

SS 400: Senior Research Thesis Proposal and Course Application
Social Sciences Department
Western Connecticut State University

The Social Sciences Senior Research Thesis allows you to research topics that are meaningful to you. By combining your personal interest, experiences and critical thinking skills which you have obtained in previous classes, you will come to a greater understanding of and appreciation for the Social Sciences discipline you have chosen. When considering topics for your thesis, be creative and think about what topic you want to explore further. Senior Research Thesis should be a fun and rewarding experience where you will create questions that reflect your primary research interests. You will be able to discover answers by thoroughly researching and conducting experiments. The scientific inquiry process will help to guide you through this process and might even lead to a great discovery!

The following are imperative for success in writing your Senior Research Thesis: **ASK questions, INVESTIGATE a possible answer, CONNECT your findings to the real world, DISCUSS your findings with your peers and department faculty, and REFLECT on what it all means.** Following the steps in this packet will not only assist you with creating a proposal, but also guide you through preparing and being organized for the Social Sciences Senior Research Thesis course.

Please be aware that in order to reserve a seat in the following semester's section(s) of SS 400: Senior Research Thesis, you must submit the following to the department secretary as early as possible as seating is granted on a first come first served basis. Seating preference must be given to the students who are the closest to graduation. If necessary, students with fewer credits may have to take SS 400 in the following semester.

Please keep a copy of this form for your records

- **An unofficial copy of your transcripts with the prerequisites for SS 201, SS 300, and SS 400 highlighted, and**
- **This completed application form, signed by you and a faculty advisor of your choice, in your area of study.**
- **Prerequisites for SS 201:**
 - Completion of any introductory course in ANT, ECO, SOC or PS with a grade of C or better
 - WRT 101 (W1) or placement into a Writing Intensive (WI) course (W2)

Prerequisites for SS 300:

- SS 201 with a grade of C or higher
- MAT 100 or appropriate placement (i.e. any math at or above MAT 100)
- Junior or senior status

Prerequisites for SS 400:

- SS 201 with a grade of C or higher
- SS 300 with a grade of C or higher
- Completion of Writing Intensive (WI) or Writing Intensive (W2)
- Completed SS 400 Senior Research Thesis Proposal and Course Application
- SS 400 should normally be taken during the last year in the major
- Transcripts with SS 201, SS 300 and SS 400 prerequisites highlighted
- Permission processed by secretary in WA 224

I. Choose one or more Senior Thesis Topic(s):

Selecting a topic is one of the most difficult things about conducting a research-based paper for SS 400. Keep in mind as you choose a topic that you will have to live with it for an entire semester. Once you choose a topic, think about how the whole project will unfold over the course of the semester.

List two possible topics for your Senior Thesis.

Please consider consulting a Social Sciences faculty member in your major area of study for assistance.

Topic I:

Topic II:

II. What research question(s) relate to the core of your research interest? What is your research objective?

These questions/this objective must reflect your primary research focus at this time in order to begin to define the idea(s) further in preparation for your senior thesis research project. If you decide to change your thesis focus, you will need to withdraw your approved application from the department secretary and begin a new application.

III. Create Your Hypothesis

The next step is to turn your topic question(s), research and variables into a hypothesis. When writing your hypothesis you state how you believe that the independent variable will affect the dependent variable and why you believe that to be.

Examples of hypotheses from the social sciences include:

- Investors seek low-risk investments in economic downturns.
- The Salem witch trials were an expression of tension of political and social power in that community.
- Students' feelings of connectedness to school are an essential element of their academic success.

Each of these specifies a relationship that may or may not exist under particular conditions. They are testable statements about relationships between different factors.

Hypothesis:

IV. Give Bibliographic Citations for 3 sources

Source I:
Source II:
Source II:
Additional Sources:

V. What type of research methodology are you considering to operationalize your topic/focus?

For example, a field study or ethnography (participant observation and interviewing); survey research and/or interviewing; an experimental design; using available data for content analysis; a critical analysis of and response to previously existing data sets; a comparative historical analysis; and/or the study of primary and secondary records. Specify whether you wish to conduct qualitative or quantitative research.

a. What data will you collect?

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b. How will you collect data/what is your source of data?

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c. Will this be qualitative ____ or quantitative ____ research? (Check one.)

VI. Have you completed any other research on the same or a similar focus to the one you have selected above? If so, please list:

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VII. You are now prepared to meet with a faculty member from your major to discuss your senior thesis idea and approach. He/she must sign the agreement statement to verify that you have been approved for the focus you have proposed. Please note that the final development of your research will take place in SS 400, with the assistance of the course instructor.

VIII. Student Information (The information provided below must be printed legibly):

Name	_____
Student ID Number	_____
Social Sciences Major	_____
Expected Graduation Date	_____
University Email Address	_____
Telephone Number	_____

IX. Agreement Statement & Signatures

I recognize that scientific research is a labor-intensive enterprise that demands a high level of personal commitment, time, and effort outside of the scheduled class meeting time. By signing this application, I'm agreeing to dedicate the necessary time and effort to complete the Social Sciences Senior Research Thesis in accordance with requirements outlined in the course syllabus. I will also uphold the principles of Western Connecticut State University's Academic Honesty Policy,* which I have read and understand. Based on the Western Connecticut State Universities Academic Honesty Policy,* I recognize that any form of information fabrication, cheating, and/or plagiarism represents an extremely serious violation that will result in a failing grade and notification sent to the Dean of Student Affairs.

By signing below, both the student and the faculty advisor acknowledge reviewing the proposed senior thesis idea and approach. The advisor's signature verifies approval for the focus proposed in this application. The student and faculty advisor indicate agreement by signing below. Please note the final development of your research will take place in the Senior Research Thesis course.

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- **This completed application form, signed by you and a faculty advisor of your choice, in your area of study.**

Student Name Printed _____

Student Signature & Date _____

Full-time Faculty Printed _____

Full-time Faculty Signature & Date _____