

UPPER DIVISION HONORS PROGRAM

GENERAL GUIDELINES: THE HONORS THESIS/PROJECT

The Concept

The focus of the student's participation in the Upper Division Honors Program is the honors thesis/project. Whatever its specific topic may be the thesis/project must be a substantial project of independent accomplishment.

By "substantial" we intend that the thesis/project be of a magnitude that would warrant 3-4 units of academic credit for each of two to three quarters. **That when the final product is viewed/read by those in the field it would be obvious that it is a substantial work.**

By "independent" we require not only that the thesis/project be the student's own work, but also that the conception of the project be the student's own. Independence takes different forms in different disciplines; whereas a primarily bibliographic or creative project may be entirely independent, a laboratory research project may be a part of a large effort in which several researchers are involved. In this case, our intent is that the UHP student should have a substantial role in the conception, planning, and execution of the project, even if the project is part of a larger program. The thesis project should not simply be identified for the student, as it might be for a research assistant.

If the student chooses, the thesis/project may be accomplished on a topic that is not directly related to the student's major. In all cases, however, the primary and secondary faculty advisors chosen by the student must have some expertise regarding the thesis/project topic.

Approval of the Thesis/Project

In order to meet the requirements for upper division honors, the honors thesis/project must be submitted to a two-tiered approval process.

The first approval comes from the faculty thesis/project advisor. The nature of the faculty advisor's role varies from one department to another. In some cases, the advisor's approval is an individual faculty member's statement, whereas in others, the advisor's approval is made on behalf of the department. In the latter case, the UHP will assume that the necessary process has been followed and that the advisor's approval does indeed constitute departmental approval.

The second approval comes from the secondary advisor. The faculty thesis/project advisor and the secondary advisor must already approve all final theses/projects submitted to the UHP. If both advisors do not approve the thesis/project, specific recommendations must be given to the student so that he or she may revise the thesis/project and resubmit. In this event, open and clear communication between the student, the primary faculty advisor, and the secondary faculty advisor is essential to ensure that the student can ultimately produce a thesis/project that is worthy of approval.

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Once the thesis/project is submitted to the UHP, the UHP reserves the right to require students to revise any part of the thesis/project that displays poor or sloppy stylistic features, such as format, grammar, punctuation, etc.

Thesis Proposal

Due: End of the quarter prior to beginning Upper Division Honors Program

The student will write a proposal delineating the thesis/project plan. The purpose of the proposal is to provide structure for the student across the several quarters of work needed to complete the thesis/project, and to clarify the student's expectations about the assistance the faculty advisors will provide throughout the thesis/project. In addition, the proposal will include a list of work necessary for completion of the thesis/project, the timetable for the overall thesis/project and the specific deadlines for the progress reports. The student, the faculty thesis/project advisor, the secondary advisor, and the department head of the student's major must sign off on the proposal. The reason for this is that we want to make sure that the work on an Honors thesis/project will not impede the completion of the major. One of the ultimate goals of this proposal is to document the student as the intellectual author of his/her thesis/project, and to provide the student with a sense of ownership regarding the thesis/project from the very beginning.

This proposal may be amended during the course of the student's work on the thesis/project. During the one to two years in which student is involved in the upper-division University Honors Program, various events may occur that may affect the thesis/project. For example, the student's emphasis may change, or there may be unforeseeable scheduling conflicts, which impede adherence to the proposed timetable. In any event, the student should always remember that he or she is the creative author of the thesis/project, and has the authority to implement changes. The faculty thesis/project advisor must sign significant amendments to the original proposal.

Ownership/Confidentiality Issues

The thesis/project submitted as the final upper-division honors thesis/project will remain the property of the University Honors Program; it will be bound with other theses/projects submitted in the same academic year and included in the special collections portion of the library on campus (**Serial Number Y2R5H6**)

If the student does not want his/her thesis/project bound and displayed, a request may be made to keep the thesis/project confidential, separate, and in a locked space. Should anyone other than UHP staff want to see the confidential thesis/project in the future, a written request must be submitted to and approved by the student author.

In all cases, the student maintains all rights for any original work. If any portion of the thesis/project includes previously published materials as part of the student's original work (e.g., work done in conjunction with the advisor that has been published in a professional journal before submission of the honors thesis/project,) written permission from the author of the publication allowing the inclusion of the materials must be submitted with the thesis/project.

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Academic Unit Credit

The upper-division UHP student should consult with his or her faculty advisor about the nature and amount of academic unit credit that the student earns for the project, since policies and course numbers vary somewhat from one department to another. As a guideline, honors theses/projects generally require an approximate total of 12 units worth of work, spread out over several quarters. Typically 190, 197, and/or 199 courses would be taken. It is not a concern to the UHP which kind of units the student receives, or how many units, or even whether any units are received at all. That is strictly a matter between the faculty member, guided by departmental policy, and the student. The UHP is concerned only with the nature of the final product and the process of meeting the progress report deadlines as outlined above, not with the details of academic unit credit that may be awarded for the conduct of the project.

Selection of Faculty Advisor

Often students identify a prospective faculty advisor based on coursework or other departmental contact. In this case, arrangements for supervision of the honors thesis/project are made directly between the student and the faculty member. If the student does not know of an appropriate faculty advisor, the UHP staff will assist in identifying a suitable match. A copy of the thesis/project contract signed by the faculty advisor is kept on file in the UHP office. If significant aspects of the project change, students should update their files.

Faculty Advisor's Responsibilities

The working relationship between the UHP student and the faculty advisor will vary from case to case, but in agreeing to serve as an advisor, the faculty member is making a two-part commitment. First, he or she is agreeing to work with the student to refine the topic, oversee the work, provide critical evaluation to the student, and generally serve as the student's academic advisor with respect to the project. Second, the faculty member is agreeing to provide critical evaluations of the progress reports and the final project; these evaluations will guide the UHP faculty in its decision about the final acceptability of the project as an honors thesis/project. In cases where departmental approval is required, the faculty advisor's evaluation that is communicated to the UHP will be assumed to constitute departmental approval.

Selection and Responsibilities of a Secondary Advisor

A second faculty member will serve as a secondary advisor of the thesis/project, and will be selected by the student and the student's faculty thesis/project advisor. The secondary advisor will be identified early in the thesis/project process, so that s/he may be included in the creation of the thesis/project contract. The secondary advisor need not be from the same academic department as the faculty thesis/project advisor, but must be approved by the primary faculty advisor.

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While the secondary advisor may provide varying amounts of input throughout the various stages of the thesis/project, s/he has two formal responsibilities. First, the secondary advisor must be included in the creation of the thesis/project contract, and thereby may be involved with the creation of the general concept of the thesis/project. Second, the secondary advisor must evaluate and approve or not approve the final version of the thesis/project.

Annotated Bibliography

Due by end of tenth week of the first quarter admitted to the program. (In some cases it may be appropriate to turn in the annotated bibliography simultaneously with the proposal; the order of submission should be appropriate to the individual project.) All projects regardless of discipline or subject must submit an annotated bibliography.

Once the student has identified the appropriate scholarly materials to be used for the thesis/project, an annotated bibliography will be created. An annotated bibliography is a bibliography with brief descriptions of the contents of each entry. The number of items included in this bibliography should be appropriate to the student's discipline and thesis/project topic. The faculty thesis/project advisor must approve the annotated bibliography before it is submitted to the UHP.

Certainly, students may add to their bibliography list as their thesis/project progresses; additional annotations are not required.

Progress Reports

A progress report is due by the end of Tenth week of each quarter the student is a participant of the Upper Division Honors program. If a deadline for a progress report is missed, the student must petition the Director (via the Upper Division Coordinator) to be able to continue in the program. The petition must demonstrate a justifiable cause for missing the deadline. If a missed progress report deadline is not addressed, UHP Upper Division Honors cannot be conferred.

Initial Draft

Eight weeks prior to submission of final thesis/project the Initial Draft is due.

To demonstrate the progress on the thesis/project, students will submit either an initial draft or an extended outline of the thesis/project a minimum of four weeks prior to the submission of the final thesis/project. The initial draft may be of the whole thesis/project, or the first one or two sections/chapters.

Please note that while students completing certain creative projects may not have a written manuscript to submit for approval, some tangible representation of the project must be submitted to the UHP, such as a videotape of a performance or slides of an art exhibition.

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The Finished Product

The culminating product of the student's work will be presented as the honors thesis/project.

The thesis/project will often be a paper of substantial length. In the case of a thesis/project in the arts, the product might be not a paper but a performance or portfolio. In every case, the product should be an appropriate vehicle for the presentation of the student's work.

The length of the finished product will vary. It is impossible to set any firm guideline that will apply across the spectrum of disciplines, so to paraphrase Abraham Lincoln, it should be long enough to get the job done, that is, long enough to present the substantial project.

Format will also vary from one discipline to another; the thesis/project should follow the professional requirements of presentation within its discipline.

Final Submission

Due by the end of eighth week of the quarter you intend to graduate.

Honors Project Conference: All Upper Division participants are required to give a presentation at the annual Spring quarter conference.

At the end of the fifth week of Spring Quarter of each year, all students who are completing an honors thesis/project during that academic year are required to participate in a conference on campus at which they offer a presentation based on their honors work. Students may offer an oral presentation, participate in a poster session, or present a reading, display or performance of creative work, depending on the nature of their projects.

This conference allows the student an opportunity to publicly present the Honors work and to address questions that listeners/viewers may have, thereby demonstrating the expertise gained through completing an honors thesis/project. Thus, participating in the Honors Conference serves as a proxy for an oral defense of the thesis/project.

If a student cannot participate in the Honors Conference, then the student may petition the UHP Executive Committee to have an oral defense of the honors thesis/project. Fall and Winter graduates who are unable to return to campus in the Spring to participate in the Honors Project Conference will be required to have an oral defense. The defense committee will have at least three members: the faculty thesis/project advisor, the secondary advisor, and a member of the UHP Executive Committee, and will be scheduled to last for one hour. During the defense, the student will make a brief presentation of the honors work, and then address questions and or comments raised by the committee members regarding the honors work. The oral defense is not designed to be an obstacle or stumbling block for the student; rather it is considered to be an opportunity for the student to demonstrate the expertise he or she has acquired through completing an honors thesis/project.