

# OBERLIN

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## **The 400-Level Course Requirement News about Senior Tutorials, Senior Seminars, and Honors in 2007-08**

All majors in English are required to take one of three alternative 400-level courses. Any of these will fulfill that English major graduation requirement.

The three options for fulfilling the 400-Level Course Requirement include:

- a **Senior Tutorial** for one semester (only for senior majors), or
- a **Senior Seminar** for one semester (also open to juniors and even non-majors), or
- an **Honors Project** for two consecutive semesters (only for qualified senior majors).

**Applications for all these courses will be due on the Monday before Spring Break, March 19. Attached here are the applications for Senior Tutorials and Senior Seminars in Fall 2007 and Spring 2008 and applications for Honors for Fall 2007-Spring 2008 (for May 2008 graduates).** The forms can also be downloaded from the English Department website at <http://www.oberlin.edu/english/news/news.html>.

If you have not yet completed this requirement and plan to graduate in December 2007 or May 2008, please turn in your application by the March 19 deadline even if you aren't planning to enroll in a 400-level course until Spring 2008.

Shortly before registration begins on Monday April 16, we will let all applicants know to which Senior Seminar or Tutorial they have been assigned. Even if you think you'd like to pursue Honors, you need to apply for Senior Tutorials or Senior Seminars, just in case you are not selected for Honors.

Honors, as the third option, will be open only to rising seniors (second-semester juniors who will become seniors in Fall 2007 and who will graduate in May 2008). The department will consider applications in light of each student's qualifications and then invite selected outstanding students to do Honors. Although a department GPA of at least 3.33 is a minimum requirement to be allowed to do Honors, most Honors students have earned a 3.50 or higher average.

In addition to students' academic standing, approval for Honors will depend on a convincing proposal, including both a well-considered theme and a willing faculty director. We cannot guarantee even the most promising student admission if we don't have a faculty director with an interest and some expertise in the topic and approach, so make sure you plan your topic by talking with (a) faculty member(s) you might work with. Your advisor, Phyllis Gorfain (chair of the English Department Committee for the

400-Level Course Requirement), or T. S. McMillin (chair of the English Department), may be able to help you locate possible directors in the department.

Here is more information about the three options in general along with details of particular courses, teachers, and times :

**Senior Tutorials** offer students a collaborative but largely independent work experience in intimate courses with 5-9 students pursuing individual writing projects culminating in a 20-page essay or project. Faculty supervisors facilitate the groups through a variety of pedagogical methods. While some professors offer more structured guidance and others prefer more self-determination in the writing process, all the tutorials require students to spend some time engaged in group work to study methods and theories of research and criticism and to discuss drafts and work-in-progress. Students may be asked to adjust their individual projects to fit into the areas of expertise of their professors and possibly even to coordinate their topics with other students in their tutorial so that coherent workshop groups may be formed. Senior Tutorials will be normally taken for 4 hours of credit, but may be taken for fewer hours (2 or 3) to accommodate scheduling demands; however, everyone enrolled will be expected to do the same amount of work.

**Senior Seminars** are small colloquia (enrolling a maximum of 12 students) specializing in a particular set of literary works or a defined literary topic or problem. Senior Seminars will center on a body of shared readings, and student work will culminate in an individually designed paper or project in the range of 15-20 pages. While independent research and writing form the core of student work in Senior Seminars, students share a common body of material and theories as a take-off point for their individual work. Senior Seminars are offered for 4 hours of credit.

**The Honors Program in English** will allow students to spend two full consecutive semesters in study, research, and writing. Student work will culminate in an original thesis ranging from 35-50 pages and will be directed by a faculty member in the Department of English. At the close of the second semester, each Honors student will defend his or her thesis at an examination with other members of the department, discussing the essay and research with them. The first semester will be spent on reading, research, and formulating a complete prospectus for the paper. Writing the draft will begin by Winter Term at the latest, and a final polished thesis will be completed by mid-April. Like the Senior Tutorial, Honors is normally taken for 4 hours (each semester), but may be taken for 2 or 3. Successful work in the Honors Program will allow a student to be considered for Honors at graduation, but it does not guarantee such Honors.

Sincerely yours,

The English Department Committee for the 400-Level Course Requirement  
Phyllis Gorfain (Chair), DeSales Harrison, and David Walker



**Spring 2008 Senior Seminar:**

437. *Ars Poetica: Poetry, Art, Thought* 4 hours  
4HU, WR

Second Semester. What are poems for? What good do they serve? How do poets describe, explain, or justify their art? The questions will guide us in a broader inquiry into poetry and its place among other arts. Poets will include Horace, Shakespeare, Pope, Wordsworth, Dickinson, Stevens, Bishop, Ashbery, Graham. Critics will include Lu Chi, Plato, Coleridge, Jakobson, Vendler, Bloom, Grossman. 1700-1900 OR Post-1900 (not both). *Consent of instructor required. Enrollment limit: 12.*  
Mr. Harrison TuTh 9:35-10:50 am