

THE UNIVERSITY OF NORTH CAROLINA ASHEVILLE
FACULTY SENATE

Senate Document Number SD2121S
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Statement of Faculty Senate Action:

APC Document 18 (ENGL): **Delete LIT 497 and 498, Senior Capstone I and II;
Add LIT 490, Seminar in Literary Scholarship;
Update Course Descriptions for LIT 440, 484, and 488**

Effective Date: Fall 2021

1. **Delete:** On page 147, the entries for **LIT 497 and 498:**

497 Senior Capstone I (2)

First semester of the research seminar for the production of a senior thesis. Emphasis upon significant literary texts and extensive use of scholarly source work, with faculty supervision of the research process. Completion and acceptance of a formal research proposal, an annotated bibliography, and the signed agreement of the thesis advisor are required. The proposed research will be presented as the final exam. Prerequisite: Senior standing or permission of department chair. Fall and Spring.

498 Senior Capstone II (2)

Second semester of the research seminar emphasizing the writing process with additional research incorporated. Course is taught by designated faculty member who will supervise the work with the assistance of the thesis advisor. Presentation of research required with integration of technology throughout. Prerequisites: LIT 497; senior standing or permission of department chair. Fall and Spring.

Add: On page 147, new course, **LIT 490: Seminar in Literary Scholarship**

490 Seminar in Literary Scholarship (4)

An intensive research-based study of a specific topic in English studies based on the instructor's area of expertise. After an initial instructor-led examination of the topic, students develop research projects appropriate to their interest that culminate in a presentation at the Undergraduate Research Symposium. This seminar experience encourages students to become University Research Scholars by including instruction on research methods; ethical engagement with research; techniques for drafting, developing, shaping, revising, and editing work; supportive feedback; and one-on-one meetings with the instructor. May be repeated once as content varies. Prerequisites: LIT 324, 334 and 335, or permission of instructor. Spring.

2. **Delete:** On page 146, the entry for **LIT 440:**

440 Seminar in Literary Theory and Criticism (4)

Explores a variety of critical approaches to literature with attention to the intellectual foundations of critical methods and their implications for interpretive, critical, and creative practices. May be repeated once as content varies. Prerequisite: 8 hours of literature courses or permission of instructor. Every year.

Add: On page 146, in place of deleted entry:

440 Seminar in Literary Theory and Criticism (4)

An intensive study of how to interpret literary and cultural texts with attention to critical theory and its various methodologies. Students will engage with both primary works and secondary sources and write an 8-10 page research essay, which may be presented at the Undergraduate Research Symposium. May be repeated once as content varies. Prerequisites: LIT 324, 334 and 335, or permission of instructor. Fall.

3. **Delete:** On page 147, the entry for **LIT 484:**

484 Seminar in Major Literary Period (4)

A major movement, genre, or theme (e.g., Irish Modernism; Writers of the Beat Generation; Studies in Renaissance Literature; Modern Jewish Writers, etc.) studied against the historical and intellectual background of a major literary period and with secondary literature considered. A study and exploration of imaginative literature that includes lectures, discussions, in-class writing, techniques for drafting, developing, shaping, revising, and editing work, supportive feedback, and individual meetings for the development of significant projects and for the assessment of work. May be repeated once as content varies. Prerequisites: LIT 324, 334 and 335, or permission of instructor. Every year.

Add: On page 147, in place of deleted entry:

484 Seminar in Major Literary Period (4)

An intensive study of a major literary period with attention to its historical, cultural, and intellectual contexts. Students will engage with both primary works and secondary sources and write an 8-10 page research essay, which may be presented at the Undergraduate Research Symposium. May be repeated once as content varies. Prerequisites: LIT 324, 334 and 335, or permission of instructor. Fall and Spring.

4. **Delete:** On page 147, the entry for **LIT 488:**

488 Seminar in a Major Author (4)

An intensive study of one significant author that includes both a comprehensive study of primary works and substantive work with secondary sources. Authors regularly offered include Shakespeare and Milton. Other major authors cover a wide gamut based upon student and faculty interest. This seminar experience includes lectures, discussions, in-class writing, techniques for drafting, developing, shaping, revising, and editing work, supportive feedback, and individual meetings for the development of significant projects and for the assessment of work, with class time divided accordingly. May be repeated once as content varies. Prerequisite: LIT 240. Fall and Spring.

Add: On page 147, in place of deleted entry:

488 Seminar in Major Author (4)

An intensive study of a significant author (or two) with attention to their formal innovativeness and the historical, cultural, and biographical contexts that shaped their work. Students will engage with both primary and secondary sources and write an 8-10 page research essay, which may be presented at the Undergraduate Research

Symposium. May be repeated once as content varies. Prerequisites: LIT 324, 334 and 335, or permission of instructor. Fall and Spring.

Impact: Deleting LIT 497 and 498 eliminates the requirement that all literature majors write a senior thesis during a two-part senior capstone sequence. Students will fulfill the four hours they would have spent in LIT 497 and 498 by opting to complete LIT 490, a research- and writing-intensive course that encourages them to meet requirements necessary to graduate as a University Research Scholar, or by opting to take another 400-level, LIT-prefixed course – LIT 440, 484, 488 – all of which will now require a minimum of an eight to ten-page analytical paper with secondary sources. Literature majors are currently required to take one 400-level course and will now be required to take two. Teaching licensure English majors are currently not required to take a 400-level course and will now be required to take one. The updated course descriptions for the 400-level LIT seminars emphasize continuity between them with regard to their intensive focus, seminar format, and common assessment tool. Along with LIT 490, these course offerings replace LIT 497/498 for demonstrating major competency.

LIT 497 and 498 have each been offered twice a year. Deleting these courses frees up eight contact hours in our schedule for 400-level seminar course offerings. As such, the addition of LIT 490: Seminar in Literary Scholarship does not create a need for extra faculty. It will simply join the rotation of our current 400-level seminar offerings (LIT 440, 484, 488). We plan to offer three of these courses each semester: one section of 484 and 488 each semester, LIT 440 in the fall, and LIT 490 in the spring. Deleting the two-semester capstone should help teaching licensure students with scheduling and ease the burden on faculty with regard to fluctuating course loads. All 400-level seminars will share the same prerequisites that were previously listed only for LIT 484: LIT 324, 334, and 335, which are the three required survey courses for the major.

Rationale: After meeting for a year, our department's curriculum development committee concluded that the two-course Senior Capstone sequence (497/498) was not in the best interest of our students and too logistically onerous to be sustainable for our faculty. The one-size-fits-all model of a senior capstone in which students would produce a 20+ page thesis and present at the Undergraduate Research Symposium is not a requirement that we believe is appropriate for all English majors with a concentration in literature, let alone literature with teaching licensure. The model is geared to students who wish to continue their studies in graduate school. Because we value that endeavor, the creation of LIT 490 will provide students with graduate school aspirations (or other research inclinations) the opportunity to write a senior thesis and present it at the Undergraduate Research Symposium and perhaps a professional conference (e.g., Sigma Tau Delta, the Philological Association of the Carolinas, etc.).

Mounting logistical hurdles also inform our proposal to move beyond the two-course Senior Capstone sequence. The sequence requires two faculty members to teach asymmetrical teaching loads annually. Teaching each course is more work than the two contact hours reflects and scheduling them is challenging. In addition, the sequence requires outside faculty to serve as thesis advisors. While advising work can be rewarding, it is uncompensated and often laborious. After a raft of retirements, we have had to rely on emeritus faculty and colleagues in other departments to advise our students. The quality of this advising varies based on faculty workload, expertise, and interest. A much more sensible model is to have self-motivated students elect to enroll in a course where they will work with the faculty on record to complete a senior thesis over the course of one semester.

The proposal shifts major competency from 497/498 and an extracurricular comprehensive examination to our 400-level seminar requirement. Shifting the major competency has the added benefit of increasing enrollment in these courses, which often cover a topic of scholarly interest to the instructor. We believe students benefit from taking courses that align with faculty's current and specialized research interests. The updated course descriptions for 400-level seminars include standardizing their prerequisites to clearly distinguish between 300-level and 400-level work and ensure that students entering the seminars have a

solid foundation in literary history. Professors can, however, grant overrides to students whom they believe can successfully complete a seminar.