliant on one or two drafts and revisions) is a very helpful last step in preparing for writing a senior thesis.

You are also encouraged to read examples of senior projects in the Literature Program over the summer, to familiarize yourself with the kind of work that the program has historically supported, though you need not feel constrained by the examples you find.

Public Writing, Adaptations, and Creative Nonfiction

Public writing seeks to constitute a public—and the distinction between passable and excellent work in this category often incorporates how thoughtfully the student conceptualizes that public, as well as the students' success across the other assessment criteria outlined at the beginning

of this document. Each piece or collection of such writing is also the invention of a particular public (so *not* the assumption of a “general audience,” which is a fiction, but the inauguration, in writing, of a conversation in/as the commons.)

Public writing and creative nonfiction incorporates work in the following categories:

- A **suite of journalistic pieces** or other forms of **public writing on literature**, displaying a sustained and in-depth engagement with a particular and definable body of literature, linked so as to produce a coherent body of work.
- A **single, sustained piece of public writing** on a literary subject, such as might, at a larger scale, become a trade book of some kind. This sort of work may take many forms and treat many topics, including but by no means limited to:
 - a biography, group biography, or historical narrative about a literary subject;
 - an argument about a literary topic, movement, genre, or text;
 - an exploration of a theme or idea, using literature as the primary site for thinking through these questions or as evidence for making an argument about them.
- A **creative-critical project**, which combines fictional or poetic elements with critical work on a text or texts. Depending on the nature of the project, this might include creative projects that centrally incorporate criticism into the text in some form. It may be helpful in some cases to include a supporting critical statement, explaining the relationship between the finished work and the research and literary analysis that underpins it.
- A creative **adaptation** of a literary work, grounded in close and careful analysis of a text, including historical fiction, and other rewritings or reimaginings of specific literary works. As with creative-critical projects, a supporting critical statement may be helpful. Regardless of whether such a statement is produced, students should be able to reflect robustly on how their adaptation engages the text in their boards.

Additional Assessment Criteria

This type of writing asks that the writer identify, directly or indirectly in the piece and certainly when asked, the audience for their project, and that they think about this in particular when writing—each work of public writing or creative non-fiction being also a way of answering the question what/who is a/the public.

Preparation

If you are considering a Public Writing or Creative Nonfiction senior project in Literature, you are strongly encouraged to have taken courses in **both** Literature **and** Written Arts before beginning your senior year, in order to develop both your critical acumen and your approach to craft.

You are also strongly encouraged to enroll in courses in Literature, L&L or across the college that prepare you to think critically about public-facing critical writing. Examples currently offered include:

- Courses in Written Arts with a specific focus on public or critical writing or creative nonfiction (Wyatt Mason frequently offers such courses);
- Courses cross-listed with Literature that focus on public or critical writing or creative nonfiction (e.g., CLAS 329: Ancient Literary Criticism with Prof. Daniel Mendelsohn); • LIT 3233: American Study (Prof. Peter L'Official's Calderwood Seminar); • Any other Calderwood Seminar in Public Writing, in any field.

Editorial and Curatorial Projects

Editorial and curatorial projects are those whose primary intellectual contribution turns on the selection, editing, and framing of a text or set of texts. Editorial and curatorial projects ask students to historicize and contextualize, and to theorize, the production of reading texts and the selection of text and/or other objects. They help readers or viewers approach a particular work or literary question anew. Projects should lead students to think through every choice made and to rearrange their own knowledge about a subject: to rearrange the givenness. Students undertaking such projects will consider what new arrangements of things in the world this opens up.

Editorial and curatorial projects should always be accompanied by some kind of critical apparatus in which your knowledge of the area is on display. This apparatus might take the form of a substantial introduction to the text or texts (at least 15–20 pages), but could also include textual annotations, commentary and notes; head notes; conclusions; exhibition wall texts and catalog materials; and other forms of supporting writing suitable to the form chosen.

Examples of work in this category may include:

- Preparation of a **scholarly edition** of a single text or linked series of texts, supported by an introduction and textual annotations. This kind of work typically requires thorough research of and close attention to archival documents (e.g., letters, diaries, notebooks, drafts), careful transcription, and the production of an extensive critical apparatus. Such an edition project of previously unknown archival materials might be a decisive step towards an actual publication (post-graduation).
- Preparation of a **“reading” edition or an anthology of texts**. Here, the focus is not necessarily on close examination of archival documents (though it may also involve this, depending on the nature of the specific project), but on the curation and selection of materials, based on thorough research of, say, the work of a writer or the historical context of a certain topic. It must be accompanied by an introduction of at least 15–20 pages, which articulates a clear rationale and a thematic thread that holds the texts together and justifies the selection of texts and the production of the anthology or final document. This kind of project entails the reimagination or reconfiguration of published or unpublished materials, aiming to present material to a reader through a new conceptual and critical framing. The documents selected here may be archival or already published, or a combination; they may be brought to light for the first time, or newly contextualized and introduced. Students undertaking a project of this type should ensure that they have conducted broad and deep research in their topic, and should avoid excessive reliance on, for instance, a small selection of published anthologies or similar compilations.

- **Curatorial work**, in the form of an in-person or digital **exhibition**, or curated materials presented in some other form. Whatever form is chosen, curatorial work requires close, careful engagement with a range of materials, arising from broad and deep reading in the subject of the exhibition or curated project. It is evaluated on the care with which you have considered the process of selection, and the clarity with which you can offer a rationale for the project, as well as your depth of knowledge of the project's subject matter. Curatorial projects must be accompanied by an extensive critical apparatus, including detailed descriptions of the overall rationale of the project and some kind of framing document or statement of aims, as well as wall texts or other accounts of individual objects.

Additional Assessment Criteria

Since processes of selection and small decisions about texts are often of the essence in editorial and curatorial projects, students should carefully attend to these processes, and articulate the rationale for their decisions in both the project's scholarly apparatus and in boards. Judiciousness in such judgements represents a core part of the assessment criteria for such projects.

You should also be able to answer the question: Why is the work of this project better done in an editorial or curatorial form than in a critical long essay?

Preparation

Students interested in pursuing an editorial or curatorial project might benefit from taking courses which include training in editorial approaches to literature, including:

- LIT 341 The Book Before Print
- LIT 318 Hannah Arendt: The Human Condition and/or LIT 337 The Life of the Mind—Exploring its Critical Edition
- LIT 362 Global Modernism
- LIT 2381 Translating Tact
- GERM 467 Correspondences: Figures of Writing (offered in German only)

The skills required for much editorial and some curatorial work can also be developed “on the job,” and in this case, you should consult with your advisor and/or a faculty member with experience in such areas for guidance and support.

Translation

Translation senior projects are supported by coursework in the Literature Program. While some students complete a stand-alone translation senior project in Literature, many combine

Literature with another program within the Division, interdivisional programs, or programs located outside L&L (for instance, Anthropology, Film, History, and Theater and Performance).

Projects in translation render literary prose, fiction, poetry, journalistic prose, historical and archival documents, archaeological work, and materials emerging from art, theater and performance, in addition to materials employed in the social sciences. Every translation senior project connected to Literature should have a critical introduction that speaks to the text's history, situating it within the criticism both in the target and the source language, and offering a statement on method that is informed by debates within translation studies. Students may consider footnotes and other marginalia toward the recommended 10 to 20 pages for the introduction.

Translation Projects: Some Specific Guidelines

An excellent translation requires not only a high level of mastery of the foreign language, but also an ability to carefully craft prose or poetry in English. You will choose the text to translate in consultation with your advisor. We highly recommend that you find a text not yet translated into English, but translation of previously translated texts can be accepted—especially when previous translations are problematic, censored, or present evident lacunae, which might be part of the reasons why a new translation is needed. The authors you chose to translate may not be well known outside their own country or region, which gives you the exciting task of presenting them for the first time to an English-speaking readership. We cannot specify the length of the translation a priori, since much depends on the genre and the level of difficulty. You should consult with your advisor on this, and be willing to adjust accordingly as the project goes forward.

Translation projects require a 10- to 20-page critical introduction. It is not uncommon for the discussion in the final project board to revolve largely around your introduction, so it's important that you gauge your efforts accordingly.

Translation projects can revolve around a single author or one specific work. But they can also be a collection of texts of disparate genres around a given topic that you find especially relevant. They can also be an anthology of texts or chosen excerpts (defined by genre, a time period, a common dialogue—length may vary), that you critically select and choose to focus on. An anthology or a collection of texts in translation does not have to limit itself to a single question. It does not need to belong to the same discipline either (texts which are not from literary sources can be used too if you can motivate their choice). Each selected collection of translated texts, however, requires its critical *raison d'être*. The reasons for your choice(s) should be openly addressed and discussed in your introduction, with contextual references and the guidelines

that lead the process. No translation is the definitive translation, and your selection can help you motivate and understand your own work.

Preparation

Students are encouraged to draw upon coursework as they prepare for the senior project.

Courses can include, but are not limited to:

- LIT 210: Translation, In Theory
- LIT 331: Translation Workshop
- LIT 2319: The Art of Translation
- LIT 245: Palestinian Literature in Translation
- Coursework towards proficiency in the source-text and target language if students are not native speakers already.
- Coursework in genre(s), context(s), and discipline(s) related to the student's anticipated area of focus, both within the Literature program and intersecting programs and concentrations.

Additionally, students are encouraged to immerse themselves in the many opportunities on the Bard campus and beyond to interface with translation. Students may:

- Attend the regular talks and conference of the Bard Translation and Translatability Initiative.
- Attend talks through programs including Literature, Written Arts, Language and area studies programs and concentrations, Theater, Anthropology, and other venues on campus invested in questions of the art of translation and its practical application.
- Get involved with campus publications related to translation and multilingualism here at Bard and in the greater Hudson Valley. Bard's students-run journal *Sui Generis* is one option that offers students opportunities to interact with the practice of translation, and extend to issues of dissemination and audience engagement as they relate to the root meaning of translation in the sense of moving meaning from one place to another.

Format and Presentation

Most Literature senior projects take the form of written text, totalling at least 40–60 pages of critical writing or the equivalent of public writing, editorial work, curatorial work or translation. Some projects, however, may require alternate formats or media. A Literature senior project need not take the form of a printed text in cases where the nature of the materials, approach, or some other aspect of the project dictates an alternate format.

Some possible formats and media for the Literature senior project include:

- Written text;
- Written text with visual components, illustrations, photographs, graphs, or other accompanying images;
- Website, digital edition, digital exhibition, or other online multimedia format; • Exhibition or exhibition design, including accompanying written documents;
- Podcast or other audio project;

- Video essay or film; • Other multimodal project.

Students planning to complete a project that departs from the written form may do so only with the approval and support of their advisor. If you are considering a non-traditional format, you should consider (and be able to articulate for your advisor and board members) the answers to the following questions:

- Why does *this* project need to take *this* form? What is the underlying rationale that necessitates that the project use the proposed format or medium?
- Do you have the necessary skills to undertake a project in this format, or can you acquire them rapidly enough for it not to interfere with or distract from the central work of researching, analysis and writing, which forms the core of all senior projects in Literature? In most cases, students will need to have already acquired the key skills before beginning their senior year.
- What models exist of literary studies work in the format I am proposing? What are my inspirations? What existing works will my final project look like?

Whatever format you choose, you should work with your advisor early in your senior year to establish milestones for completion that are appropriate to the usual process of development in your chosen format, including a realistic goal for what work will be completed by the midway board. For some non-traditional formats, this may mean you plan to circulate a script or some other piece of writing for the midway.

Resources and Support

There are many resources available across the Bard college community and beyond to support students working towards senior projects. The following gives only a small sampling of relevant resources. You should consult with your advisor and other faculty about specific resources targeted to your project, including relevant library resources in the broader area.

Bard's Guidelines and Regulations for Senior Projects

The [Student Handbook](#) offers detailed information about how senior projects must be prepared and submitted. Find this information under "Appendix II: Senior Project Preparation and Presentation" or by navigating to this website: <https://www.bard.edu/dosa/handbook/>

Ethics approval for Literature senior projects

Students writing senior projects in Literature typically do *not* need Institutional Review Board approval (ie, an official ethics clearance for people conducting research that uses human participants). The Bard IRB has this to say about which projects require approval:

Your project needs to be reviewed if it meets ALL the following criteria:

- Your research is defined by a systematic investigation
- Your research has as its goal the generation of generalizable or universal knowledge
- Your research involves human participants.

For example [. . .], interviewing prisoners for a magazine article on prison life or students for a magazine article on college life would not need to be reviewed because its goal is not the production of generalizable or universal knowledge—the information generated is specific to the people interviewed in their current and specific situation. However, interviewing the same people for an anthropological study would require review because it would be a systematic investigation (in line with disciplinary norms) and would have as its aim to contribute to generalizable or universal knowledge. Although in this case the substance of the interviews might be quite similar, the scientific goals of the anthropological study bring it into the sphere of the IRB.

If you are working with human participants at all (i.e., if you are planning to conduct any interviews, ethnographies, or anything of this nature), you should speak to your advisor immediately, who can help you to contact the IRB Board and/or faculty with experience in this kind of research to determine whether you need such approval.

Examples of Past Senior Projects

The library keeps a record of past senior projects across the college, which you can consult:

- A full and searchable database of senior projects is available here: <https://digitalcommons.bard.edu/undergrad/> You may want to search this database for projects on topics similar to yours, for example.
- A smaller and more focused list of examples specifically in Literature is available here: <https://libguides.bard.edu/sprojexamples/langlit> These may offer a good place to start your explorations.

Research Resources

Whatever genre you adopt, the senior project in Literature is a research project which is likely to require you to make use of research tools that go beyond what you have previously used. The Stevenson Library will be your first port of call for this work, but you should also be aware of the following resources, available through the library and beyond:

- **Borrowing privileges for seniors:** seniors can check out books from the library's main circulation collection for the full academic year.

- If you need to access a book that Bard's library doesn't hold, in many cases you will be able to access it using the library's **Interlibrary Loan** service (ILL). Information about how to use ILL is available here: <https://libguides.bard.edu/ILL>
- For individual research help, you can contact Alexa Murphy (the Literature librarian) or use the [appointment request form](https://www.bard.edu/library/ask-a-librarian.php) to schedule a meeting with any librarian: <https://www.bard.edu/library/ask-a-librarian.php>
- As students who attend school in New York state, you are eligible to apply for a **library card at the New York Public Library**. This card gives you access to the NYPL's online resources, as well as the right to access materials in their very extensive physical holdings, which include some extremely impressive research libraries (which you cannot borrow from), as well as circulating libraries (which you can borrow from), as well as some amazing archives. Further information about joining the NYPL is available here: <https://www.nypl.org/library-card/new>
- **Archives:** Bard's archives include some interesting collections, including the Arendt collections, recordings of poetry readings held at Bard through the years, and many other things of interest to students of literature. You may also be interested in the CCS collections, which include archives with a more visual arts focus. Archives in the broader area are held at many locations in New York City, throughout the state, and beyond. Talk to your advisor if you are interested in pursuing this kind of research.
- **Citation-management software:** undertaking a large-scale research project of this kind can involve challenges with organizing your material and keeping track of what you have read. The library offers resources on using [Zotero](#) for citation management.

Other Support from the Library

The library also offers numerous other resources, which you are encouraged to look into, including:

- **Research guides:** the [literature research guide](#) and the [Literature Senior Colloquium Guide](#) offer resources and guides to undertaking research in Literature: <https://libguides.bard.edu/literature> and <https://libguides.bard.edu/litseniorcolloquium> •
- **Senior carrels:** there will be a lottery in September for senior carrel assignments.
- **Writing support:** Jane Smith (jesmith@bard.edu) provides writing coaching and support out of the library. Students can contact her directly to meet with her anytime.

- **Shut Up and Sproj** is a co-writing event, where students can write together. Keep an eye on your email for details about this and other events, workshops, and training.

Learning Commons

The Learning Commons boasts an embarrassment of riches when it comes to resources and support for senior project writers. They offer regular **workshops** throughout the year, which will be advertised via email, especially targeted to students writing senior projects. You can also access **one-on-one tutoring** for project writing support, as well as learning strategies tutoring for time management and strategies for executing parts of the project.

Funding for Senior Projects

There are several sources of funding on campus, available to support costs associated with research. For instance, if you need to travel to archives or libraries to conduct your research, these funds could pay for travel and accommodation. Deadlines are usually mid to late in the fall semester, so you should look into this as early as possible. Further information, including a list of available funding sources, is available through the Dean of Studies office, and at this link: <https://www.bard.edu/deanofstudies/senior-projects/>