

**Requirements Towards the Fulfillment of Honors in English**  
**A Creative Thesis in Poetry**

**Eligibility:** 3.5 major 3.0 overall GPA; sign up for three hours of Independent Study each semester, for a total of six credit hours.

**Prerequisites:** A211 (Introduction to Creative Writing); A312 (Writing Poetry) or A412 (Poetry Workshop).  
**Consent of Professor.**

**Begin March 1 of junior year:**

Student generates a summer reading list to include:

1. Two books of essays on poetics.
2. Five books of poetry in translation.
3. Five volumes of contemporary poetry.
4. Ten selections from poets predating 1960. The classics—for instance, the *Selected Poems of W.B. Yeats*, *Shakespeare's Sonnets*, Wordsworth's *The Prelude*, etc.

This reading list is due to the Thesis Advisor March 31, and reading can begin at any point after approval of the list.

**By September 1 of senior year:**

1. Summer reading list must be completed. For ten of the twenty books of poetry, a one-page, single-spaced essay is due which explores the poetics of each particular author. Knowledge of poetic theory gleaned from the books on poetics can inform the critical lexicon of these papers. For instance, the student might read Denise Levertov's essay "Some Notes on Organic Form" and then discuss how a poet like John Berryman is or is not a poet practicing organic form.
2. Ten original poems must be handed in to the Thesis Advisor. These should be poems the student intends to include in the thesis. They can be poems from prior workshops, as long as they are the student's best work. They do not need to be at a finished stage, but neither should they be first drafts.
3. A new reading list is due comprised of ten books of poems: two in translation, four contemporary, four classics. This will be your reading for semester one.

**Student and Thesis Advisor will set a regular meeting time.** Meetings will occur every other week for 45 minutes for a minimum of seven meetings. If the student has an unexcused absence and fails to show up for a scheduled meeting, the Thesis Advisor will then designate the project as an Independent Study instead of an Honors Thesis. If the student fails to show up for two scheduled meetings, the Thesis Advisor may resign from advising the project.

The Thesis Advisor will advise a maximum of two theses. When there are two, those two students are required to meet four times together each semester, trading sets of 5 poems each time, writing comments on the poems, and discussing their work together.

**By January 10 of senior year:**

1. 20 finished poems are due.
2. Response papers to five books from first semester.
3. A new reading list of five books for spring semester of the student's choice.

**By March 31 of senior year:**

Final draft of the thesis is due to the Thesis Advisor for remarks, minor suggestions and grading. The final thesis, to be eligible for Honors, must contain 25-30 poems as well as a reflective essay of 5-10 pages which will set the thesis in the context of the readings engaged throughout the year. For example, the student may explore which poetics they reject or accept, which authors influenced the poems and where that influence is manifest in the student's work, whether imitations of specific poets were ventured, and what the student has learned from the entire scholarly and artistic project.

**By April 5** the Thesis Advisor will return manuscript to the student, who will address any final issues and submit the thesis to the Thesis Advisor and second reader by **April 15. No changes can be made after that date.**

**Second Reader:** Every honors thesis will be read by a second reader, either the Director of English Department Honors or someone deputed by that person, who will offer consultation on a grade but who will not grade the work.

The purpose of the second reader is to offer a kind of objective vantage point on all theses written in a given year, as well as to act as the last proofreader. The thesis, however, should be technically perfect at the time of submission to the Director of Departmental Honors. **Do not bind the thesis until it has been reviewed by the second reader.**

**If these requirements are not met, the status of the course will change to an English 499 Independent Study and will be graded according to the amount accomplished. The Honors designation is reserved for students whose ambition and scholarship meet our highest expectations.**