Guidelines for Senior Honors Thesis in WGSS

Students majoring in WGSS whose names have appeared on the Dean’s List at least twice are eligible to do a two-semester Honors Thesis (WGSS198 & WGSS 199) as their senior capstone instead of a one-semester Senior Project (WGSS193). Students doing an honors thesis must still take Doing Feminist Research (WGSS 190), offered each Fall term. The honors thesis requires a commitment to sustained and in-depth study of a topic and the self-discipline to engage in extended independent work, so students should carefully consider whether they have the motivation and the time in their schedule to undertake the significant effort of a two-semester thesis. Students doing a thesis are expected to work on it throughout the academic year in order to receive a credit for each semester. A student wishing to do an honors thesis in WGSS should begin planning in the junior year and meet each of the following deadlines:

1. **Before the end of junior year**, the student must discuss the possibility of doing an honors thesis with the Director of WGSS and identify a faculty member willing to serve as primary mentor for the thesis. The primary mentor must be a full-time member of the Tufts faculty and should be affiliated with the WGSS program. The student has a preliminary meeting with the primary mentor to discuss the proposed topic and to help identify other potential committee members. Most thesis committees consist of two people – the primary mentor and a second member of the Tufts faculty from a different department or discipline. The committee can include a third member, from Tufts or elsewhere, if the student would benefit from the advice of an additional expert on the topic. Once the primary mentor has agreed to serve, the student is expected to begin developing a draft thesis proposal that will be submitted early in the Fall term.

*** If the honors thesis involves human subjects and requires approval by the Institutional Review Board (IRB), the student MUST secure that approval before collecting data on human subjects. Students should submit a proposal to the IRB as early as possible to avoid delays in beginning and completing their theses. If any data collection is being done while the student is abroad, clearance must be obtained before the student leaves. See IRB information here: [http://www.tufts.edu/central/research/IRB/index.htm](http://www.tufts.edu/central/research/IRB/index.htm)

2. **By the second Friday of senior year**, the student will submit a draft thesis proposal containing the following elements to all mentors for comment:
   a. A clear statement of the research topic and research questions.
   b. A brief statement articulating the general theoretical contexts or frameworks that will be used in pursuing the research.
   c. An initial bibliography of the pertinent literature, including a summary review of the most important arguments related to the research questions.
   d. A brief discussion of the proposed methods and format of the thesis.
   e. A timeline for completion of the thesis, including dates on which drafts will be submitted to mentors for input and revision.

3. **By the last Friday in September of senior year**, the student will resubmit the revised version of the proposal to all mentors and to the WGSS Director for final approval to go forward with the Honors Thesis. Once the thesis proposal is formally approved, the student will submit a Mentor Agreement Form to the WGSS office and file both a One on One Course Form to register for WGSS 198 (and in Spring WGSS 199) and a Senior Honors Thesis Candidate Form at Dowling Hall.

4. **By the first Friday in December of senior year** the student will submit either a full outline and/or a first chapter draft to the primary mentor (and others as appropriate) and meet before winter break to discuss the progress of the work. The student will continue the thesis work in the second semester only if the primary mentor determines that adequate progress has been made to date.