Liberal Arts College Fall 2020

#### **LBCL 496 HONOURS ESSAY SEMINAR**

#### **Wednesday 18:00-20:00**

**via ZOOM**

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**Office hours: TBA**

**Course description**

This course will help you plan and write a successful honours thesis, developing skills that provide a foundation for all research and writing. You will learn how to familiarize yourself with the literature in your area of interest, develop a focused thesis topic, take useful notes, and then plan and organize an honours thesis through prewriting. By the end of the **first semester** you will have a working bibliography, a focus statement/draft introduction, and a short draft/detailed plan of your thesis. In the **second semester**, emphasis will be on research and writing; class time will be devoted to honing your critical skills, reading and commenting on each other’s work. Once you have a more complete first draft, we will work on revision at the levels of structure and content. You will then read and polish second drafts. By the end of the course, you will have produced a well-researched, clearly expressed honours thesis.

**Important information: Online term**

Due to the current exceptional circumstances, all seminars will be held online, at least in the first semester. Attendance and participation are required. Zoom seminars will operate as close to in-class seminars as possible. Please make sure that your camera is on, that your mike is off when others are speaking, and that you participate with questions, thoughts, and comments. With your help, we should be able to create an atmosphere which replicates the seminar classroom until we can meet in person once again.

Content belonging to instructors shared in online courses, including, but not limited to, online lectures, seminars, course notes, and video recordings of classes remain the intellectual property of the instructor. It may not be distributed, published or broadcast, in whole or in part, without the express permission of the faculty member. Students are also forbidden to use their own means of recording any elements of an online class or lecture without express permission of the instructor. Any unauthorized sharing of course content may constitute a breach of the Academic Code of Conduct and/or the Code of Rights and Responsibilities.

Stable internet and computer access are necessary. Try to find a quiet, private, and comfortable place for classes. You may find headphones helpful for concentration. Note that the instructor cannot answer any technical questions. Consult with IITS for all technical issues, access issues, and Moodle issues at: help@concordia.ca or 514-848-2424 ext. 7613.

This is a challenging time, requiring flexibility, creativity, and care. Please contact me if you are experiencing difficulty, and I will do the best I can to help.

**General Requirements:**

* **Come to class**: attendance is mandatory. It is your responsibility to notify the instructor of anticipated absences and, when appropriate, provide medical notes to document them.
* **Pay attention to deadlines** and make progress on research and writing.
* **Meet with your thesis director** regularly to discuss your work in progress.
* **Respond to each other’s work thoroughly and responsibly**.

**Evaluation & Term Work**:

* Focus statement and annotated bibliography (due Nov. 1) 5%
* Responses to peers’ work and class participation 15%
* Seminar presentation\* 10%
* Short section (c. 10 pages) and outline (due Dec. 2) 10%
* First draft (due Feb. 3) 10%
* Second draft (due March 10): 10%
* Thesis\*\* (due April 9): 40%

**Assignment notes:**

All assignments must be formatted to conform to MLA or Chicago style. Students should keep copies of their work.

\* Seminar presentation: you will choose a short article or chapter of a book relevant to your thesis, present a critical reading of it, and begin to outline its relevance to your developing project. You must make your selection available to other students and the instructor at least a week before the presentation.

\*\* Thesis: The final version (up to 40 pages) is to be delivered both to the instructor and to your thesis director. The thesis director gives the thesis a final grade. The instructor evaluates your overall work and assigns the final course grade.

### Course Schedule

(subject to change, depending on class size and needs, etc.)

**Fall Semester**

Wed. Sept. 9 Introduction. What is an LAC honours thesis?

Wed. Sept. 16: Interactive reading, note taking, citeable notes, building a literature review. Strategies for getting reading done. Evaluating relevant literature.

Wed. Sept. 23: Research strategies.

Wed. Sept. 30: On focus statements and outlines.

Wed. Oct. 7: *Seminar presentations*. Annotated bibliography. Developing a regular writing routine. Ways to overcome writer’s block.

Wed. Oct. 14: *Seminar presentations*. How to revise. Editing your sentences.

Wed. Oct. 21: *Seminar presentations*. Constructing a strong argument. Types of evidence. Using evidence to support your argument.

Wed. Oct. 28: *Seminar presentations*. Types of feedback. Peer review: giving, receiving, and using feedback.

**\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*** **Focus statements and bibliographies due November 1 \*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\***

 [Cc to class and thesis director.]

Wed. Nov. 4: *Focus Statements*.

Wed. Nov. 11: *Focus Statements*. The dangers of perfection. Fine-tuning your argument, introduction, evidence, structure and conclusion.

Wed. Nov. 18: *Focus Statements*.

Wed. Nov. 25: *Focus Statements*.

Wed. Dec. 2: **Short section of thesis and provisional outline due!** [Cc to class and thesis director.]

**Winter Semester**

Wed. Jan. 6: Roundtable on writing; specific problems will be addressed (to be determined by the group). Section workshop.

Wed. Jan. 13: Section workshop.

Wed. Jan. 20: Section workshop.

Wed. Jan. 27: Section workshop.

Wed. Feb. 3: **First draft due!** [Cc to class and thesis director.]

Wed. Feb. 10: Draft workshop.

Wed. Feb. 17: Draft workshop.

Wed. Feb. 24: Draft workshop.

**Wed. March 3: Mid-term break (no class)**

Wed. March 10: Draft workshop. **Second draft due!** [Cc to class and thesis director.]

Wed. March 17: Draft workshop.

Wed. March 24: Draft workshop.

Wed. March 31: Draft workshop.

Wed. April 7: **Honours thesis due!** [Cc to thesis director.]