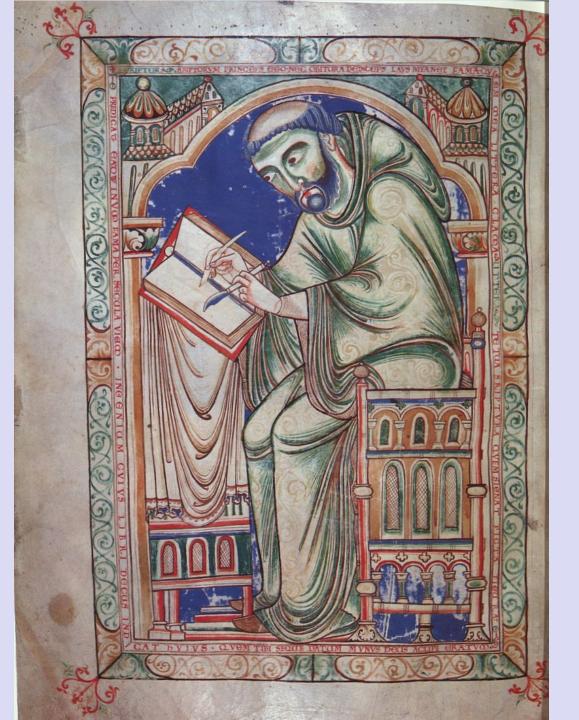
Department of Comparative Literature

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.

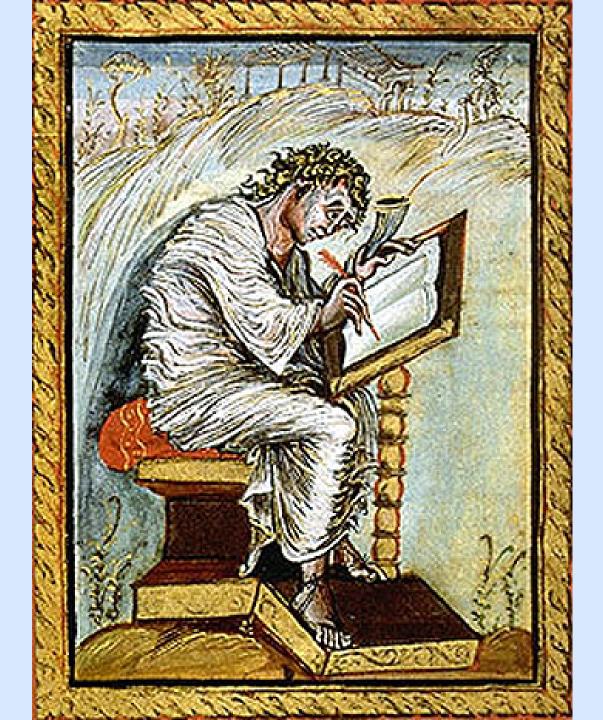
PROCEDURES (5)

- 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

