

A SHORT, PRACTICAL GUIDE TO THE CW THESIS

SUPERVISOR ASSIGNMENT

You should have received an email in May from the Co-ordinator of Creative Writing, notifying you of your assigned supervisor. **(If you did not, please contact Kate Sterns kate.sterns@concordia.ca 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 at the Graduate Orientation. 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

Early in your first semester, 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.

Communication is extremely important.

- 1) 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 to answer emails in a timely fashion. Response to your work may come in oral or written form, or (ideally) 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, punctuation, 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), you must ensure that your work is submitted to your supervisor in a timely manner. Supervisors 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 your work requires supervision from someone with a different area of expertise, again, please contact the Co-ordinator of Creative Writing. If required, another supervisor will be allocated to you.

IMPORTANT DATES

15th April (1st year): Short Form Proposal

For the short form proposal, briefly (250-350 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), Liz Burgess, in the English Office. (Grad.English@concordia.ca)

15th September (2nd 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. Please consult 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 Creative Writing 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 14th (latest) to readers, upload the approved thesis by April 1st to Graduate Studies/Spectrum. **You must also apply to graduate by January 15th.**

For fall graduation: June 14th (latest) to readers, upload the approved thesis by September 1st to Graduate Studies/Spectrum. **You must also apply to graduate by July 15th.**

(For all relevant dates for graduate students:

<https://www.concordia.ca/students/graduate/important-dates.html>)

PARAMETERS

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

Poetry: 40 pages.

Drama: A complete play. (This may include a One Act 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 outlined [here](#). For any technical issues or questions please confer with the GPA (Graduate Program Assistant).

THE PROCESS

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 a reader, who will write a Thesis Report.

Your reader is determined in consultation with your supervisor. The reader may be drawn from the Creative or Academic stream. In general, a supervisor will apply to the reader on the student's behalf.

A reader has four weeks to read and comment on the work. 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 with the supervisor.

(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. However, it is the supervisor's role to ensure that only work of acceptable quality is submitted, so this rarely 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 reader's report will focus on how to take your manuscript forward to the next stage of the drafting process.

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 for a specified time if desired.

<https://www.concordia.ca/gradstudies/students/thesis-based/process/send-your-final-submission.html#:~:text=Embargo,justification%20to%20the%20Thesis%20Office.>

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