

SEWANEE SCHOOL OF LETTERS
ABOUT THE M.F.A. THESIS

All M.F.A students must complete a thesis. This is a substantial creative manuscript: a novel or sustained nonfiction narrative, a collection of short stories or essays, or a collection of poems. Length for the M.F.A. thesis may be anywhere from 80 to 200 pages of prose or 40 to 50 pages of poetry. Each student should purchase a copy of the *MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers (7th Edition)*. Students may also be interested in purchasing the *MLA Style Manual and Guide to Scholarly Publishing (3rd Edition)*, though it is not required.

Though work on the thesis may begin at any time after required course work has been completed, the thesis proposal process takes place during the term in which a student completes her eighth course. The Thesis Registration Form is due by September 1.

Thesis work carries six hours of graduate credit, so students should register for six hours of English 599. They may register for thesis hours in the Fall, Spring, or Summer terms, and may register for all six hours in the same term or for three hours at a time. Banner registration deadlines will be communicated by the School of Letters Office. The student need not pace her writing process precisely to her registration for hours: she may, for instance, register for all six hours in the fall term but continue to work and confer with her advisor during the spring. She must, however, complete the thesis during a year in which she receives credit for ENGL 599, and must have completed or be registered for her final hours of English 599 by the time the Thesis Defense takes place. A student who registers for six hours of English 599 has, essentially, a claim on two semesters of her thesis director's time and attention.

Credit hours are charged to your Sewanee student account. Please contact the Financial Aid office for information about financial aid during the thesis process.

M.F.A. THESIS REGISTRATION GUIDELINES AND PROCESS

The thesis proposal can be anywhere from two to five pages in length and should be submitted to your director and copied to the School of Letters office no later than Nov. 1. It should include:

- The genre(s) and form(s) of your manuscript (Fiction, Nonfiction, Poetry; novel, collection of stories or poems, essays, memoir, play, etc.)
- An informal outline of pieces or chapters to be included, if applicable

You will begin by setting up a meeting with the director to discuss whom you might choose to be your thesis director. Any professor in the School of Letters, whether present or former, can serve as your thesis director, though normally none will be able to work with more than two advisees at a time.

Fill out your Thesis Registration Form and return it to the School of Letters office by September 1. We will assume that you have already discussed your plans with your would-be thesis director. This discussion may have been via telephone, some form of mail, or in person during the summer. Please note that the Registration Form must be signed by the director and your thesis advisor.

It is the School of Letters Director's responsibility to appoint a second reader, but you may suggest a School of Letters faculty member for that role. The first reader will be your thesis director.