

DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH
LITERARY THESIS PROPOSAL

NAME:

ADVISOR:

PROVISIONAL TITLE:

___ ONE-SEMESTER LITERARY THESIS (fall term)

___ ONE-SEMESTER LITERARY THESIS (spring term)

___ TWO-SEMESTER LITERARY THESIS

Thesis Adviser's Signature: _____

Major Adviser's Signature: _____

Attach to this form a 5-page proposal in which you set out in concise and clear language your main topic and a well-focused research question.

You are aiming for a five-page document that articulates

*your main topic and claim,

*why your approach to your topic matters, and

*how exactly you plan to structure your analysis – how you plan to build a sustained argument through a multiple-chapter piece of writing.

As you work through your preliminary reading list and draft your proposal, you should consult regularly with your thesis advisor. You may also find helpful Part II of Booth, Colomb, and Williams, *The Craft of Research* (U of Chicago Press), which provides advice on how to transform a research *topic* into a useful research *question*.

One really effective way to develop and to explain why your topic/question matters is to summarize critical assumptions and existing debates about your texts/topic. How do leading scholars treat your text/topic/research question? What do you find unsatisfactory about their formulations? What are the existing critical debates? What gaps or misunderstandings do you seek to correct? If your text/topic has not (yet) generated much critical attention, you should say why it deserves closer study.

You should attach to your proposal a working bibliography of relevant primary and secondary materials, as well as a copy of the "Special Registration Form" filled out with the following basic information: 1- or 2-semester thesis, name, name of thesis advisor, brief description of project.