

# **SENIOR THESIS INFORMATION**

**DEPARTMENT OF NEAR EASTERN & JUDAIC STUDIES**



**2017 - 18**

**Brandeis University  
Near Eastern and Judaic Studies  
2017-2018**

## **Why Write a Senior Thesis?**

Each year seniors must decide whether to write a senior thesis. It is, of course, a major undertaking, and a significant investment of time and energy. A year-long course (NEJS 99d), it requires intensive research in primary sources and culminates in a major piece of writing (typically 75 to 100 pages). It is well-suited for highly motivated and self-starting students.

Here are some of the reasons why students consider doing a senior thesis:

1. It provides an essential experience for those planning to do graduate work, especially in NEJS. A senior thesis means "doing" NEJS, not just learning it; it helps you to discover how the scholar conducts research and transforms that raw information into a coherent story and analysis.
2. You can explore, in great depth, a subject that is of great interest to you, but only tangentially (if at all) broached in the general curriculum.
3. If your research requires the use of non-English sources, you can improve your foreign language reading skills to the level expected in graduate work.
4. The thesis is a major writing experience: With the help of your advisor, you will learn how to structure a large piece of writing and, in the process of writing, have an opportunity to refine your style and to internalize the conventions and mechanics of academic prose.
5. You can graduate, depending on your success in the thesis, *with honors*, *high honors*, or *highest honors* in Near Eastern and Judaic Studies, which will be acknowledged at Commencement. (At the very worst, you will graduate without departmental honors.)

If you are interested, you should seek out a thesis advisor (a NEJS faculty member in the geographic or chronological specialty of interest to you), go through the mechanics of formal registration, and begin designing a strategy to choose an important, feasible topic. You should aim to complete most of your research by the end of the first semester, and then use January through March to write and revise.

The thesis must follow the conventions described in “Undergraduate Honors Thesis Regulations,” which is attached to this packet.

What kinds of topics are appropriate? The list of recent theses at the end of this document suggests the broad range of possibilities. It should be a subject in which you have a particular interest; it should also be one for which there exists a substantial and accessible base of primary documentation. While you probably have some idea of the topic that interests you, the advisor can help you link that interest to a set of primary sources (whether printed or archival), most of which are available on campus or at least in the Boston area.

The **Office of the Dean of Arts and Sciences** offers limited funds (up to \$150) to seniors writing senior theses. Detailed information and applications can be found at: <http://www.brandeis.edu/das/programs/thesis/index.html>. There is no set deadline for applicants.

**Library & Technology Services** has created a guide to help you along the path to completion including how to construct a thesis, a list of suggested research databases, how to use InterLibrary Loan, simplifying citations with RefWorks, helpful advice and tips to keep you unstuck, uploading to the Archives, and publishing choices. Details are at <http://brandeis.libguides.com/thesis>.

### **To Write or not to Write a NEJS Senior Honors Thesis**

That is the question!

Whether 'tis nobler in the mind to suffer the slings  
and arrows of an outrageously high GPA

Or to take arms against a sea of tsores (oy vey!)

And by opposing end them. To sleep (knowing that I will  
graduate with Honors), to die (of shame knowing that  
I'll deprive my parents of their desire to kvell about  
my Summa)....perchance to dream. Ay, there's the rub.  
(by Bard C. Freeze)

**Near Eastern and Judaic Studies**  
**Undergraduate Honors Thesis Regulations**  
**2017-2018**

All students who complete their junior year with a cumulative index of 3.25 or higher in NEJS (including Hebrew courses) are eligible for enrolling in NEJS 99d in their Senior year.

Reminder: Students with a general cumulative index above 3.8 can graduate with *Summa cum Laude* **only** if they have received departmental honors, i.e., an accepted Senior Honors Thesis.

All students who desire to graduate with honors in NEJS must register before September 13, 2017 (and again before January 24, 2018) for NEJS 99d, which is a full-year course. Students who choose to do a dual-honors thesis with another department must inform their NEJS advisor and the Undergraduate Advising Head (UAH) in writing, enroll in 99d course, and satisfy the requirements of both departments.

NEJS 99d may count as two courses toward the nine NEJS courses for the major.

It is permissible for other departments to count NEJS 99d toward their own honors requirement, if they wish.

All students enrolled in NEJS 99d must write their thesis with a NEJS faculty member, who must sign their NEJS 99d course instruction form. That person shall be considered their thesis advisor, and if desired may also become their NEJS advisor.

All students who wish to write a Thesis must present their thesis advisor with a 1-3 page proposal of the topic the semester before the start of the senior year (or at the latest during the first two weeks of their senior year). There is no standard format for this proposal. The final NEJS 99d project should typically be between 50-100 pages in length and must follow standard academic conventions (e.g. Chicago Manual of Style).

Every thesis must be defended before three faculty members, one of whom must be the thesis advisor. The other two readers should have first-hand knowledge of the thesis topic, and may be from NEJS, though any faculty member at Brandeis or another academic institution is acceptable. The second and third faculty members should be chosen through consultation among the advisor, the UAH, and the student. The second and third readers should be chosen by February 2, 2018 at the latest, and be officially asked to join the committee by the advisor (not the student writing the thesis). The student is encouraged to discuss the thesis with the second and third readers at all stages of its composition, and to share drafts of the thesis with them.

The student must give his/her advisor a completed draft of the thesis (in paper) by March 12, 2018, and all three members of the committee must receive the final draft of the thesis (in paper) by April 2, 2018. Each thesis is given a letter grade by the thesis advisor, which is independent of the defense; this grade must be submitted by the deadline for senior grades in courses with no exams, and is the grade for NEJS 99d.

A student may defend a thesis only on the recommendation of the student's thesis advisor. The thesis must be defended no later than April 16, 2018. The defense should typically last between 40 and 50 minutes, and should be chaired by the student's thesis advisor. The student should then leave, while the three readers confer on the outcome: ("Highest Honors," "High Honors," "Honors," or "No Honors"). The student then returns to the room, is told the level of honors, and is given a frank appraisal of the work by the committee, and suggestions for improving it before uploading it to the electronic Brandeis Repository. To facilitate this, the three members of the student's committee are urged to make extensive comments on spelling, style, content, methodology, bibliography, and the like on the text of the thesis before returning it to the student.

The **Thesis Defense form must then be signed by all three members of the committee.** The committee may also determine that the thesis is not eligible for honors, in which case the student does not graduate with honors, but does receive course credit, assuming the thesis receives a passing grade.

The final version of the thesis should be electronically submitted to the Library Archives where it will appear in the Brandeis Institutional Repository. Formatting requirements and upload instructions are provided on the LTS website at URL: <http://brandeis.libguides.com/thesis>.

Note:

It is each student's responsibility to adhere to these deadlines. If they are not met, the student may forfeit the right to defend the thesis and to graduate with departmental honors.

### **Key Deadlines for 2017-18**

- \_\_\_\_\_ Register for NEJS 99d: September 13, 2017
- \_\_\_\_\_ Topics due in writing: Semester prior to senior year or first 2 weeks of senior year
- \_\_\_\_\_ Committee of three readers chosen: February 2, 2018
- \_\_\_\_\_ Register for NEJS 99d: January 24, 2018
- \_\_\_\_\_ Thesis draft to advisor: March 12, 2018
- \_\_\_\_\_ Final date to submit thesis draft to committee: April 2, 2018
- \_\_\_\_\_ Final date for thesis defense: April 16, 2018
- \_\_\_\_\_ Grade submitted to Registrar by advisor: May 9, 2018

### **Printing your Thesis (for yourself and your faculty advisors)**

We recommend the Brandeis Copy Center, who can provide black and white copy services at 3 cents per page and color for 15 cents per page. Binding is roughly \$1.50, a plastic cover is 50 cents and a leatherette backer is 75 cents. There is a \$1 charge for opening an electronic file. They require 4 days' turnaround; if you need RUSH service, they charge a 10% additional fee.

There are many off-campus options as well, i.e. Staples and Kinko's.

Congratulations on your accomplishments, best of luck as you finish and move on to the next chapter in your lives!

# Course Change Form (Add/Drop)

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## Student Information

Last Name:

First Name:

Sage ID: 20

Email:

@brandeis.edu

Undergraduate

GSAS

IBS

Heller

## Registration Information

Term:

Fall

Spring

Summer

Year: 20

Class (Subject/Catalog #/Section i.e. CHEM 18A Sec. 2):

Which action are you requesting?

Drop Course

Add Course with Letter Grade

Add Course as Audit **(Graduate Students Only)**

Change Grading Status to Audit **(Graduate Students Only)**

Student's Signature:

Date:

## Required Signatures

Print Instructor's Name:

Instructor's Signature:

Date:

Print Chair or Grad Advisor Name:

**(Graduate Students Only)**

Chair or Advisor Signature:

Date:

## For Internal Use Only

Processed By:

Signature:

Date:

Brandeis University · Registrar's Office · Mailstop 068 · 415 South Street · Waltham, MA 02453-2728

registrar@brandeis.edu · Phone(781)736-2010 · Fax(781)736-3485

## Senior Thesis Funding

Limited funds (up to \$150) are available to seniors writing theses. **Standard costs for copying and binding theses cannot be funded.**

Weight will be given to the candidate's abstract and to the faculty recommendation. When presented with equally excellent thesis proposals and recommendations, the committee may review the candidates' grades to determine grant recipients. For students doing research in grant-supported programs, it is essential that the requested support cover only those expenses which cannot be covered by grant funds.

### Send all completed applications to:

[monaghan@brandeis.edu](mailto:monaghan@brandeis.edu)

Meredith Monaghan  
Director of Academic Fellowships

### Application Checklist

Your completed application should contain the following:

- Student Information Sheet ([download PDF](#))
- 1-page Abstract: explain why you chose this subject and how requested funds will be used.
- Itemized Budget Request: Please list costs of specific items. Ordinary school supplies and costs for copying and binding theses will not be reimbursed.
- Résumé
- Thesis Advisor's Recommendation Letter ([download PDF](#)): emailed directly to [monaghan@brandeis.edu](mailto:monaghan@brandeis.edu).

**BRANDEIS UNIVERSITY**

**APPLICATION FOR SENIOR THESIS FUNDING**

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**STUDENT INFORMATION SHEET**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

E-Mail Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Campus Mailbox #: \_\_\_\_\_ Graduation Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Major(s): \_\_\_\_\_

Minor(s): \_\_\_\_\_

Title of Thesis: \_\_\_\_\_

Brandeis Thesis Advisor: \_\_\_\_\_ Dept.: \_\_\_\_\_

N.B.: All theses that involve human subjects must adhere to the University's guidelines for the protection of human subjects in research.

Total Budget Request: \_\_\_\_\_

If you've applied for or received other funding to support your thesis, list how much and from whom:

\_\_\_\_\_

Student's Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**APPLICATION CHECKLIST**

- ☐ **Student Information Sheet**
- ☐ **1-page Abstract:** explain why you chose this subject and how requested funds will be used
- ☐ **Itemized Budget Request:** Please list costs of specific items. Ordinary school supplies and costs for copying and binding theses will not be reimbursed.
- ☐ **Résumé**
- ☐ **Thesis Advisor's Recommendation Letter:** emailed directly to monaghan@brandeis.edu

**SUBMISSION:** Please submit your application materials (excluding the letter of recommendation) to Academic Services in Usdan 130, addressed to:  
**Meredith English Monaghan**  
**Attention: SENIOR THESIS FUNDING**

**DEADLINE:** Applications will be reviewed on a rolling basis, but must be submitted no later than December 1 for Fall semester graduates and May 1 for Spring graduates. Original receipts for thesis-related purchases must also be submitted by this date.

**Please direct any questions to Meredith English Monaghan, Director of Academic Fellowships:  
monaghan@brandeis.edu.**



# BRANDEIS UNIVERSITY

## APPLICATION FOR SENIOR THESIS FUNDING

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### BRANDEIS FACULTY THESIS ADVISOR'S RECOMMENDATION LETTER

\_\_\_\_\_ is applying for Senior Thesis funding. As the thesis advisor, please comment on both the nature of the applicant and proposed research project. Selections will be based on originality in concept, academic excellence, and on the feasibility of the project. Please also comment on the proposed budget. Funds are limited and awards are likely to be under \$150. For students engaged in research in grant-supported programs, it is important that the applicant does not request funding for expenses already covered by the grant(s).

In your letter of recommendation, please respond briefly to the following questions:

1. Please evaluate the proposed project and assess the student's ability to complete it successfully. Please comment on the student's role in initiating the project.
2. How does this student compare to other undergraduates whom you have supervised on research projects or theses?
3. In your opinion, are the student's expenses necessary to complete the proposed research?
4. Do you have departmental funds to support the student's research project? If so, please specify the monetary amount.

Your recommendation should be **emailed to** Meredith English Monaghan: [monaghan@brandeis.edu](mailto:monaghan@brandeis.edu). Please reference "Senior Thesis Funding" in the subject-line of the email. The student's funding application will not be reviewed until receipt of your letter.

## Library Archives Requirements

### Basic Formatting:

Title Pages should contain the following basic information:

Brandeis University

Department of Near Eastern & Judaic Studies

Academic Year 2017-2018

Author

Title of thesis

Date

Thesis Advisor

Senior honors theses are submitted to the Archives electronically, and they appear in the [Brandeis Institutional Repository](#). Please note that only the final version is to be submitted electronically upon approval from each department or program. Theses will still be submitted to senior thesis defense committees for review first. Electronic submission to the Institutional Repository is the final step in the process, after all corrections have been made.

### Cover Sheet:

Please include a cover sheet based on the template (see attached) **with the signatures of your thesis advisor and committee members**. Your thesis must be submitted as a PDF. Be sure to follow the instructions for naming the PDF file.

You can find more information at: <http://brandeis.libguides.com/thesis>

**(Sample: Cover Sheet--template)**

Title of Thesis

Senior Thesis

Presented to

The Faculty of the School of Arts and Sciences  
Brandeis University

Undergraduate Program in [Department]  
[Professor Smith], Advisor

In partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Bachelor of [Science/Arts]

by  
[Sally Smith]

[April 2018]

Copyright by  
[Sally Smith]

Committee members (if applicable):

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

## Recent Senior Theses in the NEJS Department

### 2017

Gabrielle Hersch: "Moroccan Jewish Onomastics in Casablanca: Lessons on Moroccan Jewish Identification and Positionality"

Benjamin Notis: "Thunder's Relationship to Immanence and Transcendence: From Rabbinic Text to Hasidic Thought"

### 2016

Eliezer Buechler: "The Innovation of Isaac Luria to Cover One's Eyes with One's Right Hand During Qeri'at Shema"

Noam Cohen: "And a Fire Came Down from Before the Lord: Examining the Relationship Between Leviticus 10 and Numbers 16-18"

Gregory Fain: "Omnipotence in the Shadow of Aristotle"

Hannah Kober: "The Motivations and Experiences of Jewish Students of Arabic at Israeli Universities"

Samuel Marlowe: "Christianity and Antisemitism: *An Evaluation of Rosemary Ruether's Faith and Fratricide*"

### 2015

Sara Fried: "I will demand of you, and you will answer me:" Arguing Effectively with God"

### 2014

Lauren Cimbol: "How 1950s Suburban Synagogue Architecture Reflects Changing Attitudes within American Judaism"

Dahlia Herzog: "Adam's Sin as a Model for Human Nature and the Redemption of Israel: The Interpretations of Genesis Chapter 3 in Avot D'Rabbi Natan and Genesis Rabbah"

### 2013

Eitan Cooper: "Milah Confronts Modernity: Analyzing Debates Over Circumcision Technique"

Emma Green: "Judaism in the Buckle of the Bible Belt: The Oklahoma City Jewish Community"

### 2012

Brian Blumenthal: "InTension: PresenTense and the Reinvention of the Next Generation Jew"

Hillel Buechler: "Uvah Teheze: Biblical Criticism and Halakhah in Modern Jewish Thought"

Ethan Goldberg: "In the Shadow of Sulzer: The Mixed Legacy of Cantor Alois Kaiser"

Ilana Sidorsky: "Hamakom Yinachem Etchem: Understanding the Impact of Jewish Mourning Rituals Within Developing Jewish Identity"

## **2011**

Emily Jaeger: "Differences Within: Gender and Gender-Bending in Ugaritic Mythological, Epistolary, Legal and Administrative Texts"

Joshua Jerusalmi: "A Monumental Statement: Placement and Meaning in the Shaw and New England Holocaust Memorial"

Madeline Mayer: Service Learning Programs in Jewish Day School

Hannah Perlman: "The Language and Legacy of Violence in the Akedah"

## **2010**

Marnina Cowan: "The Position of the Hebrew Language among Arab Citizens of Israel" in Hebrew, "יחסם של ערבים אזרחי ישראל לשפה העברית"

Talia Graff: "From Ideology to the Classroom: Israel Education in the Religious Schools of a Reform and a Conservative Congregation"

Zach Margulies: "Upon the Shoulders of the Seaward Philistines:" Philistine Governance in the Iron Age I and IIA"

Garrett Nada: "The Self-Identity of the Naqab-Bedouin Students of Ben-Gurion University"

Rebecca Shapiro: "Memories Never Die: The Significance of Objects in a Survivor's Tale"

Emily Watkins: "On the Border of Fire: Origins of the National Religious Settler Movement in Israel"

## **2009**

Elizabeth Imber: "Scottish Missionary Work among Jews in the 19th Century"

Yael Rooks-Rapport: Post-Jewish Art

Sara Smith: "Imahot Liturgy: A Study of the Historic Development of the Insertion of the Imahot into the Amidah"

**DUAL SENIOR THESIS WITH NEJS  
DEPARTMENT OF NEAR EASTERN AND JUDAIC STUDIES**

STUDENT: \_\_\_\_\_

CONTACT INFO (EMAIL, PHONE) \_\_\_\_\_

DEPARTMENTS: NEJS *and* \_\_\_\_\_

DEPARTMENT IN WHICH THESIS WILL BE WRITTEN: \_\_\_\_\_

TENTATIVE THESIS TITLE:

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

THESIS ADVISORS: NEJS: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

TENTATIVE DATE FOR DEFENSE: \_\_\_\_\_

Signed and approved by undergraduate advising head:

IN NEJS: \_\_\_\_\_

IN OTHER DEPT: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Checklist:

Topic proposal submitted: \_\_\_\_\_ (before September, 2017)

Committee of three readers chosen: \_\_\_\_\_ (before February 2, 2018)

Thesis draft to advisor: \_\_\_\_\_ (before March 12, 2018)

Thesis draft to three-person committee: \_\_\_\_\_ (before April 2, 2018)

Thesis defense: \_\_\_\_\_ (before April 16, 2018)

Grade submitted to Registrar by advisor: \_\_\_\_\_ (before May 9, 2018)

ADVISOR: Please place this form in the student's file.

**CERTIFICATION OF HONORS 2017-18**  
**DEPARTMENT OF NEAR EASTERN AND JUDAIC STUDIES**

STUDENT: \_\_\_\_\_ DATE: \_\_\_\_\_

THESIS TITLE: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

THESIS ADVISOR: \_\_\_\_\_

THESIS READERS (print names and sign):

1. \_\_\_\_\_

2. \_\_\_\_\_

3. \_\_\_\_\_

Thesis honors level (CHECK one)

\_\_\_\_\_ Highest Honors

\_\_\_\_\_ High Honors

\_\_\_\_\_ Honors

\_\_\_\_\_ No Honors

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Signature, Undergraduate Advising Head)

ADVISOR: Please give completed form to NEJS office!