

TOPICAL STUDIES

Comprehensive Senior Paper/Project

Objective

The purpose of the comprehensive senior paper is to integrate the areas of academic study in the topical field with research interests relating to that particular subject. The paper should demonstrate depth and comprehensiveness. Evidence of insights beyond the obvious and the ability to evaluate and synthesize ideas is essential. It is expected the paper be more than a commentary or evaluation of student satisfaction with the topic. The paper should have a research component and should meet the expectations and approval of the faculty advisor and the associate dean.

Before writing a paper, you must choose a subject or topic with advice from your faculty advisor. After choosing a subject or topic, narrow the scope sufficiently to insure you explore only a part of your general subject, but you explore it thoroughly. Your paper is your controlling idea, tying together and giving direction to all other separate elements in your degree program.

A **Proposal Form** must be submitted and approved by your faculty advisor and the associate dean before in-depth work begins on the paper.

Research Paper Guidelines

Your paper might include primary and secondary research. Primary research would be personal interviews or evidence you have gathered on your own or original observations/investigations. Secondary research is based upon other speakers' and writers' material.

A STUDENT MAY NOT SUBMIT A PAPER WRITTEN FOR ANOTHER CLASS AS THE TOPICAL MAJOR RESEARCH PAPER. Plagiarism can result in a failing grade or expulsion from the college.

The paper can be approached in several ways:

It can grow out of a research interest generated in a class or seminar during your academic career.

It can be done as independent study for credit.

It can be a project rather than a paper (with the approval of the faculty advisor and associate dean as indicated on the **Proposal Form**).

The following standards must be observed:

- The paper should be 20-25 pages in length (on consultation with the faculty advisor).
- APA or MLA style used for references.

- The paper must be double-spaced with standard margins in place.
- Pages should be numbered.
- The paper must be typed with the following margins:
 - left margin: 1.5 inches (if bound), 1 inch (if unbound)
 - right margin: 1 inch
 - top margin: 1 inch
 - bottom margin: 1 inch (including bottom-centered page number)

The paper is submitted with the **Approval Form** to your faculty advisor by a mutually determined deadline to meet the following deadlines for submission to the associate dean:

March 1 for May graduation
June 1 for August graduation
October 15 for December graduation

Be sure to allow time for revisions from your faculty advisor before final submission to the associate dean.

The final grade for the comprehensive senior paper is **a letter grade: A, B, C, D or E.**

For those who select a project in lieu of a paper, the project must be fully explained in the **Proposal Form**, and approved by the student's faculty advisor and the associate dean as indicated.