

THE SENIOR HONORS THESIS/PROJECT

- **Different Types of Theses** – Typically a senior Honors thesis ranges from 30-100 pages depending on the discipline: *Experimentation-based* is completed in collaboration with a faculty member on an existing research project (25-40 pages); *Humanities and Social Sciences* is an in-depth argument supported with relevant scholarship and the student's own insight (40-60 pages); *Creative Writing* pieces are approximately 100 pages; *Visual Arts and Performing Arts* vary in length but the thesis should contextualize the creative work within the field and offer critical insights into the student's creative process.
- **Early Preparation for the Senior Honors Thesis/Project** –As early as the junior year, an Honors student selects a faculty mentor or advisor in the student's major area of study who is willing to work with the student for two consecutive semesters of extensive study of a topic.

The Office of Undergraduate Research accepts applications from Honors students in any discipline to fund student academic research or creative studies under the direction of a faculty mentor. Deadlines vary. Contact the Office of Undergraduate Research for more information.

- **Registering for the Senior Honors Thesis/Project** - To be eligible for registration in the Senior Honors Thesis/Project the student must be a member of the Honors Program and have completed all other Core Curriculum requirements, including the Core Humanities sequence. The Honors Program recommends that the student should have at least 21 hours of Honors credit before enrolling in HON 490 or in the Senior Capstone in the major. The Honors Thesis courses must be taken in consecutive semesters. If a department requires a senior capstone project, the student can elect either the major's option or the Honors Thesis/Project.

❖ **Option 1: Required Senior Capstone in the Major**

Students in majors that require a senior thesis/project are not required to do a separate Honors Thesis/Project.

- Honors Program approved Senior Thesis or Project in the major: BCH 407, 408; BIO 496, 497; CHEM 495, 496; PHYS 497; , CHE 450, 482; EE 490, 491 or CS 425, 426 (for Comp & Info Eng); contact the Honors Program for a complete list of approved Senior Thesis or Project in the Major courses.
- Minimum of 6 credits and the maximum allowed credits for the classes in that major
- Senior status
- Completion of the Honors Contract Course in the Major Form each semester
- Submission of a bound copy of the final thesis/project to the Honors Program upon completion by the end of the semester

❖ **Option 2: Honors Thesis/Project through the Honors Program**

- Registration in HON 490: Honors Thesis I & 491: Honors Thesis II
- Taken in consecutive semesters
- Senior status

HON 490 - Honors Thesis I

- **Selecting a Faculty Mentor** - In the junior year, before entering HON 490, the student selects a faculty mentor in his/her major field. The faculty mentor should be a full-time ranked member of the University who is willing to direct the student over two semesters. In consultation with the faculty mentor, the student discusses the topic or project and completes the *Honors Senior Thesis Agreement* available online and due within the one week of the first class.
- **Registering for Honors Thesis Credit** - The Honors student must register and complete HON 490 before registering for HON 491. **HON 490 and HON 491 MUST be taken in consecutive semesters.**
- **Attending Regularly Scheduled Meetings with the Director or Associate Director of the Honors Program** – Throughout the semester, the student meets with the Director or Associate Director of the Honors Program to initiate the Honors thesis/project and discuss the project. The first meeting is scheduled for the first week of class. Other meetings are scheduled throughout the semester.
- **Library Privileges** – Honor students can receive individual or group help on the thesis/project by making an appointment with a library specialist for a particular department. Junior and senior Honors students can borrow books for an entire semester without renewing.
- **Writing the Proposal** - A proposal of the project is a written description of the topic/project in 3-5 pages. It clearly describes the project, addresses the questions asked, identifies the methodology/approach taken, and provides a timetable for completion of the thesis/project. Signed by the student and the faculty mentor, the proposal is submitted then filed in the Honors Program Office by **October 1** in the fall semester or by **February 15** in the spring semester. Within a week, the Director of the Honors Program approves the proposal then sends copies to the student and to the mentor; the original is retained on file in the Honors Program Office. Issues such as approval of the Human Subjects Committee, if required, must be addressed in the proposal.
- **Writing the Prospectus** - The prospectus is a more advanced, detailed statement of the thesis/project. It restates the goals of the thesis/project and indicates how these goals have been refined in the light of additional work on the topic. A persuasive document, it convinces the audience that there is a need for this research. The prospectus includes an *abstract, introduction, literature review, methodology, anticipated results, outline, timeline, and reference*. The prospectus ranges between 5-10 pages double-spaced. The prospectus, signed by the student and mentor, is due in the Honors Program Office by **December 1** for the fall semester or by **April 15** for the spring semester.
- **Evaluation** - A letter grade for HON 490 is given at the end of the semester. In order to graduate with a Latin designation, the student must receive a grade of A in HON 490. If the Human Subjects Committee Approval is needed, then it should be received by this time.

HON 491 - Honors Thesis II

- **Registering for Honors Thesis Credit** - The Honors student must register and complete HON 490 before registering for HON 491. **HON 490 and HON 491 MUST be taken in consecutive semesters.**
- **Attending Regularly Scheduled Meetings with the Director or Associate Director of the Honors Program** – Throughout the semester, the student meets with the Director or Associate Director of the Honors Program to discuss the progress of the Honors thesis/project, preparation for the Oral Defense, and submission of the final product. The first meeting is scheduled for the first week of class. Other meetings are scheduled throughout the semester.
- **Submitting a Progress Report** - The progress report is a written report describing the progress that the student has made toward the completion of the thesis/project. Addressing each point of the prospectus, the student explains what has been accomplished and what needs to be done in order to complete the thesis by the end of the semester. The prospectus must be signed by the student and the faculty mentor, indicating that the thesis/project is in its final stage, then submitted to the Honors Program Office by **September 24** for the fall semester or by **February 15** for the spring semester. The Progress Report contains a final timetable indicating that the written thesis/project will be submitted to the Honors Program Office by **November 22** for the fall semester or by **April 15** for the spring semester, and an Oral Defense will be scheduled within three weeks of the submission of the written thesis/project.
- **Preparing for the Oral Defense** - At the Oral Defense, the student presents a summary of the project/thesis and defends the major points of the thesis/project in front of an audience of the faculty mentor, the Honors thesis committee, and other invited guests. The student is allotted one hour to discuss or "defend" the thesis/project. The student arranges the time and place of the Oral Defense. The Oral Defense must be scheduled within three weeks of the submission of the written thesis/project.
- **Submitting the Final Honors Thesis/Project** - The deadline for submitting the completed final thesis or project is **one week after the Oral Defense.** The Honors Thesis/Project should have the appearance of a dissertation or Master's thesis according to the University Graduate School Guidelines. The manuscript must be free of typographical, mechanical, and stylistic errors. The paper should follow the conventional formatting style as that of the field of study. Departments should have the recent stylistic guidelines. The bound copy of each Honors student's thesis/project is housed in the Honors Program Library in Lincoln Hall.
- **Evaluation** - A letter grade for HON 491 is submitted at the end of the semester. In order to graduate with **magna cum laude** or **summa cum laude**, the student must receive an A in HON 491 or a grade of A on the final Senior Honors Thesis.