

**Delta State University  
Department of Art  
Senior Thesis Guidelines**

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**Senior Thesis Guidelines for BFA Students**

**Objective of Senior Thesis**

The senior thesis project and exhibition is the capstone experience of the BFA program. This thesis demonstrates your ability to conceive, plan and execute a body of work appropriate to a professional exhibition. The senior thesis project should represent a cohesive, aesthetically unified, technically accomplished group of works. You will be asked to explain and defend the conceptual framework and process of your senior thesis work in a series of meeting with your thesis committee, culminating in a final critique of your completed exhibition installation.

**Preparing for Senior Thesis: The Semester Before**

You should start to prepare for your senior thesis project the semester before you plan on enrolling in the senior thesis course. During that semester you will (1) attend a senior thesis orientation, (2) form a senior thesis committee that will guide you through your thesis project, (3) develop a production schedule for your senior thesis project, and (4) prepare a proposal that you will submit to your committee before the end of the semester.

**1. Senior Thesis Orientation**

Attend a senior thesis orientation to learn about the objectives of the senior thesis and the different components of the senior thesis project.

**2. BFA Committee**

The semester before you plan on enrolling in the senior thesis course, you will form a thesis committee consisting of three members. The committee will be responsible for guidance and assistance in completing your senior thesis work, in planning your senior thesis exhibition, and for assessing whether you have successfully completed the requirements for the senior thesis.

**How to establish your senior thesis committee:**

You are required to have at least three committee members. Customarily the head of your concentration will serve as chair of the committee. The committee should include one other full-time faculty of DSU's art department. With the approval of the head of your concentration you may select a member of another department at DSU or an artist from the area as your third member. If you are proposing a non-faculty committee member, you must obtain prior approval from your committee chair. Contact the prospective committee member to request their participation on your committee. Notify the prospective committee member why you have selected them, what kind of guidance you think they can provide you, and why you would be honored by their participation. Thank them for their willingness to serve on your committee.

#### **How to schedule your senior thesis meetings:**

You will meet with your committee at the end of the semester prior to beginning your senior thesis course to discuss your proposal and set up meeting times. During your senior thesis semester you will meet with your committee at least 5 times.

#### **4. Plan Your Senior Thesis Project**

Meet with the chair of your senior thesis committee right after pre-registration for thesis and at least one other time before the end of the semester to discuss your ideas for a senior thesis project. The committee chair will work with you to determine appropriateness and whether your proposed project is within the scope of what can be accomplished in the allotted period.

#### **5. Proposal for Senior Thesis Project**

After consulting the chair of your committee, prepare a comprehensive typewritten project proposal for your committee which should include a supporting narrative as well as sketches/images. The proposal should explain the nature of the project, how it will be implemented, the nature of the senior thesis exhibition, and should include an approximate schedule of project execution through the course of the semester.

### **Senior Thesis Semester**

To complete your senior thesis you will need to **enroll in ART 499 Senior Thesis**.

#### **Committee Meetings**

During your thesis semester, you will meet at least 5 times with your committee to discuss your work and your progress towards completion of your thesis project and exhibition. The committee will evaluate the quality and quantity of work, assist in editing your artist's statement, and advise you regarding preparation for the exhibition.

The first meeting with your committee should take place during the first week of the semester.

#### **Final Critique**

Your final critique with your committee will take place during finals week. At this point, your thesis project should be completed and properly installed in the gallery. The purpose of the final critique is to evaluate the outcome of your senior thesis project based on its content,

craftsmanship and whether it presents a unified vision and assign a grade for your senior thesis project.

### **Senior Thesis Documentation**

The following documentary material should accompany your thesis:

1. Title page listing your name, the title of your project, the semester and year of completion, the names and titles of your committee members
2. A short bio
3. A 1-page artist statement
4. A 5-page long discussion of your thesis project (you will find detailed instructions below)
5. Photographic documentation of your completed thesis project

All documentary materials are to be submitted through Canvas before your final critique. Bring a paper copy of your documentary material to your final critique.

Your discussion of your senior thesis project affords you an opportunity to write about your work, exploring and situating its art-historical, theoretical, and personal sources and precedents; its form and process; its motivation and its interpretation. Discussion of your senior thesis project should include the following:

- Introduction/overview of your senior thesis project
- Sources and precedents for your work
- Discussion of your process
- Self-evaluation

### **Evaluation of Your Senior Thesis Project**

The final grade for your thesis project is based on the committee's evaluation of your final project as well as the progress of your thesis project. The chair of your committee will discuss the committee's evaluation with you after your final critique.

#### **Evaluation criteria:**

- weekly meetings with your thesis advisor
- completion of 5 meetings with your committee
- thesis progress
- analysis of the work in the exhibition: conceptual strength, quality, quantity, aesthetic consistency, and whether it demonstrates proficient use of materials and techniques.
- ability to explain and defend the concept and execution of the work
- exhibition design and installation
- quality and completeness of the student's portfolio and supporting materials.

### **Senior Thesis Exhibition**

The director of Fielding Wright Art Center Gallery will meet with all senior thesis students at the beginning of February to allocate exhibition space, discuss how to prepare for your senior thesis exhibition, and provide a timeline for submitting supporting materials for the exhibition.

The senior thesis exhibition usually opens on the day of commencement with a reception for participating students and their guests. The exhibition usually runs until the end of June.

### **De-installing Senior Thesis Project**

Your senior thesis project is not complete until you have de-installed your work and cleared the gallery. De-installation of your work is part of the grade for your senior thesis project, failure to de-install the work by the deadline given by the gallery will result in changing the thesis grade that appears on your transcript to an incomplete.

## **Senior Thesis Checklist**

### **First Semester of Your Senior Year**

- Attend senior thesis orientation
- Formulate your senior thesis committee.
- Develop your senior thesis proposal.
- Review your proposal with your committee chair.
- Discuss your proposal with your committee.

### **Thesis Semester**

- Make sure that all academic and studio requirements for the BFA degree have been or are being met.
- Register for ART 499.
- File for graduation at the office of the Dean of Arts and Sciences.
- Meet with senior thesis committee the first week of the semester. Thesis meetings occur on Fridays and will be scheduled by the department.
- Meet with your committee 5 times
- Attend meeting of senior thesis students with gallery director to discuss gallery procedures
- Inform gallery director about your gallery needs (pedestals, access to electric outlets, etc.)
- Submit your artist statement and label information to gallery director.
- Prepare documentation for your thesis project.
- Submit documentation prior to your final critique.
- Install exhibition.
- Schedule final critique.
- De-install your work at the end of the Senior Thesis Exhibition.

## **Appendix:**

### **Appendix A: Senior Thesis Proposal Template**

### **Appendix B: Senior Thesis Documentation Template**

### **Appendix C: Senior Thesis Committee Meetings Evaluation Form**

### **Appendix D: Senior Thesis/Senior Project Evaluation Form**

## **Senior Thesis Proposal Template**

After consulting the chair of your committee, prepare a comprehensive typewritten project proposal for your committee which should include a supporting narrative as well as sketches/images. The proposal should explain the nature of the project, how it will be implemented, the nature of the senior thesis exhibition, and should include an approximate schedule of project execution through the course of the semester.

### **Cover Page:**

**Title of Your Thesis Project**

**Proposal for a Senior Thesis Project**

**Submitted to the Delta State University Art Department**

**By Student Name**

**Semester and Year**

**Committee Chair: Name of Committee Chair**

**Committee Members: Name of Committee Members**

**Accepted: Space for Signature of Committee Chair**

**Date: \_\_\_\_\_**

### **Outline for Senior Thesis Proposal**

- **Introduction of your senior thesis project**
- **Discussion of the concept informing your senior thesis project**
- **A brief discussion of how you are situating your project in relationship to historical and contemporary art practices**
- **Description of media and methods that you will employ in completing the project**
- **Material cost**
- **Detailed timeline for completion of the project**

## Senior Thesis Documentation Template

### Cover Page:

**Title of Your Thesis Project**

**A Senior Thesis Project**

**Submitted to the Delta State University Art Department**

**By Student Name**

**Semester and Year**

**Committee Chair: Name of Committee Chair**

**Committee Members: Name of Committee Members**

**Committee Chair:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Committee Member:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Committee Member:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

### Senior Thesis Project Outline:

- **A short bio**
- **A 1-page artist statement**
- **A 5-page long discussion of your thesis project**

The paper should be approximately 5 pages in length, double-spaced and must include the following:

- Introduction of your senior thesis project
- Discussion of the concept informing your senior thesis project
- A brief discussion of how you are situating your project in relationship to historical and contemporary art practices
- Technical Information
- Bibliography
- List of individual pieces that are part of your thesis project (identify each work by title, date, medium, dimensions)

- **Photographic documentation of your completed thesis project**

Include a DVD with digital images of your work.

- Guidelines for the Documentation of your Creative Works
- Still Works / Images: JPEGs sized at a minimum of 1000 and a maximum of 2000 pixels wide, maximum 4 megabytes.
- Time Based Works: H.264 or Quicktime
- Label each file with your name, title of work, date.

**Senior Thesis Meeting Assessment Form**

To be completed by thesis committee chairperson and used for assessment of student’s semester-long senior thesis progress.

**Date:**

**Senior thesis student:**

**Form completed by:**

1. Based on the work displayed, I feel this student has made strong progress in response to the feedback received from the previous meeting.

5	4	3	2	1
Excellent	Good	Average	Below Average	Insufficient

2. Adequate pace and completion of artworks since the previous meeting.

5	4	3	2	1
Excellent	Good	Average	Below Average	Insufficient

**Comments including expectations for next meeting:**

**Senior Thesis Final Evaluation**

To be completed by thesis committee chair person and signed by all committee members.

**Date:**

**Senior thesis student:**

**Thesis Committee Chair:**

**Thesis Committee Member:**

**Thesis Committee Member:**

	Percentage of Grade	
Weekly meetings with your thesis advisor and completion of 5 meetings with your committee	10%	
Thesis progress	10%	
Analysis of the work in the exhibition:	40%	
conceptual strength		
quality		
quantity		
aesthetic consistency		
proficient use of materials and techniques		
Ability to explain and defend the concept and execution of the work	10%	
Exhibition design and installation	10%	
Quality and completeness of the student's portfolio and supporting materials	20%	
<b>Final Grade</b>		