

Guidelines for Senior Honors Theses in Foreign Languages. Effective 01.2010

Q: What is a Senior Honors Thesis in Foreign Languages?

The Senior Honors Thesis in Foreign Languages is a substantial and original research project conducted in the foreign language. It stretches over three semesters. Upon successful completion of their Senior Honors Project students will get 6 credits in addition to the 33 credits required for the Foreign Language Major (1, 2, and 3 credits are awarded respectively for the 1st, 2nd and 3rd semester of work on the thesis). Students who complete the senior honors project successfully are also entitled to graduate with “distinction,” a designation that is included on the diploma and transcript. The grades assigned for the 499 courses should reflect the quality of the work completed; in other words, “A” is not the default grade.

Q: Who is eligible to work on a Senior Honors Thesis in Foreign Languages?

All declared Foreign Language Majors with a 3.25 cumulative GPA who have found an adviser willing to work with them on their project. Students do not have to be enrolled in the Honors Program; they should, however, have demonstrated through their coursework in the major a strong ability to conduct advanced work in the foreign language. After registering for 499A **and** getting their Senior Honors Thesis application approved by the Honors Program, students will officially be members of the Honors Program (on Track III). All students (regardless of their Honors Track) need to maintain a GPA of 3.25 throughout their senior year for the final project to be accepted.

Q: What do advisers do?

Advisers agree to guide students for the duration of the project. During the first semester, they help students write a strong Senior Project Proposal—the topic of the thesis needs to be viable and related to the student’s Foreign Language Major. Advisers sign off on project applications submitted to the Honors Program for approval.

During the last two semesters, advisers help students develop and strengthen their research projects. For that reason, students should do their best to choose faculty advisers whose area of interest and expertise match their proposed project. During the writing phase of the Senior Honors Thesis, advisers should meet with the students whose theses they are advising at least every other week. They should encourage their advisees to submit written work regularly, and agree to provide timely feedback.

Because a Senior Honors Thesis involves an important time commitment on the part of both students and faculty, students are strongly encouraged to choose advisers with whom they know they can work well and faculty only to accept students they have had in one or several advanced classes. The Senior Honors Thesis Adviser does not have to be the student’s Major Adviser. The Honors Program also recommends that advisers be chosen among tenure-track or tenured faculty.

Q: What do readers do?

Secondary readers need to be chosen during the first semester of the Senior Honors Thesis. They too agree to help guide students regularly throughout the process, though they typically see and comment on fewer drafts than the primary adviser. Readers for a Senior Honors Thesis in Foreign Languages may hold faculty appointments outside the Foreign Language Department if the primary adviser deems it necessary and beneficial to the quality of the project.

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Q: What do students need to do to register for the Senior Honors Thesis in Foreign Languages?

Students interested in completing a Senior Honors Project should meet with the Honors Liaison at the latest during the first week of the spring semester of junior year (or a semester earlier if they plan on being away from campus for one of their last three semesters, or on graduating early).

They can then register for 499A directly through the Foreign Language department. If the project is accepted, students register for 499B and 499C during the first and second semester of their senior year.

Q: What does 499A entail? What elements should the proposal include?

Students registered for 499A work on their Senior Honors Thesis Proposals in consultation with the adviser. They start to review the pertinent literature and select two readers who will assist the adviser in guiding the project. The course is worth 1 Foreign Language credit (but may not count towards the 33 credit required for the Major). Prior to the end of the semester during which they enroll for 499A, students should submit their completed Senior Honors Project Application **and** project proposal to

- 1) the Honors Liaison for the Department of Foreign Languages, Literatures and Cultures a full week before the Honors Office deadline.
- 2) the Honors Office by the official deadline (check the Honors website).

The Proposal should

- * be 4-5 pages in length (see the Honors Program website for details).
- * include a bibliography.
- * be written in English (so that it can be evaluated by the Honors Program).
- * identify two readers who are qualified and have agreed to help the student complete the project.
- * be signed by the thesis adviser and two secondary readers.

Please remember that the project is not officially approved until the Honors Program has validated it.

Q: What do 499B and 499C entail? What should the final completed project include?

Students registered for 499B and 499C (worth 2 and 3 credits respectively) complete the research necessary for their project and write their thesis in consultation with their faculty committee. During these two semesters, students should plan to meet with their primary advisor every other week to submit and discuss new sections of the thesis; they should also keep their secondary readers informed of their progress; and meet with the Honors Liaison twice during the course of each semester. It is the students' responsibility to be aware of deadlines, and allow time for faculty members to provide feedback, sign forms, etc.

A Senior Honors Thesis in Foreign Languages should be written in the foreign language and be between 30 and 50 pages long. The final copy should also include a complete bibliography and follow the formatting guidelines specified by the Honors Program. The final project will be evaluated on the quality and originality of the content as well as on its linguistic qualities.