

## **DISTINCTION IN ETS**

Undergraduate ETS majors will earn the designation “Distinction in English and Textual Studies” when they demonstrate outstanding academic accomplishment by maintaining a 3.4 overall GPA and a 3.6 within the major, by enrolling in and completing the Senior Seminar in the fall semester of their senior year, and by successfully completing a senior thesis project (which will include enrolling in the Thesis Workshop in the spring semester of their senior year). The “Distinction” designation will be granted upon graduation.

The Senior Seminar will demand engagement in a graduate-style seminar course and the thesis project will require substantial research, critical analysis, and writing. These two projects will serve as valuable preparation for students interested in graduate school, and both will provide impressive credentials on applications to graduate school, law school, or other professional degree programs.

### **Eligibility and Recruitment**

Each March, eight junior ETS majors who meet the 3.4 overall/3.6 within the major GPA requirement and who are recommended by faculty will be invited to participate in the Distinction program.

### **The Senior Seminar**

Distinction students will enroll in and complete the Senior Seminar (ETS 509, 3 credits) in the fall semester of their senior year. This selected topics course is designed to train students to apply critical methodologies to cultural texts, to do independent research, and to formulate and produce a critical essay. The course should give students a coherent seminar experience, but its content need not relate specifically to the thesis projects they will pursue in the spring semester.

Students in the Distinction program may take a graduate-level seminar with the consent of the instructor as a substitute for the Senior Seminar. Students must receive a B+ or better in order to count a graduate course toward their Distinction requirements.

The fall semester Senior Seminar will remain open to ETS majors who are not in the Distinction Program, with permission of the instructor. All students enrolled in the Distinction Program will have automatic entry into the Senior Seminar and will not need permission from the instructor.

Enrollment in the Senior Seminar will be capped at fifteen students.

### **The Thesis Project**

The thesis project will require students to formulate, research, and write a 30-page paper with the guidance of a faculty advisor. Theses should be sustained, focused, critical

arguments, modeled on a seminar paper or a journal article. They are not intended to be sprawling mini-dissertations.

The Director of Undergraduate Studies will hold two mandatory meetings for all Distinction students during the fall semester. The meetings will emphasize the need to find a faculty advisor, to settle on a topic, and to begin preliminary research before the spring semester.

Each student enrolled in the Distinction program will be responsible for finding a faculty advisor for his or her thesis project during the fall semester of his or her senior year. No individual faculty member should advise more than two theses in a given year. After a faculty member has agreed to serve as a thesis advisor, he or she will sign a form which the student will file with the Director of Undergraduate Studies by the day before Thanksgiving Break. Topics should be developed during the fall semester and some preliminary research conducted before the beginning of spring semester. The bulk of the writing and research will be conducted in the spring, in conjunction with enrollment in the Thesis Workshop.

## **The Thesis Workshop**

Students in the Distinction program will enroll in and complete the 3-credit Thesis Workshop course in the spring semester of their senior year. The Thesis Workshop will meet once per week for a three-hour period and is intended to serve as a forum for small-group mentoring and directed research. The course will involve developing research questions, compiling an annotated bibliography, writing and workshopping a thesis proposal, discussing writing strategies, presenting drafts, and engaging in collegial peer critique. The Workshop will not include much required reading because it is intended to support students as they take on the work of researching their theses. Instead, readings will be limited to short pieces on writing/research strategies and readings that students select themselves. The Thesis Workshop grade will be based on the thesis proposal, bibliography, oral presentations, workshop participation, and the final thesis itself. It will be possible to receive a passing grade in the Thesis Workshop even if the final thesis is judged “unsatisfactory” for Distinction. The Workshop instructor will be responsible for facilitating the sessions, reading each student’s thesis, attending the oral hearings, and conferring with primary thesis advisors and, in the case of a split decision, the Director of Undergraduate Studies to judge each thesis “satisfactory” or “unsatisfactory.”

The Thesis Workshop instructor may not teach the Senior Seminar in the fall nor may he or she serve as a primary advisor on any thesis.

Enrollment in the Thesis Workshop will be capped at fifteen students. The only other students eligible to enroll in the Thesis Workshop will be Honors students working on an Honors thesis but not participating in the Distinction program.

## **Evaluation**

Each thesis will be read and commented upon by the thesis advisor and the Workshop instructor.

Students will present and answer questions about their theses in an hour-long oral hearing, attended by the thesis advisor and the Workshop instructor. After the hearing, the readers will confer to decide whether to judge the thesis “satisfactory” or “unsatisfactory” for Distinction. In the case of a disagreement between the advisor and the Workshop instructor, the Director of Undergraduate Studies will read the thesis and consult with the two readers to decide whether to judge the thesis either “satisfactory” or “unsatisfactory.” Theses will not receive letter grades. A student who receives an “unsatisfactory” on his or her thesis may still receive a passing grade in the Thesis Workshop if the workshop instructor feels such a grade is warranted.

## **UNIVERSITY HONORS AND DISTINCTION IN ETS**

Students enrolled in the University’s Honors program who meet the GPA requirements will be invited to participate in the Distinction program on an altered schedule and with slightly altered requirements.

### **Recruitment and Eligibility**

Each October, Junior ETS majors in the Honors program who meet the GPA requirements will be invited to participate in the program.

Honors students who do not meet the Distinction program’s GPA requirements, do not receive faculty recommendation, or fail to complete the requirements for earning Distinction may graduate with Honors but will not graduate with Distinction.

### **Thesis**

The department will accept the longer, 60- to 100-page “Capstone Projects” the Honors program requires, provided they meet the Distinction program’s requirements for the development of a critical argument.

Honors students enrolled in the Distinction program will be responsible for finding a faculty advisor during the fall semester of their junior year.

### **Thesis Workshop**

Honors students will enroll in the Thesis Workshop in the spring of their junior year rather than waiting until their senior year. They will be required to participate fully in the class and complete all the assignments relating to research questions, bibliography, proposal-writing, drafts, oral presentation, and peer critique. Honors students will not be required to submit a final thesis draft at the completion of the Workshop, but instead will submit a polished portion of their Honors thesis, which will be a minimum of 20 pages

long. Their Workshop grade will be calculated by the Thesis Workshop instructor based on their participation, completion of assignments, and the 20-page submission.

Honors/Distinction students who wish to study abroad during the spring semester of their junior year may petition the DUS to do an independent study with their thesis advisor during the fall of their senior year in place of the Thesis Workshop. However, the department strongly advises Honors/Distinction students to organize their plan of study to accommodate study abroad during the fall of their junior year to avoid this conflict.

Honors students who are not enrolled in the Distinction program will be eligible to enroll in the Thesis Workshop if there is room in the class. They will be graded according to the requirements for Honors students, but they will not be considered for the Distinction designation.

### **Senior Seminar**

Honors students participating in the Distinction program will enroll in the Senior Seminar in the fall of their senior year, after completing the Thesis Workshop. Honors/Distinction students may take a graduate-level seminar with the consent of the instructor as a substitute for the Senior Seminar.

### **Evaluation**

Students will present and answer questions about the 20-page portions of their Capstone projects submitted for fulfillment of the Thesis Workshop in an hour-long oral hearing, attended by the Workshop instructor, the advisor, and any additional readers.

Combined Honors/Distinction Capstones will be submitted in April of the senior year. Each Honors/Distinction Capstone will be read and commented on by the Thesis Workshop instructor who worked with the student the previous spring, the thesis advisor, and the Director of Undergraduate Studies. The readers will confer to decide whether to judge the thesis “satisfactory” or “unsatisfactory” for Distinction. In the case of a disagreement between the advisor and the Workshop instructor, the Director of Undergraduate Studies will read the thesis and consult with the two readers to decide whether to judge the thesis either “satisfactory” or “unsatisfactory.” The student will submit a signature sheet to be signed by the Workshop instructor and the Capstone advisor and then filed with the Director of Undergraduate Studies.

An Honors student who completes the Thesis Workshop and Senior Seminar and then decides not to complete his or her Capstone project may still be eligible for Distinction. The student will need to revise and resubmit the twenty page portion of the Capstone originally submitted as fulfillment of the Thesis Workshop. The revision should bring the original chapter into line with the requirements of the Distinction thesis: a 30-page sustained, focused, critical argument, modeled on a seminar paper or a journal article. The project’s advisor and the Workshop instructor will read the revised paper and will

decide whether or not to award the project Distinction. Students will not need to schedule an additional oral hearing.