**Senior Thesis Seminar**

**FR BC 3091**

**PLEASE NOTE: THIS IS A PROVISIONAL SYLLABUS AND SUBJECT TO CHANGE**

Instructor: Brian O’Keeffe

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Office hours: TBD

**Course Objectives and Rationale**

This course provides a framework to assist students preparing their senior thesis in the French Department at Barnard College. The course has two principal aspects:

(a) The meeting each Tuesday is a collective session where the thesis (i.e. work-in-progress) of each student will be discussed in turn. Partly, this will involve an intellectual engagement with the issues raised by each thesis project. Partly, it will be a matter of addressing questions of a more practical nature, including questions concerning theoretical approaches, research methods, and designing the architecture of the thesis (introductions, individual chapters, conclusions etc.) These sessions will give students the opportunity to discuss their own work, but also to benefit from the commentaries of classmates and the instructor. Students are expected to become sufficiently familiar with the work of their classmates that they can offer meaningful commentary and engage collaboratively with each other’s thesis projects.

(b) Each Thursday, at times to be fixed in consultation with the instructor, students will have individual meetings with the instructor in his office. These will be sessions lasting approximately 1 to 1 ½ hours and during these meetings matters pertinent to the student’s individual project will be addressed in detail.

**Students enrolled in this course will complete the following tasks:**

(a) A senior thesis, written in French, on a French/Francophone literary topic, or on a topic that explores the overlap between literary studies and neighboring disciplines (the focus of which must remain, in this latter case, rooted in French/Francophone contexts and remain broadly informed by literature), or else a practical translation project composed of two parts: firstly, a translation from French to English, and secondly, an accompanying ‘translator’s preface’ of not less than 7 pages written in French. The appropriate length of the text to be translated will be determined in consultation with the instructor.

(b) An oral presentation of the thesis project of approximately 10 minutes, to be given in French, and which will take place at a special meeting of the Senior Thesis Seminar towards the end of the semester.

Work towards the completion of these two tasks will necessarily involve activities that will take place as part of the student’s weekly individual meetings on Thursday, and in the Tuesday class meeting. Participation in the Tuesday meetings can and will involve completing certain homework tasks, such as reading and then providing, in class, a critical summary of a given theoretical text, preparing a brief presentation of work-in-progress, offering a close reading of a given portion of the student’s set-text(s), etc.)

Work towards the completion of these two tasks will also involve frequent meetings with thesis supervisors. That frequency is a matter each thesis supervisor will determine, but students are advised that such meetings should be regular, rather than merely occasional, and they should amount to at least *four* meetings over the course of the semester.

**Grading percentages**

(a) 70 % The thesis itself or the translation project + preface. The thesis will be not less than 25 pages, and not more than 40 pages (thus, approximately between 70000 to 12000 words).

(b) 10 % A bibliography of 12 sources minimum, appropriately annotated, showing evidence that the items on the bibliography have been read and properly engaged with.

(c) 10 % The end-of-semester oral presentation.

(d) 10 % Participation, completion of the Senior Thesis Seminar instructor’s assignments, and attendance in the Senior Thesis Seminar.

N.B. Students are invited to be clear about the following:

The senior thesis itself is graded in terms of a ‘fail,’ a ‘pass,’ or a ‘pass with distinction.’ The letter grade (A, B, C, etc.) is awarded for the student’s performance in the Senior Thesis Seminar as a whole, and according to the grading percentages given above. Therefore, attendance, participation, and completion of the assignments imposed by the instructor all count towards the final grade, as does the oral presentation. The grading of the senior thesis itself is arrived at by a joint decision between the Senior Thesis Seminar instructor and the student’s individual senior thesis supervisor. But the ultimate responsibility for assigning a letter grade rests with the senior thesis instructor.

**Students requiring accommodations**

I am happy to assist students requiring accommodations in any way I can. Students requiring accommodations should first register with the Center for Accessibility Resources and Disability Services (CARDS) in 101 Altschul Hall. Students requesting accommodations will need to meet with a CARDS case manager for approval. Once registered, students are required to present an accommodation letter to me. Students are not eligible to use their accommodations in this course until I have signed their accommodation plan. See also [cards@barnard.edu](mailto:cards@barnard.edu).

**Statement on wellness**

Barnard College strongly believes that it is important for you to recognize and identify the different pressures, burdens, and stressors you may be facing, whether personal, emotional, physical, financial, mental, or academic. We as a community urge you to make yourself – your own health, sanity, and wellness – your priority throughout this semester and your career here. Sleep, exercise, and eating well can all be part of a healthy regimen to cope with stress. Resources exist to support you in several sectors of your life, and we encourage you to make use of them. You may wish to consult the pages devoted to Feel Well, Do Well @ Barnard (<https://barnard.edu/health-wellness)>, and further useful sites are these:

<http://barnard.edu/primarycare>

<https://barnard.edu/about-counseling>

<http://barnard.edu/wellwoman/about>

<https://health.columbia.edu/services/stressbusters>

**Honor Code**

Barnard’s Honor Code was established and approved by the student body in 1912 and updated in 2016. Students taking this course will be expected to abide by the Code, and are therefore asked to read the full text of the Code in its updated version: “We, the students of Barnard College, resolve to uphold the honor of the College by engaging with integrity in all of our academic pursuits. We affirm that academic integrity is the honorable creation and presentation of our own work. We acknowledge that it is our responsibility to seek clarification of proper forms of collaboration and use of academic resources in all assignments or exams. We consider academic integrity to include the proper use and care for all print, electronic, or other academic resources. We will respect the rights of others to engage in pursuit of learning in order to uphold our commitment to honor. We pledge to do all that is in our power to create a spirit of honesty and honor for its own sake.” See also <https://barnard.edu/honor-code>

**Personal pronouns**

The instructor for this course, Brian O’Keeffe, uses the pronouns he/him/his. If any student wishes to specify their preferred pronouns, please let the instructor know, and he will be happy to use them.