

Department of Comparative Literature

The Honors Thesis Project

**The scribe
Eadwine at
work in
Canterbury
(c. 1150-60)**



PROCEDURES (1)

- Plan on signing up ASAP for COLT 1990 (“Senior Thesis preparation”).
- To do so you need a thesis director – so approach faculty straightaway.
- Schedule appointments with professors to discuss your thesis plans. Decide (with them) who will be your director and who will be your second reader.
- Note: one of the two must be a member of our dept. The other may be in another dept.

PROCEDURES (2)

- **Locate your your thesis director's COLT 1990 section number – look for it in the Banner Class schedule.**
- **Register ASAP for COLT 1990. As your grade option for the fall choose S/NC.**
- **When you register again in the spring for COLT 1990, choose ABC/NC, if you prefer.**

PROCEDURES (3)

- Download the “Honors Thesis Information” form from the dept.’s web site.
- Fill it out on your computer rather than by hand. Include the provisional title of your thesis, your proposal abstract, and an initial bibliography
- Your form must be signed by both your readers – *i.e.*, your thesis director + your 2nd reader.

PROCEDURES (4)

- **Honors Thesis Information” form is due at the department by Oct. 15.**
- **However, it is better to aim on getting your draft ready by October 1.**
- **That will give you and your readers an extra two weeks, should revisions be needed.**

PROCEDURES (5)

- **You must hand your readers a healthy chunk of draft by December 10.**
- **Be prepared to work like mad during the January break.**
- **Full draft of thesis is due March 15.**
- **Submit by April 15 one copy of your final draft to each reader, and also one copy to the Department office.**
- **You will be notified in early May whether your thesis is accepted for Honors.**

**Matthew the
Evangelist**

**Ebbo Gospels
(c. 816-35)**



OUR EXPECTATIONS FOR THE THESIS

- The honors thesis must be the outcome of a significant amount of research.
- Its project will be of a comparative nature.
- It will feature the languages and literatures in your concentration program.
- You will read and cite non-English materials in the original language.
- Your references in notes and bibliography will follow the rules of the MLA or Chicago style sheet – use the links on the dept.'s web sites.

YOUR TOPIC

- Pick a general subject that will sustain your interest for half a year.
- Look for a specific question that intrigues you.
- Be patient with it: expect to find the answers later and by stages.
- If you have difficulty in coming up with one firm topic, jot down instead three or four hypothetical topics.
- Discuss those alternatives with faculty: your best option will gradually emerge.

HOW TO TALK TO YOUR READERS

- Advice from Charles Lipson, in *How to Write a BA Thesis* (Chicago, U of Chicago P, 2005).
- First "think on paper" in order to generate ideas.
- Then visit several faculty members. Sound each of them out about your area of interest and the topic(s) you are considering.
- Prepare those meetings: outline your area of interest and your questions about it.
- Tell how well equipped you are to investigate your area and what skills you still need to hone for it.
- Bring along an annotated list of relevant courses that you have taken, seminar papers you have written, special skills you have.

HOW TO WORK WITH YOUR THESIS DIRECTOR

- "Bring your own agenda and questions to each meeting."
- "At the end of each meeting, set a time and a specific task for the next meeting."
- "Use brief regular meetings to keep your project on track."
- "Try to do some brief informal writing for most meetings." Bring along two copies.
- A tip on how to "prime the pump" for such writing: Whenever you complete a set of readings, write a bibliographic essay in which you delineate the most important items read. Outline the major points found by you in each author or critic, and also note your own responses.

**Christine
de Pizan
at her
writing
desk**

