

## **A Practical Guide to the Creative Writing Thesis.**

### **Important Dates**

#### **May-June: Supervisor Assignment**

You will receive an email from the Director of Creative Writing, notifying you of your assigned supervisor. Please be advised that due to workload, maternity leave, sabbatical and other work-related issues, not all faculty will be available to supervise at any one time. However, we do make every effort to assign supervisors based on a student's stated preference (if any), artistic compatibility and availability.

#### **Graduate Orientation**

Incoming graduate students have a chance to meet with CW faculty members in a meeting held early in the first semester. Not all faculty teach graduate courses at any one time, so this is an opportunity to meet with us, discuss the thesis process, and ask questions. If you are unable to attend orientation, we encourage you to email your assigned advisor and arrange a meeting at your mutual convenience.

#### **Mid-February: Thesis Workshop**

A workshop will be held to go over details of the Short and Long Form proposals, and other aspects of the thesis process. Details of time and place will be advertised in January.

#### **15<sup>th</sup> April, of your first year: Short Form Proposal**

Briefly (250 word maximum) outline your intended project (subject, genre, supervisor). This proposal must be approved by your supervisor before submission to the Graduate Secretary in the English Office.

#### **15<sup>th</sup> September, of your second year: Long Form Proposal**

This proposal (500-1,000 words, maximum) focuses on the following (applicable) elements of your thesis: story/plot; themes/ideas/arguments; structure; style; genre; form; influences. (Examples are available at the Proposal workshop, or from the Graduate Secretary. If you remain uncertain, please consult your supervisor.) You ought to begin working on this proposal in the summer, with your supervisor. This proposal must be approved by your supervisor before submission to the Graduate Secretary in the English Office.

On completion, it is reviewed by the Graduate Committee. (If revisions are required, your supervisor is notified.)

**Please note: If the subject or form of your thesis alters significantly during the course of writing it, a new long form proposal may be required.**

#### **1<sup>st</sup> February: Thesis Submission**

This ensures a SPRING graduation. **The defense will take place in early March.**

### **15<sup>th</sup> May: Thesis Submission**

This is for a FALL graduation. **The defense will take place in late June.**

#### **Working with a Supervisor**

1. Once you know your supervisor, arrange a meeting to set up a work schedule. How often you submit, and in what quantity, will be determined by mutual agreement. Work over the summer may be subject to more infrequent meetings. However, you may expect to meet with your supervisor a minimum of three times per semester and via email, if not in person, outside of semester.
2. If a supervisor cancels a meeting, it should be re-scheduled immediately. Students may also expect emails to be answered in a timely fashion. Response to your work may come in oral or written form, or both. You should feel that your supervisor has read the work thoroughly, understood what you are trying to achieve, and offered some concrete suggestions as to how to strengthen the work. However, supervisors are not copy editors. Typos, and grammatical errors, should be corrected by you before submitting any draft. Please refer to the CANADIAN STYLE GUIDE or THE CHICAGO MANUAL for guidelines of usage, spelling and format.
3. Equally, please ensure that you are in regular communication with your supervisor, who should be kept advised of your plans.
4. Most supervisors require a MINIMUM of two weeks to read submitted work. They may require **up to a month** during busy times of the semester. However, if a supervisor takes more than four weeks, without giving an adequate reason why, please contact the Director of Creative Writing.
5. If you wish to meet a particular deadline (for graduation, work or travel plans), ensure your work is submitted to your supervisor in a timely manner. They are under **NO OBLIGATION** to permit you meet this deadline if your work is not of an acceptable standard, or if they are given too short a period in which to read, comment and approve the thesis. If this occurs, you may be liable for any extra fees incurred.
6. If, for any reason, a conflict arises with your supervisor, and direct consultation cannot resolve it, please contact the Director of Creative Writing. If necessary, another supervisor will be allocated to you.

#### **Parameters**

**Fiction:** 60 pages minimum, 250 pages maximum. 12-point font. Double spaced.

**Poetry:** 50 pages

**Drama:** A full-length play.

<http://www.concordia.ca/content/dam/sgs/docs/handbooks/thesispreparationguide.pdf>

**(Some elements of the thesis requirement are currently under review by the Creative Writing Committee. Please confer with your supervisor if you think your thesis subject may fall outside these parameters in any way.)**

### **Thesis Defence**

As a general rule, a defence will take place within 6 weeks of submitting your thesis. After submission, copies are distributed to your readers who will be chosen by the supervisor, in consultation with the student, and (if required) with the Director, Creative Writing. Readers have four weeks to read and comment on the work. Their comments are submitted, in writing, to the supervisor. If the thesis is deemed ready to defend, these comments will be forwarded to the student. Closer to the defence date, you should have a conversation with your supervisor to help formulate a response to the readers' observations about your work.

(If the thesis is deemed NOT ready for a defence, your supervisor will resume work with you on a further draft. It is, however, the supervisor's role to ensure that only work of acceptable quality is submitted, so this seldom happens.)

For the defence, you *may* prepare an opening statement of between five and ten minutes. This might outline the inspiration for the thesis, aspects of the creative process, and/or touch on (without responding fully) to the reader's comments. **This opening statement is not mandatory.**

Please remember that defence is a poor name for what takes place. The committee is interested in seeing what you have learned while at Concordia, and how you have applied that to your work. You are not being asked to *defend* your creative choices, but to articulate the reasons behind them

Finally, the thesis is not required to be of (immediately) publishable quality. Good work takes more time than we can afford you, or than you can afford to spend here. Please look on this as a university requirement, therefore, and **get it done.**