Senior Thesis Guidelines – THDA 798

If you are majoring in General Theatre, you will write a thesis during your senior year. Usually, your advisor will be the advisor for General Theatre. If you want to work with a different advisor, you will need the approval both of that advisor and of the General Theatre advisor. Students from other option areas need to consult the option advisor as to whether a senior thesis is possible for that area of study. Otherwise, a capstone must be completed.

The Senior thesis in Theatre and Dance is an opportunity for Theatre and Dance majors to bring their interpretive (and creative) abilities, their writing skills, and their understanding of cultural traditions (one or more areas of the theatre and dance arts) to bear on a long-term, independent project in the form of a thesis that will serve as the culmination of their Theatre and Dance studies at the University of New Hampshire. The Senior Thesis for Theatre and Dance majors exemplifies each student’s accumulated knowledge and mastery of analysis and/or creativity.

It is vital that the student wishing to begin a thesis demonstrate sufficient preparation through coursework, have a good working knowledge of the topic proposed, and show evidence of strong research, creative, and writing skills.

At a minimum, the thesis will comprise thirty pages. The thesis must address a question that you have explored during your time as a Theatre major. While the thesis may draw upon your personal experience, you must call upon at least six external academic sources.

You must meet with your advisor to discuss your progress a minimum of once every two weeks. During the semester in which you are writing your thesis, you will register for THDA 798. Please address all questions to David Richman, David.Richman@unh.edu who is currently serving as advisor to General Theatre.

Students wishing to write a creative project in the form of a play must have taken a course in Playwriting. Students wishing to undertake an analytical, critical, historical, or Theoretical paper must have taken at least one semester of Theatre History and at least one other course in the History/Theory area. (For purposes of this document, Directing is to be counted as a course in the History/Theory area.) Whether it takes the form of a creative or critical paper, the senior thesis is usually 30-40 pages in length.

The student should work closely with at least one mentor. In some cases, the student and/or the mentor may wish a second reader to participate. Students writing theses for honors should have a panel of at least two readers, the mentor and a second reader.

The student should meet with the mentor for continuing guidance. By mutual agreement, the student and primary advisor should create a deadline schedule for when to produce a proposal, outline, and a bibliography. Dates should also be set for when to turn in a first draft, a second draft, and by semester's end, the thesis in its final form. It is the student’s responsibility to seek out their advisor to make these arrangements. If you fail to comply, you could fail and have to spend more time in school.

At semester's end, the student will engage with the mentor or mentors in a conversation about the work: this conversation will be part thesis defense, part exit interview. The final grade will reflect the quality of the ongoing work, the final product, and the post-thesis conversation.