

English Department Honors Thesis Procedures

Revised October 2009

Honors Thesis Description

The Honors Thesis in the English Department provides the opportunity for a student, working closely with a faculty advisor to define and carry through a research or creative project toward the conclusion of his or her major program in English. This project culminates in the completion of a substantial piece of analytical or creative writing (25-50 pages), which incorporates significant research of both primary and secondary materials (12+ cited sources). By exploring a critical or creative problem in some depth, the thesis writer will strengthen his or her analytical thinking, research practices, and writing skills.

The thesis identifies a critical or analytical problem (or part of a problem) that others have not yet addressed directly or adequately, or it approaches an existing problem in a new way. Substantial library research into what others have suggested about the topic is an essential first step in the process, but the Honors thesis goes beyond this to include a student's own insights and ideas, his or her own methodological perspective, analysis, and argument.

Eligibility

A student who has completed 24 or more credits toward the English major and who has a cumulative grade point average of 3.0 or higher *and* a 3.0 or higher in his or her English courses may choose to write a thesis for possible English Department honors. The Honors Thesis course will earn three credits per semester for one or two semesters.

Faculty Advisor and Proposal Procedure

An interested student should choose a member of the English department faculty as an advisor to the thesis, secure that instructor's participation, and discuss the project in advance of the semester during which it is to be carried out. A formal Independent Study proposal must be submitted to the office of the Dean of Arts and Sciences the semester prior to enrollment in the course. Once the proposal is approved, the Dean's office will register the student for the course.

Thesis Committee and Defense

In consultation with his or her advisor, the student will identify two other faculty members from the English department to constitute the thesis committee. In some cases, it may be appropriate to invite an additional member to join the committee from a faculty outside the department to reflect significant interdisciplinary content. For example, a student examining representations of gender roles in literature might want to add a committee member from the Women's and Gender Studies Department. The project will end with an honors defense, during which the student will meet and discuss the thesis with the advisor and other committee members who will then determine its eligibility to receive departmental honors.

Fulfillment of Requirements (Policy To Be Approved by Department)

The Honors Thesis may be completed in fulfillment of the department's upper-level writing requirement or as a substitute for the Capstone Seminar.