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### What is the Culminating Thesis Essay?

- It's "culminating" because you've been preparing for this your whole English MA career!
- About 6,000–8,000 words long (roughly 25–30 pages), including your Works Cited list
- In most cases, a revision and expansion of a paper (or papers) you've already written

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### How do I sign up for ENGL 791?

- Email the DGS to confirm that you are ready for ENGL 791 in Fall 2022
- Contact a full-time faculty member (see <https://qcenglish.commonsc.gc.cuny.edu/people/faculty/>) to ask if they're willing/available to be your thesis advisor
- Submit an ENGL 791 Sign-up Form and your proposal (about 250 words) to [MAEnglish@qc.cuny.edu](mailto:MAEnglish@qc.cuny.edu) by **August 5, 2022**.

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**ENGLISH 791 – CULMINATING THESIS ESSAY SIGN-UP FORM**

Submit this form via email to the Director of Graduate Studies at [MAEnglish@qc.cuny.edu](mailto:MAEnglish@qc.cuny.edu). All information must be typed.

**Student Information**

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

CUNYfirst ID# (8-digit): \_\_\_\_\_

Contact email: \_\_\_\_\_

**Committee Information**

Advisor: \_\_\_\_\_

Reader: \_\_\_\_\_

**Culminating Thesis Essay Proposal**

Working Title: \_\_\_\_\_

Please provide a brief proposal for your culminating thesis essay (approx. 250 words), either in the space below or as a separate page. Make this description as specific and focused as you can at this early stage.

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Working Title – "What are you blind?..No, you are." The "Queerness" of Blindness in Carla Trujillo's *What Night Brings*

In Carla Trujillo's 2003 *What Night Brings*, an eleven-year-old Chicana lesbian, Marcel Cruz, lives in an abusive household with her parents and younger sister in southern California in the midst of the Vietnam War. Every night Marcel returns to her bed after her strenuous day and recites a prayer where she continually asks God for two things: for God to make her father disappear and to turn her into a boy. According to Marcel, "When night comes, that is when everything is best (3)." Even if she cursed with nightmares, awakened by her parents' squabbles, or pained by her father's beatings, or night Marcel is able to ask the only being she believes can deliver for all that she wants. In *What Night Brings*, night becomes a forum for queerness. Here, Marcel is able to partake in conversation-albeit with a divine medium-about going against what is culturally expected of her. Marcel does not fit into the patriarchal Chicano society due to her sexual identity and desire to be relinquished of her father.

While Marcel wants to break out of her situation, she is unable to do so without the help of subsequent family members. In *What Night Brings*, many characters are associated with or characterized with blindness and visual abnormalities. In my paper, I plan to argue how *What Night Brings* depicts blindness as a type of "queer vision." The characters that are described as metaphorically blind—Eddie and Della Cruz—stand as the antagonists and pillars of the Chicano "norm." However, the characters associated with actual visual impairment and blindness are also associated with going a happier, alternative life to the Cruz girls. In this instant, the blind do not live a life of darkness but a life of enlightenment.

In this paper, I will further be discussing prominent theories and research done in the fields of disability studies, Chicano studies, queer studies, and will be looking back into the history of the blind community—specifically public perception and regulation of their sexuality.

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