Policy on Liberal Studies 498 and 499 (‘Thesis Option’)
Liberal Studies 498: Readings for Research in Humanities (3 credits)
Liberal Studies 499: Research in Humanities (3 credits)

In the Department of Liberal Studies, majors have the option of writing a senior thesis, through the courses designated LBRL 498 and 499. The LBRL 498/499 requirement is normally completed senior year during two consecutive quarters under the direction of a single professor from the Department. Students are responsible for making arrangements with a professor for the sequence. This is often done in consultation with their department advisor and other members of the department, usually at the end of their junior or beginning of their senior year. Professors accept LBRL 498/499 students at their own discretion; they typically work with no more than two students at a time. Students should identify potential topics and an appropriate advisor during the quarter preceding the quarter in which they will take LBRL 498.

A successful senior thesis is a piece of original research in the humanities and related fields. As such, it will be based upon a thorough and significant engagement with a relevant corpus of primary sources, informed by thoughtful use of relevant scholarly studies and/or theoretical frameworks. In some cases, this includes engaging in field work. Students research and write their thesis in consultation with a faculty advisor whose field of academic expertise is well suited for the selected topic.

Those students who write a thesis also have the possibility to be considered for graduation with departmental honors. **Departmental Honors Policy:** BA Humanities students who have completed LBRL 498 and LBRL 499, have a cumulative GPA of 3.3 in their major courses and receive a grade of 'B' or higher for their Senior Thesis (in LBRL 499) meet the requirements for departmental honors.

Each professor establishes his or her own specific requirements and grading systems for LBRL 498 and 499, but the Department as a whole agrees on the following basic guidelines:

**LBRL 498:**
- a list of about 8-10 books or sets of articles, to be read independently and discussed in the weekly meetings
- weekly meetings of at least one hour with the professor
- an annotated bibliography
- a written prospectus for the senior thesis (3-4 pages)

**LBRL 499:**
- further reading and research with a clear focus on theme and sub-themes of senior paper
- weekly meetings of at least one hour with the professor
- participation in 1-2 meetings with other majors enrolled in LBRL 499
- a senior thesis (normally between 30-50 pages in length) written in at least two drafts
- students should aim to have a full first draft of the thesis no later than Week 8 of the quarter

LBRL 498 and 499 are taken for a letter grade.

The student, in consultation with his or her director, will request that a second professor in the Department also read and provide comments on a penultimate draft of the thesis. Arrangements for a second reader should be made at the start of the quarter in which a student is enrolled in LBRL 499.

Students are strongly encouraged by the Department to present their 498/499 projects at the Department’s annual Scholars Week symposium (spring quarter, usually in the eighth week). Presentations are 5-10 minutes long and are followed by questions from the audience.

The student must submit the final version of the senior thesis in two hard copies—one to the director, the other to the department office.

*revision approved May 11, 2016*