

Information about the 400-Level Course Requirement and Senior Tutorials and Honors in 2009-10

All majors in English are required to take one of three alternative 400-level courses. Any of these will fulfill the 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, *but not available in 2009-10*), or
- an **Honors Project** for two consecutive semesters (only for qualified senior majors).

Completed applications for these courses will be due on the Monday before Spring Break, March 16. Attached here are the application forms for Senior Tutorials in Fall 2009 and Spring 2010, and for Honors for Fall 2009-Spring 2010. The forms can also be downloaded from the following url: <http://oberlin.edu/english/news/news.html>.

If you have not yet completed this requirement and plan to graduate in December 2009 or May 2010, please turn in your application by the March 16 deadline even if you aren't planning to enroll in a 400-level course until Spring 2010.

Shortly before registration begins on Monday April 13, we will let all applicants know their assignments: to which Senior Tutorial they have been assigned or if they have been accepted for Honors. We may not be able to tell you your assignment until the Friday before registration. **Those applying for Honors must also complete the top of the Honors application form to give Senior Tutorial preferences, 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 2009 and who will graduate in May 2010). 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, students who qualify for honors must have completed all of their major requirements (*we might approve someone who needs one course more to fulfill their requirements*).

Here is more information about the three options:

Senior Tutorials offer students a collaborative but largely independent work experience in intimate courses with 5-10 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

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to accommodate scheduling demands; however, everyone enrolled will be expected to do the same amount of work.

[This information is for future academic years: no seminars will be offered during 2009-10.] 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 a full academic year in study, research, and writing. Student work will culminate in an original essay of about 35 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 include participation in the Honors Colloquium and reading, research, and early draft of the essay. A final polished thesis is due by mid-April. Like the Senior Tutorial, Honors is normally taken for 4 hours (each semester), but may be taken for fewer hours. Successful work in the Honors Program will allow a student to be considered for Honors at graduation, but it does not guarantee such Honors.

In addition to students' academic standing, approval for Honors will depend on a robust major (a strong number of courses in the department and the major requirements mostly completed), a convincing proposal (including a well-considered theme), a willing faculty director, and a strong writing sample. We cannot guarantee even the most promising student admission if we can't appoint a faculty director with an interest and some expertise in the project. Therefore make sure you plan your project by talking with (a) faculty member(s) you might work with. Your advisor or William Patrick Day (chair of the English Department) may be able to help you locate possible directors in the department. No proposal for honors is ever approved if the student has not consulted some member(s) of the department.

Sincerely yours,
The English Department Curriculum Committee

Senior Tutorials Offered in 2009-10

Fall 2009: ENGL 400-01 A. Needham Tu 7-9:30 pm
Fall 2009: ENGL 400-02 J. Pence MWF 10:00-10:50

Spring 2010: ENGL 400-01 L. Baudot MWF 11:00-11:50
Spring 2010: ENGL 400-02 T.S. McMillin MWF 2:30-3:20
Spring 2010: ENGL 400-03 S. Zagarell Tu 7:00-9:30 pm

Honors in 2009-10

Fall 2009:
ENGL 450: W.P. Day
MWF 2:30-3:20

Spring 2010:
ENGL 451: W.P. Day
TuTh 4:30-5:45