

Great Books Honors

Faulkner University
A Christian University

Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind. This is the first and greatest commandment. And the second is like it: Love your neighbor as yourself.

Contact: Dr. Andrew R. Jacobs, PhD
334-386-7657
ajacobs@faulkner.edu

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Great Books Honors

If we let ourselves, we shall always be waiting for some distraction or other to end before we can really get down to our work. The only people who achieve much are those who want knowledge so badly that they seek it while the conditions are still unfavorable. Favorable conditions never come. C.S. Lewis, “Learning in War-time”

Great Books Honors (GBH) at Faulkner University represents a university-wide honors track that accommodates all degree plans. Its design and content prove both challenging and transformative, and by participating in the GBH program, students accept a model for learning that will encompass and enrich the student’s entire degree experience. The driving force behind GBH is a Great Books methodology anchored by a Christian worldview. Great Books learning encourages an emphasis on primary texts (the classics, the enduring voices of Western Civilization), the importance of and application of interpretive questions, and a conversation-style classroom setting. The method represents an effective remedy for those students who find the traditional lecture model too passive and at times watered down.

In the Great Books Honors program, we read, write, think, discuss, and serve with the sense that there are eternal implications to all that we are doing.

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GBH Requirements

To be eligible to participate in the Great Books Honors program, the following requirements must be met:

GBH Requirements

To be eligible to participate in the GBH, the following requirements must be met:

- New, prospective students must:
 - Complete a short application and interview,
 - Have a high school GPA of at least 3.0 (on a 4.0 scale),
 - Score at least a 27 on the English component of the ACT; a 410 on EBRW of the SAT, and/or 25 VR on the CLT.
 - Receive official confirmation of acceptance.
- Continuing Honors students must:
 - Establish a cumulative grade point average of at least 3.0 during the freshman year and maintain a cumulative GPA of at least 3.0 until graduation. A student whose cumulative GPA fails to meet this standard will not automatically be released from the program. That student's record will be reviewed term by term, and participation may be continued provided the student shows steady progress in raising the GPA to 3.0 and remains in good standing regarding the other requirements listed here.
 - Comply with Faulkner University Student Handbook regarding conduct and behavior.
- Prospective Honors graduates must:
 - Complete the five core courses with a 3.0 or greater GPA.
 - Complete the two contract courses related to major.
 - Complete the Senior Thesis/Project.

Note: A student who wishes to participate in the Great Books Honors program but does not meet any or some of the requirements may participate in the program per director approval, either conditionally or via the GB 1300 Introduction to Great Books bridge course (whose requirements include an interview; high school GPA of at least 3.0 on a 4.0 scale; and at least a 23 on the English component of the ACT and an overall composite of 25 or the SAT, CLT equivalent). Once invited the student must continue to meet certain academic and personal standards.

GBH Students: GB Honors students strive to embody certain noble attributes. Such students are ...

- organized, having a greater sense of time management and ability to prioritize;
- ready to come to class mentally focused and prepared;
- committed to learning and curious about a wide variety of topics and issues;
- confident they can rise to the challenges of academics and life;
- willing to do the work, even when it is demanding;
- willing to seek help (from professors, peers, tutors, counselors);
- willing to accept and respond to constructive criticism;
- content to find a place in a community of scholars, working with and for others;
- critical thinkers, eager to ask questions and listen to others;
- eager to make connections among topics in their classes, world, and personal lives, to see the big picture of education and life;
- creative, enjoying the new patterns that emerge from old ideas;
- committed to growing "in wisdom and in stature and in favor with God and man";
- lifelong learners.

GBH Course Substitutions

To facilitate student participation in the Great Books Honors program, the university allows various substitutions for courses within any student's degree plan. GBH will make every effort to review a student's degree plan individually. Note, however, that it is primarily the student's responsibility to remain aware of the relevant degree plan requirements.

To graduate from the Great Books Honors program, students must complete the following course sequence:

- Great Books courses I-V
- Two Contract Courses (selected from one's major courses)
- Great Books Thesis

Faulkner University typically allows the following course substitutions. GB students should AVOID taking these classes:

- English Composition I and II (EH 1301 and 1302), Western Tradition I and II (HU 2315/2325), and Literature;
- with transferred credit, possibly American Cultural Heritage, Social Literacy courses (Introduction to Psychology/Sociology), Lifetime Fitness (HS students only), Christian Ethics, electives, and other EH/HU/HY/BI courses.
- Substitutions will be finalized (post registration) by the GBH director and deans.

The university and GBH program work hard to allow students to participate in the program. Therefore, certain exceptions or accommodations may be made on an individual basis. Even if a student transfers credit (dual, AP, etc.), the substitutions remain flexible and vary according to each student; substitution schemes will remain *highly* unique to the student. On rare occasions, a student must take the relevant courses in the GBH program that cannot be substituted as a part of the student's degree plan. Such actions will prove necessary to graduate from the program.

GBH: A Liberal Arts Education in Christ

Great Books Honors at Faulkner University finds itself uniquely positioned to serve student-believers in their quest for spiritual formation under Christ. Students formed by our model not only enter the rest of their lives with deep insight into the most important ideas common to Western Civilization, with character and intellect shaped by the true, the good, and the beautiful, but do so with the certainty that all knowledge, indeed, everything that *is*, proves only possible as a result of the immanent and transcendent brilliance of Jesus Christ, and as such, restoration, of mind, of identity, and of community, may only pass through his narrow gate. The justification for such thinking lies in the inherent mission of true liberal learning to identify humanity as her subject, her virtues and deficiencies, her questions, and her search for meaning in sometimes strange and hostile environments. What one observes, as James Schall states in *On the Seriousness of Human Affairs*, is that by such activity “we are—by the important things, by God, by one another, by the games that fascinate us, by beauty and understanding—taken out of ourselves in order to discover what is in some sense also destined to be ours” (106). A Christian liberal arts education reveals Christ, who then re-introduces us to the world.

In whole, one may define a Christian Great Books Liberal Arts education as one that attends to a meaningful reality in a charitable community of texts and audiences via the authority of Jesus Christ. An explanation of its individual parts, however, furnishes a more complete and nuanced understanding. Schall, for instance, describes “liberal arts” as “those studies, those disciplines which, on going through them, enable us better to see what is there” (24). The engagement with such material involves a process that allows one greater and sharper perspective. One not only discovers the experiences and questions and conclusions of authors long since dead in ages long since past, but one discovers what one’s present neighbor in the seat across experiences, asks, and concludes in the discussion of the text. Greater perspective informs community and allows one to see the world and its inhabitants with a God’s-eye view. Important, too, is the focus on “what is there,” on the apprehension of reality with significant attention to accuracy. One can find confidence in the ability of the human person to *know*. Such confidence proves always necessary, but absolutely vital given the current culture and its immersion in doubt and skepticism. Jeffrey Davis and Philip Ryken draw attention to “arts” as “a way of knowing or doing something that leads to a whole set of options previously unavailable” (28). Again, the learning creates a broadening effect. It presents new knowledge that both suddenly and gradually introduces one to the immensity of existence and an infinite God. The process recalls the image provided by C.S. Lewis in *The Great Divorce*, where those who journey ever closer to God find themselves more real and more substantial. For this reason, then, the “freeing’ or ‘liberal’ arts” as they are called embody “a way of life enabling us to be free enough to know the truth of things” (24) and thus effect His Kingdom work in always-changing conditions.

Implicit here is the notion that perspective increases in quality in proportion to the richness of the new material. Such is the link between reading and education and the importance of “great books” as the curriculum for liberal learning. Each of the Great Books courses introduces the student to works located in the particular culture of a particular time, from antiquity to the Renaissance to modernity, each with some immutable quality that bears relevance to the human condition. As Robert Hutchins says, “They were the books that had endured and that the common voice of mankind called the finest creations, in writing, of the Western mind” (xi). A student finds value in each period. These are works that remain historical but whose concepts prove universal. “The Greek and Roman experiences,” Schall states, “remain in some sense normative” (30). In learning more about the universal, the student in many ways finds him or herself better prepared to engage the particulars of the day, often viewed as divorced from the previous experiences of humanity. At the same time, in stressing the importance of these works, one cannot discount the link between classical literature and biblical truth. David Lyle Jeffrey, for instance, maintains that “the rich tradition of liberal learning in the West has in fact remained at the most fundamental levels more biblical than classical” (1). A conversation with works from antiquity to the patristic writers and later becomes, in the end, a conversation about Christ: a world that needs him, a world that welcomes him, and world forever changed by his presence. Indeed, one must note the distinction between merely classical or liberal learning and *genuine* humane learning whose end purpose lies in the elucidation of God and His truth. “Christian liberal arts learning,” Davis and Ryken explain, “rightly understood and done, sees God at the center of everything” (29). Any true knowledge of the human person should reveal, as Pascal describes it, “an infinite abyss” that may only “be filled by an infinite and immutable object, that is to say, only God Himself” (244).

A Christian Liberal Arts education proves a welcome remedy to the generally poor state of the modern university, one which lacks “any principle of order” in its disciplines (Schall 38) and, as Leland Ryken laments, often reduces education to simply “getting a requirement ‘out of the way’” (16). Great Books Honors locates learning firmly in the sanctity of Jesus Christ and applauds within the human person that “participation in the *imago Dei* [that] makes of the study of the humanities something almost sacramental...” (Jeffrey 3). Thus, the program, perhaps more than most, proves capable of answering three questions valued by a university for the development of an individual program: how one communicates one's discipline through the lens of a Christian worldview; how one prepares graduates to enter the world as Christian *professionals*; and how one prepares students for a life of service within the community.

Great Books Honors through the Eyes of Faith

Great Books encourages students to think Christianly about learning in the engagement of curriculum that concerns what it truly means to be human, which must always begin and end in Christ, as Clement of Alexandria states, “... our Educator is the holy God, Jesus, the

Word guiding all mankind.” The Great Books courses include Great Books Courses I-V (and a bridge course should that prove necessary), two contract courses, and a thesis course.

- **Introduction to Great Books:** This course acts as a bridge course to the honors program. Utilizing the discussion approach, this course explores works of literature, philosophy, religion, and political thought from the ancient world to the modern. The course thus accomplishes, at a slower pace and with shorter readings, what the entirety of the program attempts to introduce as a whole. The course will thus introduce the students to the most significant ideas in Western Civilization through a Christ-centered lens.
- **Great Books I:** Utilizing the discussion approach, this course explores works of literature, philosophy, religion, and political thought of the ancient world. Authors include, but are not limited to, Homer, Plato, Aristotle, Aeschylus, Sophocles, Euripides, Aristophanes, Virgil and Augustine. Students thus become immersed in Greek and Roman culture, which as more than one Christian writer has affirmed, provides wonderful preparation on the contemplation of God. Further, it provides necessary information in the later Christianization of Greek/Roman thought by the Church following birth, death, and resurrection of Christ.
- **Great Books II:** Utilizing the discussion approach, this course explores works of literature, philosophy, religion, and political thought of the Middle Ages and Renaissance. Authors include, but are not limited to, Aquinas, Dante, Machiavelli, More, Luther, Calvin, and Shakespeare. Students thus become immersed theology, philosophy, literature, etc. characterized by the revealed knowledge of God in Scripture and the Living Word.
- **Great Books III:** Utilizing the discussion approach, this course explores works of literature, philosophy, religion, and political thought of the Enlightenment and Romantic era. Authors include, but are not limited to Descartes, Milton, Locke, Voltaire, Rousseau, Kant, Wordsworth, and Austen. Students thus become immersed in concepts that begin to show the tendrils of modernization, especially empiricism, and its effect on Christianity.
- **Great Books IV:** Utilizing the discussion approach, this course explores works of literature, philosophy, religion, and political thought of the modern world. Authors include, but are not limited to Kierkegaard, Marx, Dostoevsky, Sartre, Camus, Brecht, Auden, Eliot, Nietzsche, and Solzhenitsyn. Students thus become immersed in the concepts of the modern world, which at times finds itself largely antagonistic to Christian thinking, with the increased de-spiritualization of culture’s major institutions, relativism, and isolationism. The course prepares students for persons and ideas hostile to Christ. At the same time, it provides students, too, with the tools to address these concerns.
- **Great Books V:** Utilizing the discussion approach, this course explores works of Christian formation through the centuries. Authors include, but are not limited to,

Ireneaus, Polycarp, Athanasius, Ignatius, Gregory of Nazianzus, Basil the Great, Ambrose, Gregory the Great, St. Benedict, St. John of the Cross, St. Teresa of Avila, The Cloud of Unknowing, Ignatius of Loyola, and Thomas a Kempis. The final course acts as a wonderful capstone to the actual GB courses, ending with some of the most significant Christian thinkers since the time of Christ. Students are then able to see the transformation of Christian thought over the years.

- **Contract Courses:** Here the student adopts two courses from his or her major. The course itself remains the same, but a GB supplement is added, with the coordination of the student, content instructor, and GB faculty. The model ideally brings the learning amassed from the Great Books Courses directly into the student's chosen major. In this way, the good, the true, and the beautiful the student experiences will be linked to the particulars of that degree, ensuring that the student will translate the Christ-like thinking into his or her profession.
- **Thesis Course:** The capstone for the honors track will take the shape of a thesis. Students will be assigned a final project that draws all that student's learning together and asks for the student to create a thesis that links faith and learning. The work will prove a tangible contribution to the whole community of faithful learners.

Another way the program will encourage the students to think Christianly about the material they will be learning is through a close sense of community. Students learn in an intimate environment that fosters relationship and forms into habit a charitable give and take in conversation. Honors students come from a wide range of backgrounds, and the nature of the program is to increase perspective by learning from thinkers from different ages and asking questions of the perspectives in a room full of different perspectives. The style itself represents one of the most humane, communal forms of learning possible.

Great Books Forming Christian Professionals

The wonderful benefit of the program is that it represents a co-enrollment program, meaning it touches students from all the specific colleges within the university. Again, the immediate focus of the curriculum is the understanding of the human person—and by extension, humanity's relationship to Christ. The GB model provides the students with the tools to strive for all areas of excellence in any particular field, be it math, science, business, physical education, or another field. Again, the curriculum promotes this strive toward excellence, but so does importance of community within the program. The students learn to read, listen, and ask within group settings, increasing understanding and the visibility of Christ within the community.

Great Books Forming Community Servants

Given the intellectual caliber of those students involved, it becomes that much more important to cultivate within these students a deep sense of service and humility. The program has long since adopted the model demonstrated in John 13 when Christ, the Son of God, washes his disciple's feet. Whoever wishes to be first must be last. GB Honors also recognizes the danger inherent in the development of particularly clever persons. Lewis writes: "The better stuff a creature is made of—the cleverer and stronger and freer it is—then the better it will be if it goes right, but also the worse it will be if it goes wrong." Once more, the curriculum itself proves a humbling experience given the immense time and intelligence behind these works. More importantly, however, one must encourage the students not only to understand humility, but form properly humble habits.

GBH Advantages at a Glance:

- Smaller classes for many required general education credits.
- Opportunities for early, productive scholarship.
- Interdisciplinary courses to encourage students to synthesize material.
- Innovative classes that are taught differently, but are not more difficult.
- Discussion-oriented, interactive classes.
- Opportunities to enhance course projects through honors contracts.
- Close relationships with many bright, energetic students.
- Many opportunities to develop leadership skills and hone academic skills.
- Close relationships with faculty members committed to student success.
- Better letters of recommendation from faculty who know students well.
- Opportunities for social, spiritual, and service activities with peers.
- Special recognition at graduation and other gatherings.
- Advantages when applying to graduate and professional schools.
- Advantages when applying for jobs after graduation.
- Networking with national and regional honors organizations.

GBH Contract Courses

The GBH contract courses represent an important upper-level component of the honors curriculum at Faulkner University. They are designed to increase opportunities for honors work and promote close intellectual relationships between Great Books faculty, fellow Great Books students, and the wider university faculty. With the consent of the professor of record and GBH faculty, GBH students may undertake these studies and receive honors credit, which will appear as such on transcripts. In developing the contracts, the guiding principle should be the student's interest in a course and subject matter and the student's desire to relate the material to the Great Books core. (See example, page 14.)

Contract Course Procedure

The GBH student should approach the GBH director or relevant GBH faculty to begin the process of creating a contract course. Generally, students are encouraged to pursue one contract course per semester and only after the completion of GB I-V, though exceptions may be made given certain circumstances. (As always, it is primarily the student's responsibility to manage his or her academic affairs.)

With this contract opportunity, an Honors student and select faculty agree in writing to a specific set of goals. Contracts should be carefully considered, reflecting the interests of both the student and the goals of Great Books Honors. Honors contracts share some of the characteristics of guided independent study, except that contract research should closely relate to the subject matter, concepts, and methods of the course in which it is undertaken in close relations with the Great Books. The courses will generally involve some or all the following characteristics: select readings from the Great Books chosen to enhance and deepen the student's understanding of course material; guided research involving use of resources to enhance assignments for the course; and written work designed to encourage the development of logical skills and communal thinking. Whatever approach is taken, each contract should include the following:

- Well-defined goals and objectives.
- Specification of the item(s)/text(s) to be examined.
- A timeline of activities spanning the entire semester.
- A schedule of meetings between student and instructor.
- Methods of evaluation.
- Additional responsibilities assumed by student and/or instructor of record.

Note the following important material related to contract courses:

- Honors contracts are available only to Great Books Honors students. Approval must be given before the contract is initiated.
- The contract must build from an upper-level course in the student's degree plan.
- No member of the general university faculty is obligated to enter an honors contract, and therefore, general instructors may elect to refuse a student's request to develop a contract. If a general instructor agrees to allow a student to create a contract for the course, the instructor of record has the minimal role of confirming the Great Books component of the student's work within the general course work. Of course, some instructors may select to be more involved.
- The contract must be agreed to by the student, the faculty of record, and GB faculty.
- All Honors contracts should be initiated before the end of the semester prior to the semester in which a contracted course is going to be taken.
- After the semester begins, reasonable modifications in the contracts can be made by mutual agreement of the student, the faculty of record, and GB faculty.
- If the student fails to meet his or her agreed-upon goals or does not perform at the appropriate academic level, the GB faculty member may rescind the contract at any time. If the faculty of record of the specific course does not perform his or her responsibilities, then the student may appeal to the GBH director and request a different faculty member for oversight of the course.
- The designation of a course as an honors course in no way relieves the student of regular course responsibilities. In fact, these responsibilities must be accomplished with a final grade of B or better for the Honors designation to be awarded.
- Students may also rescind contracts. If a student finds it necessary to do so, he or she is obligated to notify the GB faculty and faculty of record in writing of this action and explain the reason for rescinding the contract.
- The grade awarded to the student is based on regularly required coursework and the GBH supplement outlined in the contract, which should count for a minimum 10% of the total grade. A grade of B or better is required for Honors credit to be awarded. Grades for regular course work are the responsibility of the content instructor, while the GB faculty is responsible for grading of the GBH supplement, although faculty are encouraged to collaborate in grading to the extent possible.

**Great Books Honors
Contracted Course Form
(EXAMPLE ONLY. Details may be modified.)**

Student:

Current Year/Semester:

Student's Major:

Course Designated Honors Within Student's Major:

Goals/objectives: The goal of this contract course is to build beyond the standard course material by engaging a work from an authority within the field, developing a clear understanding of that work and an appreciation for its social, historical, and spiritual significance, especially in light of its place in the greater conversation of Western Civilization.

Specification of the item(s) to be examined:

A timeline of activities spanning the semester:

- Rough draft due
- Final draft due

FINAL GRADE FOR PAPER AND COURSE:

LINKS: ROUGH DRAFT / FINAL DRAFT

A schedule of meetings between student and instructor: The student, course faculty, and GB faculty will consult through email and Google docs throughout the semester. A meeting with all three persons may take place during midterms.

Methods of evaluation: In addition to the normal coursework, the student will be required to write a 7-10 page paper on the above text. The process for composing this paper will include the submission of a rough draft and a final draft. The student will receive feedback during various stages of the process. The paper will represent 10% of the student's total grade.

Additional responsibilities assumed by student and/or instructor of record:

Any modifications of standard course recommended by the professor of record:

Great Books Honors Faculty:

Name:

Signature: (digital signature)

Faculty of Record:

Name:

Signature: (digital signature)

NOTE: When complete, all documents will be digitally archived by GB faculty.

Great Books Honors Thesis Guide

The Great Books Honors Thesis represents the culmination of the GB student's experience in the Great Books Honors program. Only GB students in good standing with the program will be allowed to take the course.

TIMING OF COURSE

GB students should plan to complete the thesis in a full year. The typical schedule would suggest fall to spring of the student's senior year, but the student may also plan for a spring to fall schedule. Generally, students should only take the thesis after having completed Great Books courses I-V and the two contract courses, though exceptions may be made depending on the particular circumstances.

THESIS COMMITTEE

The student's GB thesis committee is comprised of three faculty members: the Great Books thesis director and two additional committee members, with the preference that one of those committee members comes from that student's content area (EH, ED, PY, etc.). The student should select the faculty members and formally request their involvement. Once the committee has been established, the student should then inform the Great Books faculty member, who will act as the thesis chair.

THESIS SUBMISSION REQUIREMENTS

The Great Books Honors Thesis should meet the following requirements:

- 35-50 pages, not including the works cited (excluding title and reference pages.)
- You may pursue a traditional or project-based thesis. The traditional thesis includes a central argument and various sectioned chapters supporting that argument, amounting to a minimum of 35 pages. A project-based thesis will feature a central argument, a written portion, and an additional section/component that represents the remainder of the page requirement.
- MLA citation. We can make arrangements in special cases for other style guides when the situation demands it, but MLA will be the standard.

GB 4301 THESIS ASSIGNMENTS AND GRADE DISTRIBUTIONS

- Weekly participation and progress 10%
- Annotated bibliography 10%
- Prospectus 10%
- Rough Draft 10%
- Final Draft 50%
- Defense 10%
- Structure and Strategy

Many options are available to the student wanting to write a thesis. These vary from a traditional, extended argument in the form of a long paper to a project that is tailored by the student and her committee to round out the educational experience. Be advised that projects still entail a significant amount of writing but may be less research-oriented and may be more hands-on than the traditional long paper. Additionally, the Thesis can be merged with your capstone, if your major has that requirement. In short, there are a lot of possibilities for the thesis; consult closely with your thesis advisor and committee to come up with a workable idea and plan.

ANNOTATED BIBLIOGRAPHY GUIDE

To prepare you for the quality of research expected of a thesis project, you are required to write an annotated bibliography of no less than fifteen (15) sources, roughly half of your total anticipated sources for the thesis. An annotated bibliography is a list of citations for various books, articles, and other sources on a topic. The annotated bibliography looks like a Works Cited page but includes an annotation after each source cited, which acts as a summary and/or critical evaluation of a source.

Summary: basic description, who wrote the document and when, purpose of the document, its original reception by the public.

Evaluation: increases your engagement with the source by critically assessing the work for accuracy, relevance, and quality.

Generally speaking, each annotation should include the following sentences. (If you're struggling, feel free to use this structure as a model.)

- Identify the source's thesis.
- Explain the source's main points: A, B, and C
- Highlight any special conclusions the author makes, especially as they are relevant to your own thesis

- Emphasize the strengths and weaknesses of the source
- Discuss how you might be able to use the source in your own project, knowing that as you continue to research and refine your argument this expectation might change.

Formatting and writing precisely will be an important component of your grade.

- Each annotation should be one paragraph, between five to eight sentences long (about 150- 200 words).
- Start with the same format as a regular Works Cited list.
- All lines should be double-spaced. Do not add an extra line between the citations.
- If your list of citations is especially long, you can organize it by topic.
- Try to be objective and give explanations if you state any opinions.
- Use the third person (e.g., he, she, the author) instead of the first person (e.g., I, my, me)

Sample annotated bibliography

London, Herbert. "Five Myths of the Television Age." *Television Quarterly*, vol. 10, no. 1, 1982, pp. 81-69.

Herbert London, the Dean of Journalism at New York University, explains how television contradicts five commonly believed ideas. Using specific examples of events seen on television, such as the assassination of John Kennedy, he argues that culture has embraced conventional wisdom about certain topics, none of which are really born out by reality. His examples have been selected to contradict such truisms as: "seeing is believing"; "a picture is worth a thousand words"; and "satisfaction is its own reward." London uses logical arguments to support his ideas, and his style and vocabulary would make the article of interest to any reader. The article clearly illustrates London's points, but does not explore their implications, leaving the reader with many unanswered questions and doubting the accessibility of the source for this project.

Lamott, Anne. *Bird by Bird: Some Instructions on Writing and Life*. Anchor Books, 1995.

Lamott's book offers honest advice on the nature of a writing life, complete with its insecurities and failures. Taking a humorous approach to the realities of being a writer, the chapters in Lamott's book are wry and anecdotal and offer advice on everything from plot development to jealousy, from perfectionism to struggling with one's own internal critic. In the process, Lamott includes writing exercises designed to be both productive and fun. Lamott offers sane advice for those struggling with the anxieties of writing, but her main project seems to be offering the reader a reality check regarding writing, publishing, and

struggling with one's own imperfect humanity in the process. Rather than a practical handbook to producing and/or publishing, this text is indispensable because of its honest perspective, its down-to-earth humor, and its encouraging approach. Chapters in this text could easily be included in the curriculum for a writing class. Several of the chapters in Part 1 address the writing process and would serve to generate discussion on students' own drafting and revising processes. Some of the writing exercises would also be appropriate for generating classroom writing exercises. Students should find Lamott's style both engaging and enjoyable.

*Adapted from MLA Citation Guide (8th Edition),
Columbia College*

PROSPECTUS GUIDE

“At break of day, when you are reluctant to get up, have this thought ready to mind: ‘I am getting up for a ... [human’s] work. Do I still then resent it, if I am going out to do what I was born for, the purpose for which I was brought into the world? Or was I created to wrap myself in blankets and keep warm?’” Marcus Aurelius, *Meditations*

The purpose of the prospectus is to elucidate key questions in your thesis and map out your path for the project. Problems addressed at this level will reduce frustrations later. A prospectus (roughly 8-12 pages) must be approved by your committee.

Research Areas / Support

- Books and Databases in the Gus Nichols Library (GNL)
 - Probably your go-to resource to find source material. Using GNL gets you access to hard-copy books, electronic books, online journal articles, and other source material. Remember that Interlibrary Loan allows you to access material unavailable through Nichols Library. The library staff’s *job* is to help you, so visit the library.
- Britannica’s GBWW *Synopticon*
 - Various copies of this two-part volume are available in the GB wing. The Syntopicon provides an index to the Great Ideas. You can find an introductory essay and an outline of topics (with specific references to authors) on subject areas ranging from “Art” and “Chance” to “Family,” “Philosophy,” “Progress,” and “Wealth” ... 102 topics in all! This resource will help you connect your thesis to ideas across Western Civilization; in other words, it will help you link your thesis to the GB program.
- Thesis Committee
 - Your thesis committee is designed to help you with this research process. Plan to meet with them initially and then periodically, especially as you need help. Ask questions. Listen to their advice. Follow up when necessary.

Prospectus Outline Structure: complete the following and submit to your GB chair; all material created here may then be incorporated into your thesis.

- Introduction (1-2 pages)
 - Establish context by describing the subject of your thesis (in broad terms). Begin generally and move gradually toward a more focused discussion.
 - Draw down to the central problem/question on which you hope to focus.
 - State your proposed thesis in 1-2 sentences. Include the WHAT (what are you arguing?), the HOW, (how is it demonstrated?), and the WHY (why is it important?). For clarity, UNDERLINE your thesis statement.
- Argument and Objectives (3-4) pages
 - Based on your (tentative) argument and the subject matter, identify and discuss your objectives; i.e., what must you provide your reader in terms of evidence and analysis to give your claim authority?
 - Objectives might include matters of historical context (what time periods, worldviews, etc. are involved), evidence (what does the actual content of the subject area—text, media, data, etc.—suggest), and scholarship (who are the major players and what are they saying concerning your subject), among other elements.
 - Note: the HOW of your argument will point to the brunt of your necessary objectives.
 - Sections: Identify and sketch out the sections of your thesis and what each will hope will prove. Offer initial titles for the sections.
- Connection to Great Ideas (2-3 pages)
 - Your thesis, in some way, shape, or form, connects to elements of the Great Conversation (the development and discussion of key ideas in Western Civilization over the centuries—GB, for instance, invites you to the Great Conversation). Your task here is to identify where your subject area connects to these big umbrella ideas.
 - E.g., matters of government might connect you to Plato, Aristotle, More, or Tocqueville; matters of faith might connect you to Augustine, Aquinas, Pascal, or Lewis; matters of aesthetic taste might connect you to Aurelius, Dante, Burke, or Nouwen. The Great Books *Syntopicon* is a great help here.
- Conclusion (1-2 pages)
 - Revisit the thesis (especially the WHY)
 - Highlight the main points of the argument, reaffirming your conclusion.
 - Draw to the deeper significance; why should we care?
- Annotated Bibliography
 - List all potential sources and format appropriately (MLA)

Additional Prospectus Tips

- Keep in mind that the purpose of the prospectus is to show your committee what you plan to do in the future. It is not just a miniature version of the thesis. Thus, the language should be characterized by “This paper will...” statements.
- Be specific and detailed in your language. Vague comments and circular discussions won’t help your committee know how to help you.
- Once you’ve submitted your prospectus, give your committee members two weeks to respond. After that hold their feet to the fire if they haven’t given you feedback yet. In the meantime, take a (short) break and start working on your rough draft.
- When the committee responds, take their suggestions with grace and humility. If you disagree, say so, but remember that they’ve been doing this for a while and know more about the direction you’ll need to go and the steps you’ll need to take.
- Thesis killers: procrastination, disorganization, and ghosting.

ORAL DEFENSE REQUIREMENTS

The oral thesis defense represents the final big hurdle of the thesis process. Having thought, re-thought, and poured over the evidence for months, you now have the opportunity to synthesize it for an audience.

Important Note: your thesis committee will NOT allow you to reach defense stage if you are unprepared and do not have a reasonable chance of presenting your material successfully. If you're at this point, you're on track.

Basic Format

- Thesis defenses occur in one-hour intervals.
- Students receive 50 minutes for their entire defense.
- The students will have 20-25 minutes to present their slide show, giving the committee 10-15 minutes to ask questions, followed by 10-15 minutes Q&A from the audience.
- At the end of the defense, the committee will confer for five minutes afterward and determine if the student receives a Pass (minor revisions needed, if any) or a Conditional Pass (some revisions needed).

Slides

- Students should create a slideshow to present their thesis. The slides must be conducive to basic Faulkner classrooms (PowerPoint, Slides, Canva, etc.). Exceptions should be presented to the thesis chair in advance to allow for accommodation.
 - Slides should include limited text and relevant, vibrant visuals.
 - Students may use audio, video, etc., as well as creative transitions but should be mindful of timeliness and distractibility. Audio/visual should be tested in advance.

- Students must remember that the thesis draft and the presentation of the thesis draft are distinct mediums. NO ONE wants to listen to you read your thesis for your presentation. Your goal is to craft a presentation that allows your audience to grasp your thesis clearly, comprehensively, and persuasively.

Dress

Students should dress professionally. Business professional is encouraged.

FAILURE AND MITIGATIONS/EXTENSIONS

If at the time of the defense, the student fails the thesis and/or defense, the student will repeat the schedule of activities the following semester. If at the end of that following semester that student has still not passed the thesis/defense, the student will not graduate from the Great Books Honors program.

If a student fails a portion of the Great Books Thesis, that student can opt to receive an “Incomplete” pending approval of the faculty advisors and graduate from GBH once the corrective measures are taken. A student must present extenuating circumstances before such consideration will be given. Laziness and senioritis will not be rewarded.

GBH Membership and Graduation

Graduating with Great Books Honors

Every semester the Great Books Honors staff reviews the records of students who plan to graduate at the end of that term. A student who is a member in good standing at the time of that review and has completed all the requirements will graduate with Great Books Honors, with these honors noted in the graduation program and in transcripts. Graduates will also receive a Great Books Honors stole as part of the graduation ceremony. As a reminder, the following requirements are necessary for the successful completion of the program:

- Continuing Honors students must:
 - Establish a cumulative grade point average of at least 3.0 during the freshman year and maintain a cumulative GPA of at least 3.0 until graduation. A student whose cumulative GPA fails to meet this standard will not automatically be released from the program. That student's record will be reviewed term by term, and membership may be continued provided the student shows steady progress in raising the GPA to 3.0 and remains in good standing regarding the other requirements listed here.
 - Comply with the University handbook regarding conduct and behavior.
- Prospective graduates must:
 - Complete the five core courses with a 3.0 or greater GPA.
 - Complete the two contract courses related to major.
 - Complete the Senior Thesis/Project.

Any GB student who remains in *good standing with the program* but fails to complete the GBH requirements will not graduate from the GBH *program*. That student may claim membership and participation in GBH coursework, but has simply not completed the program in its entirety. (Students are of course encouraged to finish all the GBH requirements, and every reasonable effort in terms of course substitutions, finance, or other factors will be made by the program to help the student achieve this goal.)

Regaining Membership after Release

A student may be released from GBH membership for failing to fulfill the requirements listed above. Sometimes a student is able to remedy the problem(s) that caused the release and may wish to be reinstated as an Honors member. If so, the student must submit a written request for reinstatement to the Director of the Great Books Honors program.

Great Books Honors Graduation Checklist

The following form may be completed for the student's benefit, but is not a required document.

I have completed Great Books courses I-V.

- Great Books I. Term completed: _____ Grade: _____
- Great Books II. Term completed: _____ Grade: _____
- Great Books III. Term completed: _____ Grade: _____
- Great Books IV. Term completed: _____ Grade: _____
- Great Books V. Term completed: _____ Grade: _____

I have completed two contract courses.

- Contract Course One.
 - Course prefix, number, and title: _____
 - Term completed: _____ Grade: _____
- Contract Course Two.
 - Course prefix, number, and title: _____
 - Term completed: _____ Grade: _____

I have successfully completed the thesis/defense.

- Term completed: _____ Grade: _____

I have an overall cumulative GPA of 3.0 or above.

- Identify GPA: _____

CONGRATULATIONS!