THE CULMINATING EXPERIENCE
PAPER AND ORAL DEFENSE

At the end of their M.A. (either in the last or second to last semester), students will revise a seminar paper from a previous course under the guidance of a faculty mentor. Along with the CE paper, students will submit a copy of their individual Plan of Study (POS) as well as responses to a Self-Assessment form two weeks before the date of the CE defense. While the CE paper will be the focus of the defense, both the POS and Self-Assessment will help facilitate a discussion of the student's program and his or her particular track.

The goal of the paper revisions will be to produce a polished essay of about 20-30 pages that could possibly be the basis for a conference paper, a writing sample, or a publishable article.

Students will enroll in one hour of 5601 (Literature), 5602 (Language and Literature), or 5603 (Manuscript, Print Culture, and Editing) in order to work on this final paper with their chosen faculty mentor.

Final papers and the student's POS and Self-Assessment will be reviewed by a CE committee comprised of three graduate English faculty members (excluding Creative Writers): the student's chosen faculty mentor and two additional members appointed by the Director of Graduate Studies.

Faculty mentors are responsible for arranging an oral defense (including the student and all CE committee members) before the end of the semester in which the course (5601, 5602, or 5603) is taken.

The purpose of the CE defense is twofold: first, to evaluate the student's CE paper and provide feedback about the project and how it might be further revised or developed; and second, to review the student's POS and Self-Assessment in order to evaluate the department's graduate coursework and how well it serves students' needs.

At the end of the defense, the CE Committee will provide oral feedback to the student and assign a grade of high pass, pass, low pass, or fail. These forms are then placed in the student's file and used by the Graduate Committee as data for its annual program assessment report.

CE Procedure:

BEFORE THE START of the CE semester (by Dec 1 for Spring Semester, and by May 1 for Fall Semester), students are to:

1) Obtain forms (CE guidelines, CE consent forms, and two CE assessment forms) from the English Department.

2) Contact their CE mentor (the professor who agrees to guide the student through the revision) and get his or her signature on the consent forms by Dec 1 for Spring Semester and by May 1 for Fall Semester.

3) Give one copy of the form to the CE mentor and drop off the other two copies to the department secretary, one for the graduate director and one for the student's file.

AT REGISTRATION TIME, the student goes to the faculty member under whom s/he wants to enroll and obtains that professor's permission. The faculty mentor then requests that the student be given permission to enroll. Once the permission has been input in Pathway, the student can register.

AFTER THE START of the CE semester, the student and CE professor meet by the end of the 2nd week to set a timetable and deadlines for creating the finished essay.

OVER THE COURSE of the semester, the CE mentor and the student meet regularly to review the essay and discuss revisions/additions. **It** is assumed that the essay will undergo significant review and revision before assessment by the committee.

BY THE 13TH WEEK of the semester, the student is to submit a copy of the essay to each CE committee member, with a CE assessment form on top.

BEFORE THE END OF FINALS WEEK, the CE mentor is to convene an oral defense, at which the CE committee will discuss with the student both the paper and his or her POS and the Self-Assessment. Emphasis will be placed on the paper, but part of the oral exam will derive from questions the CE Committee may have concerning the student's POS and Self-Assessment. Based on the student's paper and performance during the oral defense, numerical scores will be assessed for each evaluative category on the CE defense form; then a final grade (high pass, pass, low pass, fail) will be assigned by the committee and communicated to the student.

WHEN GRADES ARE DUE, the CE mentor reports the committee's decision by filing the student's 5601, 5602, or 5603 grade of passing (credit {CR}) or failing (no credit {NC}), and giving all assessment forms to the English office to be placed in the student's file along with a copy of the portfolio for archiving.

FORMATTING

The procedure a graduate student must go through in getting the 5601, 5602, or 5603 project approved simulates, in many respects, the "real world" process of submitting a manuscript for publication or conference presentation.

The completion of the 5601, 5602, or 5603 project represents the culmination of the degree program. It is the apex of the candidate's achievement in the program, and it reflects the author's degree of mastery of the writing process.

The author is responsible for formatting:
- ✓ Print must be black, with a sharp, dark image.
- ✓ Standard type size (12-point font) is required.
- ✓ Use standard, serifed typefaces only. Italics may be used for emphasis.
- ✓ Use a uniform type face and size of type throughout
- ✓ Print only on one side of each page.
- ✓ Double-space; do *not put* an extra double-space between paragraphs.
- ✓ Triple-space, leaving two blank lines, between headings and first line of text.
- ✓ Lengthy quotations (more than 40 words or four typed lines) should be set as a block, indented from the left margin, and double-spaced.
- ✓ Indent the first word of each paragraph from the left-hand margin. Be consistent.
- ✓ Margins must be 1 inch on all sides.
- ✓ Pages numbered in MLA style.
- ✓ The word "page" is not used before the numerals.
- ✓ The font type and size of the page numbers must be the same as the body of the thesis.
- ✓ Handwritten corrections will not be accepted. The use of correction fluid, correction tape, pencil, ballpoint, or felt tip markers is not allowed in the final copy. Corrections must be made so that the final copy is clear and clean.
- ✓ Paper: 8-112" by 11", white paper, at least 20-pound weight.

2. Vita: Include a c.v.

MA STUDENT SELF-ASSESSMENT FORM

This form must be completed and turned in along with the final draft of your Culminating Experience (CE) paper and a copy of your Plan of Study (POS). Please type responses to the questions on a separate sheet of paper with this form attached. Generally, the committee finds it helpful if your responses are constructed as brief paragraphs. These answers will help provide a context for your work and frame discussion at your oral CE defense.

1. What contribution do you see your CE project making to your field of study? How do you intend to share your work with a larger audience?

2. Describe the development of your methodology and research strategies for your CE project, particularly in terms of current and historical conversations in the field.

3. How has your MA POS helped shape your CE project? For example, in what ways have course content and approaches, methodologies and research strategies, etc., from any of your classes influenced the work on your CE project? Please be specific.

4. How has your Program of Study (i.e. the courses you have taken) facilitated your understanding of diverse fields in English studies? Please be specific.

<div align="center">**THE CULMINATING EXPERIENCE**</div>

<div align="center">Assessment Form (revised November 2012)</div>

Please review the attached essay, complete this form, and bring both with you to the assessment committee meeting.

Title of essay:_____

Do not place the student's name on this form. Instead, please ask the student to create a cover sheet with his or her name and the title of the project and turn it in with the self-assessment.

CE Committee:

    1)_____ (mentor)

    2)_____ (grad faculty member)

    3)_____ (grad faculty member)

<div align="center">**PART I: CE Paper Assessment**</div>

Sophisticated academic arguments that situate texts within aesthetic, social, and historical contexts:
Outstanding (4)_____ Good (3)_____ Fair (2) _____ Unacceptable (1) _____

Scholarship produced in dialogue with current and historical conversations in the field:
Outstanding (4)_____ Good (3)_____ Fair (2) _____ Unacceptable (1) _____

Work evaluates and engages methodological approaches appropriate to academic discourse:
Outstanding (4)_____ Good (3)_____ Fair (2) _____ Unacceptable (1) _____

Writing engages a vivid, appropriate style that demonstrates mastery of mechanics and grammar.
Outstanding (4)_____ Good (3)_____ Fair (2) _____ Unacceptable (1) _____

Summary: Estimate of the work as a whole:
Outstanding (4)_____ Good (3)_____ Fair (2) _____ Unacceptable (1) _____

PART II: Assessment of Oral Defense

Student's ability to synthesize an understanding of interrelations across diverse fields of study:

Outstanding (4)_____ Good (3)_____ Fair (2) _____ Unacceptable (1) _____

Student's ability to demonstrate a broad grounding in the diversity of fields in English studies:

Outstanding (4)_____ Good (3)_____ Fair (2) _____ Unacceptable (1) _____

NUMERICAL TOTAL: _____

Assessment of CE Paper and Oral Defense:

High Pass _____ (credit {CR}) Pass _____ (credit {CR}) Low Pass _____ (credit {CR})

Fail _____ (no credit {NC})

Date_____ _____
                                              (signed)

CULMINATING EXPERIENCE COMMITTEE

This is to certify that _____

(Name of Student)

has obtained the consent of a UMKC faculty member to serve as their 5601/5602/5603 (Please circle appropriate course number) Culminating Experience Mentor by Dec 1 for the Spring Semester and May 1 for the Fall Semester.

_____

Mentor   Date

Return to the English Department (Cockefair Hall 106) for inclusion in student's file.

01/12

MENTOR COPY

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STUDENT FILE COPY

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