

A SHORT, PRACTICAL GUIDE TO THE CW THESIS

SUPERVISOR ASSIGNMENT

In May or June, you will have received an email from the Co-ordinator of Creative Writing, notifying you of your assigned supervisor. **(If you did not, please contact the co-ordinator immediately.)** We always try to assign supervisors based on a student's stated preference (if any), and artistic compatibility. However, please be advised that for various reasons not all faculty are available to supervise at any one time.

GRADUATE ORIENTATION

Incoming graduate students have a chance to meet with CW faculty members in a meeting held early in their first semester. Not all faculty teach graduate courses at any one time, so this is an opportunity to meet with us, discuss the thesis process, and ask questions. If you are unable to attend orientation, we encourage you to email your assigned advisor and arrange a meeting at your mutual convenience.

WORKING WITH A SUPERVISOR

Once you know your supervisor, arrange an initial meeting to discuss your thesis goals, go over requirements and set up a work schedule. How often you submit, and in what quantity, will be determined by mutual agreement. Work over the summer may be subject to more infrequent meetings.

- 1) Communication is important; please let your supervisor know when you anticipate submitting work, and they should let you know when to expect their comments. Normally a meeting is scheduled around the discussion of the comments. Extended silences or absences may result in the loss of your supervisor.
- 2) If a supervisor cancels a meeting, it should be re-scheduled immediately. Both supervisor and student should expect emails to be answered in a timely fashion. Response to your work may come in oral or written form, or both. You should feel that your supervisor has read the work thoroughly, understood what you are trying to achieve, and offered concrete suggestions as to how to strengthen it. However, supervisors are not copy editors. Typos, and grammatical errors, should be corrected by you before submitting any draft. Please refer to the *Canadian Style Guide* or *The Chicago Manual* for guidelines of usage, spelling and format.
- 3) Most supervisors require a minimum of two weeks to read submitted work. They may require **up to a month** during busy times of the semester. However, if a supervisor routinely takes more than four weeks, without giving an adequate reason why, please contact the Co-ordinator of Creative Writing.
- 4) If you wish to meet a particular deadline (for graduation, work or travel plans), ensure that your work is submitted to your supervisor in a timely manner. They are under **NO OBLIGATION** to permit you to meet a particular deadline if your work is not of an

acceptable standard, or if they are given too short a period in which to read, comment and approve the thesis. You may also be liable for any extra fees incurred due to an extended timeline of completion.

- 5) If, for any reason, a conflict arises with your supervisor, and direct consultation cannot resolve it, please contact the Co-ordinator of Creative Writing. If necessary, another supervisor will be allocated to you.
- 6) If your thesis changes genre, and either you or your supervisor feel your work requires a different area of expertise, please contact the Co-ordinator of Creative Writing. If necessary, another supervisor will be allocated to you.

THESIS WORKSHOP

A workshop is held mid-February to go over details of the Short and Long Form proposals, and other aspects of the thesis process.

IMPORTANT DATES

PROPOSALS

Each proposal, particularly the long one, is an official declaration of your intent to write a thesis; writing it should not only help you contextualize and communicate your project but clarify your sense of how to proceed in the writing of it.

15th April, of your first year: Short Form Proposal:

Briefly (250 word maximum) outline your intended project (subject, genre, supervisor). This proposal must be approved by your supervisor before submission to the Graduate Program Assistant (GPA) in the English Office.

15th September, of your second year: Long Form Proposal:

This proposal (500-1,000 words, maximum) focuses on the following (applicable) elements of your thesis: story/plot; themes/ideas/arguments; structure; style; genre; form; influences.

(Examples are available at the Proposal workshop, or from the GPA. If you remain uncertain, please consult your supervisor.) You ought to begin working on this proposal in the summer, with your supervisor. This proposal must be approved by your supervisor before submission to the GPA in the English Office.

On completion, it is reviewed by the Graduate Committee. (If revisions are required, your supervisor is notified.)

Please note: If the subject or form of your thesis alters significantly during the course of writing it, a new long form proposal may be required.

THESIS SUBMISSION DATES

For spring graduation: February 15th (latest) to readers, April 1st to Graduate Studies/Spectrum. You must also apply to graduate by January 15th.

For fall graduation: June 15th (latest) to readers, September 1st to Graduate Studies/Spectrum. You must also apply to graduate by July 15th.

PARAMETERS

Fiction: 25,000 words (approx. 70 pages) minimum, 250 pages maximum. 12 point font. Double spaced.

Poetry: 40 pages.

Drama: A full-length play.

Please confer with your supervisor if the genre of your thesis falls outside these categories. Further permission may be required from the Creative Writing committee.

FORMATTING

Please follow the [guidelines](#). For any technical issues or questions please confer with the GPA (Graduate Program Assistant).

THESIS READERS

As of 2019, the thesis defense as a formal discussion was discontinued. However, the thesis remains an important document of your progress through the program, and will culminate in the thesis being assessed, and commented on, by two faculty members (Creative and/or Academic).

Your readers will be determined in consultation with your supervisor and, in some cases, with the Creative Writing Coordinator, several months before you plan to submit your thesis. Your supervisor, or in some cases the Creative Writing Coordinator or Graduate Program Director, will approach prospective readers. While you are encouraged to recommend readers whose expertise seems best suited to your project, involvement of your preferred readers cannot be guaranteed for reasons of faculty workload and availability.

Readers have four weeks to read and comment on the work. Their comments are then submitted, in writing, to the supervisor. If the thesis is approved, these comments are then forwarded to the student and will form the basis of a final discussion of the thesis. Readers are not obligated to participate in this discussion but may be invited to do so at the student's request.

(If the thesis is deemed NOT ready for submission to the Graduate Studies Office, your supervisor will resume work with you on a further draft. It is, however, the supervisor's role to ensure that only work of acceptable quality is submitted, so this seldom happens.)

Finally, the thesis is not required to be of (immediately) publishable quality. Excellent work may take more time than we can afford you, or than you can afford to spend here. The thesis is designed to represent, to the best of your present ability, your accomplishments within the two years of this degree. Many of the comments within the readers' reports will focus on what you can do to take your manuscript forward to the next stage.

SPECTRUM

This is Concordia Library's online research repository, which includes all theses. As there may be implications for publishing, [you may put an embargo on your work](#) by writing to the Thesis Office (thesis@concordia.ca), identifying yourself as a creative writing student, and requesting a four-year embargo. Should you make no request, your work will be made freely available to anyone who is interested. A regular embargo of two years is also possible, though we advise taking advantage of the Thesis Office's recognition of the particular circumstances of creative writing students and requesting a four-year embargo from the outset.

Further questions about theses and Spectrum should be directed to the Thesis Office in the School of Graduate Studies: thesis@concordia.ca.