

Senior Project Midway Paper Guidelines

The program handbook states the following about the midway paper: "Your midway paper should describe the background and significance of your work. In some situations, other information may be included such as research design, specific methodologies, or other project plans. Midway papers should be at least 10-12 double-spaced pages of text, in addition to your cover page, references, appendices, etc." (The handbook section on the senior project is a terrific resource and should be a frequent destination for you!)

This vagueness is intentional - the goal for your midway paper should be to produce the document that will get you the most useful feedback from your midway board. Because you all need different kinds of feedback, your midway papers may look different. Work with your advisor to determine the best model for your midway paper. Here are the three most common forms:

1. The first 12 pages of the senior project/ the first chapter. This model is particularly useful for students who are writing an integrative paper that brings together different literatures, and who have thus far been focused on one particular idea that they know very well. If you choose this model, there should be an outline (as detailed of possible) of the rest of the chapter, so that the board can get a sense of the entirety of your planned work.
2. A short precis of the senior project, that has a 2-3 page summary of each planned chapter. This model might be appropriate for students who have thought a lot about several different ideas and how they all fit together (and thus, have also thought a lot about the structure of their project).
3. A brief introduction that reviews the most important background literature for the topic and leads up to the research question in a logical, linear way, followed by a detailed methods section and (usually less detailed) predicted results section. This is the model most often chosen by students who are conducting a study, and also by students who completing the proposal model who have given a lot of thought to the specifics of their research design.

There may well be other models that make sense for you. In all midway papers, we will want to see evidence that you have identified a research question, that you are on your way to becoming an expert in the relevant literature(s), and that you are making progress in your thinking, writing, and other tasks toward a successful senior project. Be sure to talk with your advisor about how to best use the midway paper to have a productive conversation with your board.

SUBMISSION DETAILS: Papers are due at 5pm to your board members (see the attached spreadsheet). Unless a board member indicates otherwise, distribute the paper in hard copy to the three members of your board.