

DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH AND CREATIVE WRITING  
DARTMOUTH COLLEGE

2022-23 GUIDE TO HONORS

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## HONORS IN THE ENGLISH MAJOR

The Department of English and Creative Writing houses two honors programs. Any student majoring in English who meets the GPA requirements may apply to Honors in English. Additionally, students majoring in English with a concentration in Creative Writing who meet the GPA requirements may apply for Honors in Creative Writing.

This *Guide to Honors in the English Major* is intended to amplify and clarify the [ORC](#) description of the Honors Programs in English and in Creative Writing and to assist students considering the option of Honors. No usable document, however, can cover every contingency. Students are encouraged to discuss the Honors Program with an advisor in the Department, with the English Honors Directors, and with the Director of Creative Writing, and should consult [the Department website](#) for updates to this guide.

## HONORS IN ENGLISH

Procedures and requirements for Honors in Creative Writing differ from Honors in English (critical and literary studies). Students interested in Honors in Creative Writing should consult the relevant section of this document beginning on page 4.

Students enrolled in the major in English who have completed at least six major courses by the end of their junior year and have a grade point average (GPA) in the major of 3.5 or higher and an overall college GPA of 3.0 or higher may apply for the Honors Program. Eligible students apply by submitting their college record to the Department Administrator along with a formal proposal of an Honors thesis. The thesis is to be completed during two terms of Honors coursework, [ENGL 98](#) and [ENGL 99](#), the first of which counts as the Culminating Experience in the major. The second term, [ENGL 99](#), constitutes an extra course in the student's major curriculum, in that it does not count as one of the required eleven courses in the major.

In addition to the GPA requirements, there are two prerequisites that establish eligibility for the Honors Program: 1) Students must complete a senior seminar in English & Creative Writing prior to the first term of Honors, ENGL 98, and 2) the theory requirement, that each English major pass at least one class in Course Group IV, should be satisfied before the term in which the candidate completes the Honors thesis and submits it for evaluation. In addition, Honors students are expected to participate in a bi-weekly seminar, which will meet usually at the G hour. Students who do not participate in the Honors seminar will not be allowed to advance to the second term of Honors, ENGL 99.

For complete information about applying to and successfully completing the Honors Program, including further regulations, deadlines, and advice, please consult the Directors of Honors. ([ORC](#))

## WHY AN HONORS MAJOR?

“Each of the various forms of major makes available an Honors Program that is required of candidates for Honors or High Honors in the major, the awarding of these to be decided upon when the student’s department or other appropriate supervisory body is about to certify to the Registrar the completion of the major.” ([ORC](#))

In the ORC, Dartmouth describes Honors work as “greater in depth and scope than that expected in the normal major program.” Honors is to be “an additional undertaking.” The Honors element of the major “shall take the form of supervised independent work on an individual or small-group basis.” All Honors programs will involve “work that is clearly greater in depth and scope than that expected in the normal major program” resulting in a formal thesis to be presented to the Department.

The Honors Program requires a student’s sustained attention over more than two terms in designing a special topic, researching it, and eventually producing a substantial piece of writing (or sometimes other media) whose depth and scope may permit the author to stand as something of an authority on the topic. (A number of Dartmouth English Honors theses have eventually become the bases of Ph.D. dissertations.) This concentrated and sustained program is qualitatively different from much academic coursework at Dartmouth, and its acknowledgment of a student’s independence and individuality makes it a highly desirable option for most of the brightest and best motivated of English majors.

A further appeal of the Honors Program is the collaboration of the student with a faculty member, who serves as supervisor of the thesis work and as the first reader, leading the evaluation process of the completed thesis. The student works with the supervisor from the earliest stages of the process, specifying a topic, and usually meets the supervisor once each week over the two terms of Honors work, establishing an intellectual and personal relationship unique to Honors work, which our graduates often declare to be the most valuable educational experience of their time at Dartmouth.

## ADMINISTRATIVE OVERVIEW

The Directors of Honors oversee and administer the program, including the Honors seminar. To ensure availability for the seminar, students enrolling in Honors should not enroll in any G course during the two terms of Honors work. The seminar will meet biweekly for two hours. Early in the second term of Honors work, students will be asked to make short public presentations of their work in progress.

To gain admission to the Honors Program, the Honors proposal must be approved by the CDC (Committee on Departmental Curriculum). Completed theses are graded by the supervisor (the first reader) and by a second reader assigned by the Honors Directors. Directors typically consult the student and supervisor to choose an appropriate second reader. Further description of the administrative personnel and procedures can be found in the *Who’s Who* and *Administrative Details* sections below.

## THE PROJECT PROPOSAL

The proposal for Honors work, submitted to the Department Administrator and distributed to the Honors Directors and the CDC, identifies the area in which the student wishes to work and the particular work or topics to be pursued. It generally includes a brief description of the project, the plan for completing it, and some evidence of the student's capacity for successful Honors work. Most proposals include a short bibliography of relevant texts or other sources. The proposal should also be accompanied by a short letter to the CDC that includes the following information: overall GPA; a list of English and Creative Writing courses taken, by term, with grades received; the name of the faculty member who has agreed to supervise the work; and the proposed terms of Honors work during which the student will enroll in [ENGL 98](#) and [ENGL 99](#).

Two pages of explanation should be enough to make the case for the thesis as a viable project. If the CDC finds the proposal weak or the project unsuitable for an Honors thesis, then the CDC may ask the student to revise and resubmit the proposal, or may reject it outright.

Some successful thesis proposals from past years are appended to this guide.

Honors proposals are due by the end of the seventh week of classes in the term which precedes the term in which the thesis would commence. **In the academic year 2022-23, the due dates for proposals for winter/spring Honors theses are these:**

**October 24, 2022 Creative Writing**

**October 31, 2022 Critical**

## HONORS IN THE MODIFIED MAJOR

Students pursuing modified majors in English, where English is the primary field, may be granted permission to do Honors work according the same criteria that pertain to unmodified English majors. It is not possible to undertake Honors in English as part of a modified major in which English is the modifying (not the primary) field.

## HONORS IN CREATIVE WRITING

Honors in Creative Writing allows the student to work on a creative thesis in a chosen genre during the senior year, under the guidance of an advisor in Creative Writing. The creative thesis may take the form of a short story collection, novella or novel, poetry collection, literary nonfiction collection, mixed media, or a hybrid project approved by the Director of Creative Writing.

Students who have completed at least four courses in the Creative Writing concentration (including at least one senior seminar in Creative Writing, [CRWT 60](#), [CRWT 61](#), or [CRWT 62](#)) and six major

courses by the end of the junior year, and have a grade point average in the major of 3.5 or higher (and a college GPA of 3.0 or higher) are eligible to apply for Honors in Creative Writing.

The theory requirement, that each English major pass at least one class in Course Group IV, should be satisfied before the term in which the candidate completes the Honors thesis and submits it for evaluation.

The first term of Honors work, [CRWT 98](#), may count as the Culminating Experience in the major. The second term, [CRWT 99](#), constitutes an extra course in the major program in that it does not count as one of the eleven courses required for the major nor as one of the four courses in the Creative Writing Concentration.

### CW HONORS PROPOSAL SUBMISSIONS

Students should submit a completed application along with a writing sample to the Department Administrator and to the Creative Writing Director. As selection into CW Honors is highly competitive, the writing sample should speak to the writing strengths of the applicant and to the potential of the proposed thesis. Once all applications have been received, the Creative Writing faculty meet to read and discuss the applications, with consideration weighing heavily on the strength of the writing sample.

Students admitted into the CW Honors program will be paired with an advisor from Creative Writing and, over the course of two terms, will work toward the successful completion of a manuscript-length body of work. Students may request a particular faculty member as Honors advisor, and that request is granted when possible, but for equity and fairness to all applicants, advisor pairings are considered only after an application has been approved for Honors work.

Students seeking Honors in Creative Writing usually have a strong working relationship with one or more Creative Writing faculty and designate an advisor from among those familiar faculty, but students are not obliged to seek out an advisor and can wait for one to be appointed once the student has been admitted into the Honors program. Likewise, a faculty member may not commit to working with a particular student until the Creative Writing Honors committee has approved the proposal.

**In the academic year 2022-23, the due date for applications for Honors in Creative Writing is October 24, 2022. Applicants will be notified of their status by the end of fall classes.**

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## Application to Honors or Independent Study in Creative Writing

**Application deadline: Monday, Oct 24, 2022.**

**Students will be notified of their status by the end of the fall term.**

Submit the complete application along with your writing sample to the Department Administrator ([katherine.h.gibbel@dartmouth.edu](mailto:katherine.h.gibbel@dartmouth.edu)) and the Creative Writing Director ([peter.m.orner@dartmouth.edu](mailto:peter.m.orner@dartmouth.edu)).

Student Name \_\_\_\_\_

Please indicate what type of project you are proposing (Honors or Independent Study):  
\_\_\_\_\_

Specify genre (fiction/creative nonfiction/poetry/hybrid): \_\_\_\_\_

Working title of project: \_\_\_\_\_

Overall GPA: \_\_\_\_\_

GPA in the major: \_\_\_\_\_

Please provide the names of three prospective advisors, in order of preference. If possible, we will try to match you with the desired advisor.

Thesis Advisor:

#1 \_\_\_\_\_ #2 \_\_\_\_\_ #3 \_\_\_\_\_

**Please prepare the following proposal and attach it to this cover sheet along with your writing sample (15-20 pages of fiction/creative nonfiction; 6-8 poems).**

### **Project Proposal**

- 1) Briefly describe your proposed thesis or independent study project.
- 2) How did the work originate and how do you see it developing further?
- 3) What writers or works influence or in some way inform your project?

**Bibliography.** These may be authors you have already read who have influenced your work and/or authors you intend to read.

**List of courses.** Provide a list of English and creative writing courses taken, with instructor, term, and grades received.

## WHO'S WHO IN THE HONORS PROGRAM

*The Directors of Honors* are faculty members of the Department of English and Creative Writing appointed to supervise and administer the program in general. The Directors are the students' chief source of information about the program. The Directors also arrange a bi-weekly seminar of English Honors students, usually held at the G hour in winter and spring terms, concurrent with Honors student enrollment in ENGL 98 and 99; this seminar gives students an opportunity to discuss their progress and to consider various questions of method, focus, and organization that come up in the course of writing a thesis. (Students seeking Honors in Creative Writing are welcome in the Honors seminar but are not obliged to attend it.)

The Directors see that deadlines are assigned and met and arrange that each thesis has a second reader. In instances of disagreement between first and second readers over grades, Honors or High Honors, or nominations for prizes, the Directors of Honors appoint adjudicators or "third readers." The Directors transmit the grades and distinctions awarded for Honors (and ENGL 98/99) to the Registrar. The Directors receive the nominations of supervisors and second readers for prizes to be awarded for Honors work, and appoint a committee of readers to decide the winners.

The *CDC* or *Committee on Departmental Curriculum* is chaired by the Vice Chair of the Department of English and Creative Writing. The CDC is the body that considers and approves applications for Honors in English. When a student, in consultation with the prospective supervisor, has prepared a description of the project, he or she should turn it in to the Department Administrator, who will pass it along to the CDC. The CDC may approve, reject, or require changes in the proposal. The Honors Directors convey to the student the CDC's decision, along with information about the scheduled Honors seminar.

The *supervisor*, who is also the "first reader," is the member of the Department of English and Creative Writing who works most closely with the student over the course of the Honors project. Identifying the Department member who is willing to supervise the project and who will be teaching or on a "Residence" term for the duration of the work is the would-be Honors student's first task after deciding to apply for the program and after deciding generally on the topic. (The CDC is reluctant to allow Department members on leave to supervise Honors projects.) The faculty member who agrees to supervise a project begins his or her work by advising the applicant on the project proposal, helping to define the topic, suggesting items for the bibliography, and endorsing the proposal when it is submitted to the CDC. Once the project is approved and the ENGL 98 work has begun, the supervisor arranges to meet regularly with the student to discuss the project and proposes a schedule for the delivery of sections of the thesis. The thesis is read in parts and as a whole by the supervisor who suggests revisions and helps the student co-ordinate all the elements. Once the thesis is complete and submitted, it will be read by a second reader, assigned by the Directors of Honors, after which the supervisor and second reader agree on grades for ENGL 98 and ENGL 99, and those are also the grades for the thesis. Supervisor and second reader agree on a nomination for Honors or High Honors, if the student's grades permit, and may also nominate the thesis for an appropriate prize.

The *second reader* appointed by the Directors of Honors to read a thesis is to be, in the Department's words, "a stranger to the thesis," a reader who comes to the work on its completion

and provides an external and objective evaluation of it. The Directors of Honors assign second readers, when possible, on the basis of expertise in the area of the thesis, but such harmony is not always consistent with the equal sharing of the work-load of reading, and so some second readers will bring to theses only their general understanding and appreciation of critical discourse. Experience shows, however, that such second readers fill their roles very effectively.

*Adjudicators* or “third readers” are appointed by the Directors of Honors only if the supervisor and second reader cannot agree on grades, recommendation for Honors or High Honors, or on nomination for prizes.

The *Department Administrator* for the Honors Program handles the routine business of the program, has copies of the guide, and can answer many procedural questions.

### ADMINISTRATIVE DETAILS

The Directors of Honors and the Department Administrator will confirm enrollment with the Registrar for the Honors seminar by issuing for accepted students electronic permission to enroll.

Three bound paper copies of the finished thesis, as well as a digital copy, are required. One paper copy is for the student, the other two are submitted to the Department Administrator, and one of those two copies will be filed in Rauner Library. An electronic copy of the thesis must also be submitted to the Department Administrator at the time of completion. Students are responsible for arranging the duplication and binding of the paper copies of the thesis, and the Department will pay the cost of producing those three copies. Students should consult the Department Administrator about the methods of payment.

All theses should be bound and printed on acid-free bond paper of 20-pound weight. (Cranes Thesis Paper or Howard Permalife Bond meet this requirement). The title page or prefatory matter should include the thesis title, author’s name and class year, department name, advisor’s name, and date.

### DUE DATE

Theses are due in electronic format by 4 p.m. one week before the last day of classes in the term when the thesis is to be completed. Three bound copies are due within seventy-two hours of the electronic submission. No grade will be issued until bound copies are deposited with the Department. Theses delivered after the due date for each format are not eligible to be awarded High Honors or to be nominated for prizes.

Students should realize that completing a thesis on time always entails difficulties. Word-processing catastrophes in particular are inevitable. The student’s schedule for completing the work should anticipate and make allowances for last-minute problems. To turn in before the deadline an incomplete thesis, one without footnotes or bibliography, for example, does not satisfy



the requirement. Incompletes for ENGL 98/99 and CRWT 98/99 are arranged, as for other courses, by the office of the Dean of the College.

## HONORS AWARDS AND PRIZES

“Those students who satisfactorily complete the Honors Program with a B+ average or better will earn Honors recognition in their major or, in appropriate cases, High Honors.” An average grade of B+ for the Honors work, therefore, brings an automatic conferral of Honors for the thesis. “High Honors will be granted only by vote of the department on the basis of outstanding independent work” ([ORC](#)). If the supervisor and second reader agree that the thesis is “outstanding,” they will recommend, via a short citation submitted to the Directors of Honors, that the student be awarded High Honors in the major. (This decision is based solely on the Honors work.) The Directors of Honors will propose awards of High Honors at a Department meeting for formal vote.

Honors theses in English and in Creative Writing, unless disqualified by lateness, are eligible for the Feinstein Prize, awarded annually for the Department’s best thesis. Those who endowed the prize added these criteria: the winner shall be the author of “a thesis that demonstrates a forceful yet easy mode of expression, a work with well expressed ideas that are more apt to change the way people feel about things in the world, a work that exhibits the greatest likelihood of influencing how the world responds.”

The Feinstein Prize is awarded by a committee appointed by the Directors of Honors to consider those theses nominated by Supervisors and Second Readers.

The Department may also nominate the Feinstein Prize thesis or another thesis for the Rintels Prize, an award given for the best thesis in the Humanities and Social Sciences.

## APPENDIX: Some Proposals for Honors Theses

### Proposal #1

“It is in the very moment of speaking that the hysteric constitutes her desire,” writes Jacques Lacan in *The Four Fundamental Concepts of Psychoanalysis*. “So it is hardly surprising that it should be through this door that Freud entered what was, in reality, the relations of desire to language and discovered the mechanisms of the unconscious” (Lacan 12). Language, then, is both source and substance of desire, and Lacan, like Freud and Socrates before him, views each phenomenon “as an object” (13). Both desire and language, after all, result from lack: the former is a “perpetual effect of semiotic articulation” (278), i.e., of the latter. The relation is circular, for articulation itself at once refers to and results from want, from that which we do not possess. In Lacanian terms, then, language is twice indicted for our longing. Through its postulation of the definite pronoun “I,” language “de-centres” us as subjects in a previously undifferentiated world. As an example of this unbounded self, Lacan shows us the child who remarks, ‘I have three brothers—Paul, Ernest, and me’ (20), unable as yet to distinguish between the “I” who counts and the “I” who must be counted. Through repeated utterance of the first-person singular pronoun we become aware of self and its boundaries; it is the gap between self and Other that we seek to mediate through narrative and desire.

In *Coriolanus*, language and desire serve as reflexive metaphors in a title persona who, in creating a narrative of himself as atomized, classical hero, repudiates both. Caius Marcius Coriolanus refuses to beseech the Roman people for their “voices,” or votes. Unable to acknowledge any lack in himself, he adopts an exaggerated masculinity in “defense against acknowledgement of his neediness,” writes Janet Adelman in “Anger’s My Meat: Feeding, Dependency, and Aggression in *Coriolanus*” (in *Representing Shakespeare*). He becomes instead “a grotesquely invulnerable and isolated thing” (Adelman 132). Coriolanus will not admit to any desire, nor will he even take food except from his “mirror image” (138), the Volscian general Tullus Aufidius. Concomitant with disclaiming his own hunger, Coriolanus must also disclaim any kinship with the hungry rabble, “whose loves [he] prizes/As the dead carcasses of unburied men/That do corrupt [his] air” (III.iii.122-24). Coriolanus, after all, wishes to be *sui generis*, to “stand/As if man were author of himself/And knew no other kin” (V.iii.35-37). Coriolanus, in short, longs for the impossible, for “a world elsewhere” (III.iii.136).

In his essay, “Who Does the Wolf Love?” (in *Themes Out of School*) Stanley Cavell points out the essential paradox of Coriolanus’s “hungering not to hunger, of wanting not to want, of asking not to ask”— of requiring public support yet being unable to “bring [one’s] tongue to such a pace” (II.iii.49-50)— a paradox whose only solution is that of “becoming a God” (76). The theme of silence, Cavell continues, “haunts the play”:

...the words ‘silent’ and ‘silence’ are  
beautifully and mysteriously associated,  
one each, with the women in his life: with  
his wife (‘My gracious silence, hail!’) and  
his mother (‘He holds her by the hand,

silent') (85).

Virgilia and Volumnia associate silence with peace, speech with war. Coriolanus, then, is caught in another paradox: speech, by his reckoning, belies desire, while silence, associated with peace by his female relations, thus connotes kinship and femininity. And all—desire, family, femininity—are equally abhorrent to a general who craves classical autonomy. For human beings, however, as Cavell writes, there can be no silence; “in this respect, there is no world elsewhere” (86).

The honors thesis I propose will comprise a psycho-linguistic and feminist critique of *Coriolanus*: specifically, of Coriolanus’s effort to “re-centre” his own subjectivity by becoming “author of himself.” I will examine Coriolanus’s exaggerated masculinity and subsequent abnegation of his mother and wife. Does Coriolanus repudiate Volumnia and Virgilia because, as women, they are inherently more “grotesque” (i.e. as opposed to the “classical,” as Mikhail Bakhtin postulates in *Rabelais and His World*), than he and therefore representative of that which he fears most in himself? or because they remind him of kinship, and of the reality that to be truly *sui generis* is, ultimately, an impossible fiction? Aufidius’s speech to Coriolanus (IV.v.103-136)—like Iago to Othello: “I am your own forever”—is arguably the most romantic in the play. In what ways does intimacy with a member of the same sex “re-centre” Coriolanus as a subject? In what ways does it restore him to a childlike state, filling the Lacanian gap that differentiates between the Cartesian “I” and chaotic external world? And in seeking to become “author of himself,” what semiotic system can Coriolanus, as author, employ? What signs recount the marginalized narrative of his desire?

These are some of the questions I will pose in the course of an honors project. Although they are, I realize, broad, I attach a preliminary bibliography below.

#### Proposed bibliography

- Bakhtin, Mikhail. *Rabelais and His World*, trans. Iswolsky, 1984.
- Bamber, Linda. *Comic Women, Tragic Men: a Study of Gender and Genre in Shakespeare*, 1982.
- Belsey, Catherine. *Critical Practice*, 1980.
- Bennett, Tony. *Formalism and Marxism*, 1979.
- Bullough, Geoffrey. *Narrative and Dramatic Sources in Shakespeare*.
- Cantor, Paul A. *Shakespeare’s Rome, Republic and Empire*, 1976.
- Cavell, Stanley. *Themes Out of School: Effects and Causes*, 1984.
- Dollimore, Jonathan. *Political Shakespeare: New Essays in Cultural Materialism*, 1985.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *Radical Tragedy: Religion, Ideology, and Power in the Drama of Shakespeare and his Contemporaries*, 1984.
- Eagleton, Terry. *Literary Theory: an Introduction*, 1983.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *Criticism and Ideology*, 1976.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *Shakespeare and Society: Critical Studies*, 1967.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *William Shakespeare*, 1986.
- Ferguson, Quilligan, Vickers, eds. *Rewriting the Renaissance: the Discourses of Sexual Difference in Early Modern Europe*, 1986.
- Greenblatt, Stephen, ed. *The Power of Forms in the English Renaissance*, 1982.

- \_\_\_\_\_. *Allegory and Representation*, 1981.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *Renaissance Self-Fashioning: from More to Shakespeare*, 1980.
- Huffman, Clifford C. *Coriolanus in Context*, 1972.
- Kahn, Coppelia. *Man's Estate: Masculine Identity in Shakespeare*, 1982.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *Representing Shakespeare*, 1980.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *Making a Difference: Feminist Literary Criticism*, 1985.
- Lacan, Jacques. *The Four Fundamental Concepts of Psychoanalysis*.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *The Language of the Self*, 1968.
- Medvedev, Pavel. *The Formal Method in Literary Scholarship: A Critical Introduction to Sociological Poetics*, trans. Wehrle, 1973.
- Schwartz and Kahn, eds. *Representing Shakespeare*, 1978

## Proposal #2

In his essay, “William Blake and his Reader in *Jerusalem*,” Roger Easson claims of Blake’s final illuminated prophecy, “Seldom in Western literature has the onus of communication fallen so heavily upon the reader.” He argues that *Jerusalem* “is a poem about itself, about the relationship between the author and his reader.” It is a “grand allegory,” which “enjoins the reader to participate with its writer in the creative process” (Curran and Wittreich, 309.) Similarly, in his study of William Blake’s “Composite Art,” W.J.T. Mitchell writes (paraphrasing Northrop Frye): “entering the vortex of a book is like trying to read the book from its own point of view.” His theory of reading Blake’s illuminated texts—as well as his actual reading of *Jerusalem*—is based on this idea of reading Blake from the inside out; in other words, reading it the way the author intended it to be read.

I am at once intrigued by this idea of Blake’s text as an “allegory of reading” and wary of the traps and kinds of blindness that might stand in the way if, like Mitchell, I attempt to systematically define the way of reading that Blake intended.

I do concur, though, that *Jerusalem* is an extraordinarily wealthy subject for a reading-based, or, more precisely, a signification-based study. Its unique form forces its audience to experience the interpretive process in a way that challenges traditional methods of reading. As with the other apocalyptic writings I’ve read, the use of codes, cryptic language, and more generally the manipulation of the signification power of written language seems to be at the forefront of the author’s—or the text’s—mind. As Easson notes, the unique and complex form of the poem seems to be a screen to confound “enemies” of the text and to educate its “friends.” Indeed, the poem opens with an address “To the Public,” which reveals the author’s apocalyptic judgment and separation of his readership into “sheep” and “goats.” More interesting than this screening of his audience, though, is the more general phenomenon that Blake acknowledges and anticipates his future audience’s reading of the poem.

My interest, then, lies not so much in the subjective mechanics of the “reading process,” so to speak (although as a reader myself, I must inevitably face this), but in the way in which Blake anticipates it. It seems that Blake transforms the impulse to “read” and find significance into an impulse to create. Both in its subject matter and in its unique form, *Jerusalem* tends to call attention to the creative process. Why does Blake do this? Is it simply an obscure, nihilistic game that holds

as its “meaning” only the fact that it is about “meaning”? I propose, rather, that Blake attempts to perpetuate the creative process that began in his own mind by installing it in the minds of his readers. In other words, I will try to show that Blake conveys to us his vision by anticipating how we read his visual/verbal poetry and then making us bear “the onus of communication” not simply by decoding a cryptic book of “confined thoughts, in mummycases, embalmed in the spice of words” (Joyce, *Ulysses*), but by joining its creative mechanism as a necessary consequence of our reading.

In my thesis I will explore this “catalytic” or, as Mitchell would say, this “vortexical” quality of *Jerusalem*, and discuss the mechanisms by which Blake communicates his prophetic vision.

In pursuing this idea I will examine both the poetic and pictorial means by which Blake expresses his vision. Following W.J.T. Mitchell’s lead in Blake’s *Composite Art*, I will take as a given the need to examine the essential and dynamic interplay of the pictorial and the poetic in Blake’s art. However, whereas his study of *Jerusalem* is limited to the monochromatic Copy D, I will focus my attention primarily upon Copy E of the text, which Blake colored by painting upon the engraved prints. Since there is only one extant color version<sup>1</sup> I will study a facsimile edition of the poem, which has been recently published by the Princeton University Press. (I will also consult older facsimiles in Baker Special Collections, although many are not actually color reproductions of Blake’s original but instead have been hand-colored by the publishers.) The use of color in the poem is a crucial and as-yet virtually overlooked<sup>2</sup> tool in Blake’s manipulation of the signifying process. Both stylistically and symbolically, color adds a further dimension, a further complication, a further invocation into the world of creation.

Also, I will trace the development of Blake’s notions of creation through his revision of Milton’s *Paradise Lost* which takes place in his prophecy, *Milton*, which is the immediate precursor to *Jerusalem*. I will examine the way in which Blake explores in *Milton* the notion of perpetuating the creative act, which he realizes in his later poem. Since in *Milton* Blake is not only an author but a reader himself, his description of how he reads may give us an idea of how he envisioned his own future readers.

Finally, I will show that this idea of perpetuating the creative act by forcing the reader to create is likewise perpetuated in the works of many of Blake’s readers. Joyce, Yeats, and Poe all take part in this tradition of forcing the reader to bear so much of “the onus of communication,” a tradition which, as Stanley Fish argues, began with Milton (if not before) and was revised and concentrated by William Blake.

### Preliminary Bibliography

Barthes, Roland. *S/Z*. Translated by Richard Miller. New York: Hill and Wang, 1974.

Bloom, Harold. *Poetry and Repression: Revisionism from Blake to Stevens*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1976.

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<sup>1</sup> There is a second hand-colored edition of *Jerusalem*, Copy B; however, it consists only of the first 25 plates (one quarter of the full text) of the poem.

<sup>2</sup> Some critics (see *Blake’s Sublime Allegory*) prefer to study Copy D because it is a later, and supposedly “more accurate” representation of Blake’s ideas. However, this may very well be inaccurate since Blake’s lamentable financial status would have made the production of another hand-colored copy a virtual impossibility.

- Clark, Lorraine. *Blake, Kierkegaard, and the Spectre of Dialectic*. Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 1991.
- Crehan, A.S. *Blake in Context*. Dublin: Gill and MacMillan, 1984.
- Curran, Stuart and Joseph Anthony Wittreich Jr., ed. *Blake's Sublime Allegory*. Madison: The University of Wisconsin Press, 1973.
- Eaves, Morris. *William Blake's Theory of Art*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1982
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### Proposal #3

Theresa Hak Kyung Cha's *DICTEE* was published a few months before her tragic death in 1982. Although the work received relatively little attention after its publication, *DICTEE* was republished in 1995 by Third Woman Press. The work has been enjoying a renaissance, a part of which is collection of essays about *DICTEE*, entitled *Writing Self, Writing Nation*, edited by Elaine Kim and Norma Alarcón, was recently published. This revival may be connected to the current emergence of a field of Asian American studies.

Cha was born in Korea; lived in Hawaii for a while as a child and studied Korean traditional dance; attended Catholic schools in California, where she began to study French and the Greek and Roman classics; and studied film, art and literature on both coasts of the U.S. as well as in France. She was heavily influenced by writers and theorists such as Beckett, Joyce, Marguerite Duras, Roland Barthes, Marguerite Yourcenar, and particularly by French film theorists such as Christian Metz and Thierry Kuntzel. She incorporated Korean history, dance, and language, a feminist consciousness and the awareness of an ex-colonial living in the diaspora into her work. The range

of her work included film, video, performance art, dance, and literature, as well as a consistent experimentation with the breaking down and reassembling of genres and forms.

*DICTEE* is as uncategorizable as Cha herself. The text includes poetry (she invokes both the lyric and the epic tradition), prose, pastiche, seemingly random images, handwritten pages, exercises in “translation,” and even empty space. English, French, Chinese, and Korean are the recognizable languages of the text, and Cha creates words such as “diseaseuse” to assume the meanings(s) for which there are no words. Elaine Kim writes that the subject of *DICTEE* is “a syntax of crisis;”<sup>3</sup> the category-defying position which Cha herself inhabits results in a complex, genre-defying work. Because of its various influences and unique nature, the work stands at the intersection of postmodernism and postcolonialism as few other Asian American texts do.

Like postcolonial native cultures, Asian American ethnicity/culture resists the appropriative or perhaps homogenizing tendencies of the larger culture, including postmodernism. Yet unlike the postcolonial, the Asian American lives in the diaspora. Neither “authenticity” or “identity” can be a claim to truth, for what is the “authentic” Asian American?<sup>4</sup> Neither is positioning within a simple colonizer/colonized binary possible for the Asian American. If the postcolonial project is to eradicate or encompass the residues of colonialism, the Asian American project is that as well, but it is also to create a space within the “colonizing” or “mainstream” culture that is neither insular nor destructive of the particular Asian American cultural heritage. I wish to examine ways in which Dickey’s “syntax of crisis” results from radical cultural dislocation and/or multiple positioning, and I shall consider as well the work’s attempt to construct a space of Asian-American subjectivity in the contexts of U.S. culture and global postmodernism.

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<sup>3</sup> Elaine Kim, “Preface,” *Writing Self, Writing Nation*, Eds. Elaine Kim and Norman Alarcón (Berkeley: Third Woman Press, 1994), x.

<sup>4</sup> Frank Chin notwithstanding.

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#### Proposal #4

I wish to propose an honors thesis examining the role of ghosts in James Joyce's *Ulysses*. Exploration of this topic dominated my work last Spring term in English 73.2, the Advanced Seminar on *Ulysses*, and I wish to build upon this work—specifically upon my term paper concerning the imagery and importance of Stephen Dedalus' ghostly mother in Joyce's text.



Among the themes I touched upon in this paper were: the imagery of the ghost mother's visits as they paralleled that of the dead King Hamlet in Shakespeare's text; Stephen's reaction to the "beastly dead" nightmare figures as a response to his own "beastly" mortality, the mother ghost as an archetypal woman and her connection to the Church; and a psychoanalytic reading of the ghostly visitations in Nighttown. I propose continued exploration of these themes as well as an expansion into the narrative's other "ghostly" figures.

My initial question echoes that of Stephen in his discussion of *Hamlet* in Chapter Nine of the novel: "What is a ghost?" (9.147). It seems to me an important concept to define in a novel in which both our heroes, two "darkbacked figures," (10.313) spend Bloomsday in mourning clothes. Both Stephen and Bloom are visited by ghosts, and clearly the men have distinct relationships to the dead. What do the nature of their 'hauntings' reveal about them? The ghost of May Dedalus haunts the novel's opening chapter and establishes Stephen's relationship to Shakespeare's mourning son, Hamlet. In Chapter Six, Bloom visits Dublin's 'Hades' and reveals himself as both father and son to the dead. In Chapter Nine, ghosts figure heavily in Stephen's theory of *Hamlet*, and his contemplation reveals much about his personal phantoms. Finally, ghosts of various types inhabit both Stephen and Bloom's Nighttown hallucinations in Chapter Fifteen. I plan to do close readings of these chapters, as well as other sections of the texts in which ghost figures appear and figure significantly.

In Homer's *Odyssey*, our hero remembers visiting Hades and conversing with the "blurred and breathless dead," (XI.28) and describes the inhabitants of the afterworld: "Now the souls gathered, stirring out of Erebus, / Brides and young men and men grown old in pain / and tender girls whose hearts were new to grief," (XI.37-39). In Joyce's epic, we find echoes of these shades: not only May Dedalus as the ruined bride in Chapter Fifteen, but Bloom's vision of his dead infant son Rudy as "a changeling, kidnapped" (15.4957) and transformed into a young man of eleven years, and Bloom's painful memories of this father who, old in pain and mourning for his dead wife, committed suicide. As well as continuing my investigation into the Shakespearean models for the ghosts of *Ulysses*, I plan to explore these Homeric models and their influence on Joyce's use of haunting spirits. Do the ghosts of *Ulysses*, like the Homeric shades, bring otherworldly messages of betrayal or prophecy?

Central to Stephen's *Hamlet* theory in Chapter Nine is his radical redefinition of a ghost—"One who has faded into impalpability through death, through absence, through change of manners," (9.147-149). This definition seems to me central to the understanding of ghostly figures and imagery in the text. For example, we might consider Si Dedalus a 'ghost of absence' to his son or Molly and Bloom 'ghosts of absence' to each other, sexually and emotionally. Finally, I plan to consider the concept of Dublin as an entire city haunted by ghosts, as James Maddox writes, "living on the memories of its dead patriots, dead tenors and dead journalist," (Maddox, 53). As, in Chapter Nine of the novel, Stephen "will have it that *Hamlet* is a ghoststory," (9.140/141), my thesis will examine many of the varied and fascinating ways in which James Joyce will have it that *Ulysses* is a ghost story.

Below is a preliminary list of relevant works, many of which I have already examined in the course of my work last spring. I am encouraged in my research thus far, since I have found little material

directly relating to the topic of ghosts in Joyce's work but much that is applicable, especially concerning the influence of Homer and Shakespeare on Joyce's text.

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### Proposal #5

Dear CDC,

Please accept this letter as my application for the Creative Writing Honors Program in Poetry. I feel that my commitment and development during my time at Dartmouth and beyond show that I will contribute to the Honors Program this year.

I took English 80 the winter of my junior year, and from there I dedicated my studies almost entirely to Creative Writing, and more specifically, to poetry. Professor Finch's introductory course sparked my curiosity for the craft, and we cast our net wide in terms of which poets we read: a selection from the *Contemporary Book of American Poetry*, which we continued to study

in Professor Mathis' English 81 course during the spring. Throughout the winter and spring, I learned how to look at poetry, both my own and others, and developed a vocabulary to critique and revise poems. I enjoyed both of these classes immensely, and looked for other ways to keep studying and workshop-ing poetry.

This past summer, I am incredibly thankful to have had the opportunity to continue to study poetry at the Robert Frost Place, led by Martha Rhodes, and under the guidance of Kevin Pruffer's poetry workshop. There, I learned how poetry fits into the world beyond Dartmouth, and hone in on my strengths and weaknesses as a poet. Kevin opened my eyes to the world of light verse and the New York poets, who I consider to be a great source of inspiration for me today. I was determined to bring my newfound focus and specific poetry interest back to Dartmouth this fall.

The term, I have taken my poetry studies to a different level through an Independent Study under the guidance of Professor Finch, and through my additional participation in Professor Huntington's Form and Theory of Poetry course. With Professor Huntington's course, I have developed the eye to decode complex poems and theory with the help of my classmates. I have learned to slow down and be more careful with my poetry readings, and I have become a more open-minded reader. The course has also been integral in aiding my understanding of how poetry fits in with the world today.

For my independent study with Professor Finch, my specific area of interest for the course is exploring specifically light verse poetry and the idea of happiness. I have made a habit of the craft, and consistently put in the time and energy necessary to develop and push myself to the next level. Before starting the term, I had a tendency to write light verse with a strong voice, but my poetry was limited and expressive, rather than creative and open. Each week, I focus on a different poet whose collection I read, and both create new work and revise older poems of mine. The poets whose work I've been reading lately include: James Schuyler, Larry Levis, Matthea Harvey, Rachel Zucker, Ron Padgett, Laura Jensen, Galway Kinnell, Stevie Smith, and I've enjoyed seeing how these poets have achieved success in light verse. I've also read various essays and theory by Louise Gluck, Roland Barthes' (*Pleasure of the Text*), and Auden (*Introduction to the Oxford Book of Light Verse*), and I hope to read work by Jacques Prevert, Jorie Graham, Kenneth Koch, and others during the rest of this term. I've been pleased with how this reading has complimented my learning from Professor Finch, and I feel that my growth over the course of the term (and over the past year) has laid the roots for my continued growth this winter and spring.

As my term with Professor Finch nears an end, and I have had the chance to reassess my progression as a poet, it is clear that my writing has developed in a way that cannot be described as simply writing light-verse poetry. I am now beginning to venture into a territory new and exciting, which I would be honored and excited to continue exploring this winter and spring. As opposed to merely expressing happiness through poems, as I was before, I am learning what it means to write with and about *bliss*, as described well by Barthes in *Pleasure of the Text*. With the prior, happiness is something tangible—like the way that eating cake tastes good and makes us happy. We could write about that experience and how it is good, but the poem will be limited in its ability to open itself up to a reader. Barthes' notion of bliss is work that is heard indirectly. Writing about subjects of bliss means finding the fine line between what is objectively good and what is unknown. It is “a disturbance, a bordering on collapse” (Barthes 25). I is the realm of

uncertainly where I have begun to create the most curiously fruitful work, and I hope to continue to explore what bliss in poetry means this winter and spring.

In moving forward, I am honored to have the chance to work with Professor Huntington on my continued development of poetry. Specifically, I would like to create a manuscript of poetry focusing on what happy really means, and especially with regards to bliss. I have found that it is not just by writing about simple happy things, that we drawn this bliss—it is much the opposite. I am motivated to spend this winter and spring creating bliss without necessarily expressing something happy directly.

I recently discovered a character whom I enjoy including in my poetry. Her name is Betty, and I've found a tremendous adventure in learning about her as I write about her. She is helping me begin to develop my ideas about happiness, and I would be eager to include her in my manuscript. My plan is to put together a manuscript of Betty poems that also includes other poems that fit with the Betty-poems themes, such as love poems for this Betty who has no companion in her life! I would be thrilled to dedicate the effort and time to seeing where Betty takes me, and where I can take her.

One of the things I've found helpful to me so far in the process of developing these poems is to write poems after re-reading a book of on-going notes—inspired by a book recommended to me by Professor Finch: Joe Brainard's *I Remember*. Writing down observations and experiences I recall has helped me find starting points for poems, which I am confident will inspire more poetry for my thesis. It's also been incredibly helpful to read volumes of contemporary poetry and draw inspiration from there—I will continue to find new poets and theorists to explore during the course of the winter and spring. Additionally, I am very involved with improv comedy on campus, and I have yet to deeply explore how the world of improv and poetry are related—if it is the case that poetry should be created and not expressed, then poetry and improv are incredibly similar. Both are rooted in the human realities that we can identify with, but are expressed in unique and interesting ways. They are not premeditated, and relating this principle to my development of Betty is exciting to me. I would be curious to see later this term and into the two-thesis terms how I can weave my passion for improv into my writing poems. In addition, I would be open to other means of accessing blissful places and experiences, which can translate into meaningful poetry. I can't wait to start, and would be honored to have the chance to get to know Betty through my own poetry winter and spring.

I would be honored to have the chance to work on this Thesis Project because it will also give me the chance to have the guidance of Professor Huntington, someone who will undoubtedly help me learn what it takes to produce a quality poem, as well as a well-developed and thoughtful manuscript. I am looking forward to working with her to find a unique voice within the poetry community, and feel that I have the motivation to confidently dedicate my winter and spring to this Honors Thesis project.

I appreciate you taking the time to consider my application.

Thank you.

## READING LIST:

Joe Brainard  
Roland Barthes  
Louise Gluck (essays and theory)  
Matthea Harvey  
Galway Kinnell  
Laura Jensen  
Kenneth Jock  
Larry Levis  
Bernadette Mayer  
Campbell McGrath  
Ron Padgett  
Carl Phillips  
Jaques Prevert  
James Schuyler  
Stevie Smith  
Rachel Zucker

## LIST OF COURSES:

Dramatic Storytelling (CoCo 4); 09F; A-

Introduction to Criticism (Engl 14); 10X; A-

Creative Writing (Engl 80); 11W; A

Creative Writing Poetry (Engl 81); 11S; B+

Independent Study in Poetry (Engl 97); 11F; in progress

Form and Theory of Poetry (Engl 75); 11F; in progress

## Proposal #6

My long-term goal as a writer is to complete a narrative of my mother's life. I applied for a Fulbright grant to conduct historical and biographical research in South Korea so I can work towards situating my mother's narrative in the context of both US and South Korean sociopolitical histories. I see the potential work with the Fulbright as a continuation of the themes in my thesis project. To prepare myself for both these projects, I am currently in English 85 Poetry with

Professor Cynthia Huntington and English 96 with Professor Woon-Ping Chin, focusing on Korean-American issues and mother-daughter themes.

In my thesis project, I would like to write about my mother's post-immigration experiences as a Korean woman in the United States in mixed poetry and prose, with the tentative title of *Hair*. I am interested especially in how her experiences in the traditionally Korean-dominated beauty supply industry intersect with the Black American culture. Black hair care has been a controversial topic racially and socioeconomically, but not much literature has been produced in regards to these tensions outside of the L.A. Race Riots. My mother's recovery from ovarian cancer is also a significant component to her story, especially the treatment that caused many changes to her life, including losing her hair. Her story provides opportunities for cultural comparison, as she sought out Western medicine and the Korean-American church whereas her own mother's struggle with cancer in Korea involved Shamanism and homecare.

Writers that deal with the issue of post-memory and expressing the stories of a previous generation heavily inform my project. Art Spiegelman's graphic novel, *Maus*, which reflects on his father's experience in the Holocaust, ignited my interest in biographical storytelling. I am also informed by Professor Chin's book, *Hakka Soul*, which intertwines accounts about her family's migrations as part of a global diaspora of Hakkas with cuisine and poetry.

### Bibliography

Art Spiegelman (*Maus*)

Woon-Ping Chin (*Hakka Soul, The Naturalization of Camellia Song, In My Mother's Dream*)

Marianne Hirsch (Critical articles regarding post-memory)

Suji Kwock Kim (*Notes from the Divided Country*)

Joy Kogawa (*Obasan*)

Jessie Carney Smith (*Encyclopedia of African American Popular Culture*)

Tananarive Due (*The Black Rose: The Dramatic Story of Madam C.J. Walker, America's First Black Female Millionaire*)

Robert Lowell (*Life Studies*)

### List of courses

09X Engl 24	B
09X Engl 80	A*
09F Engl 58	B
09F Thea 50	A
10W Engl 42	A
10W Engl 81	A
10S Engl 67	A
10X Engl 96	A
11S Engl 22	A-
11S Engl 75	A-
11F Engl 41	
11F Engl 85	
11F Engl 96	