

## **SMAD Senior Honors Thesis/Project Guidelines**

The diverse nature of the SMAD curriculum allows students to consider a broad spectrum of topics for honors theses/projects. The honors project gives students the opportunity to demonstrate their potential for graduate study, or to supplement their portfolios for prospective employers, or to further refine and specialize their area(s) of concentration in SMAD. For examples of SMAD honors thesis/projects see the honors program listing of past senior projects organized by major (download at Honors Program FAQ page).

Students considering an honors thesis must demonstrate appropriate proficiency or class work in their proposed areas of study. For example, students who wish to perform data analysis must have had or be currently enrolled in a statistics class. Students who propose an historical research project will be required to meet with the SMAD liaison librarian in order to maximize the use of potential resources available to the JMU community of scholars. Students creating a media project must have had or currently be enrolled in a class that allows them to function independently with the media required to complete their project.

**Written projects** must conform to a masters thesis format; i.e. statement of problem, method, result and discussion, bibliography with proper citations (unless otherwise dictated by subject matter). Preferred styles of presentation are APA or MLA. The JMU library provides citation style checking at <http://www.lib.jmu.edu/help/checkcite/>. See the library's citation page for further information on writing styles <[http://www.lib.jmu.edu/quick/style\\_manuals.aspx](http://www.lib.jmu.edu/quick/style_manuals.aspx)>.

Consult the Honors Program staff, the Senior Honors Project Handbook <http://www.jmu.edu/honorsprog/handbook.shtml> and the honors program web site <http://www.jmu.edu/honorsprog/shp-info.shtml> for detailed information concerning the formatting of final documents.

**Mediated projects** require a written introduction explaining the intended nature of the project or the concept leading to its creation, a listing of all software and hardware used in its creation and appropriate copyright releases for all copyrighted material used in the final production. Students using any SMAD equipment for their projects must have SMAD Production Committee approval before a proposal has been submitted to the SMAD Honors Committee. If these criteria are not met, the faculty advisor may terminate the honors project.

### **Problems and Conflict Resolution**

All problems /conflicts regarding thesis/projects will be referred to the SMAD Honors Committee whose decisions regarding any dispute will be final. Projects may be terminated by an advisor if 499A or 499B are not successfully completed.

### **Honors Thesis/Project Eligibility**

1. GPA of 3.5 or better throughout duration of project. If GPA drops below this level the student may continue his/her project only at the discretion of the project advisor.
2. Student must have secured a faculty advisor who has formally agreed to work with the student. The advisor must be a SMAD faculty member.
3. A preliminary proposal (3-7 pages with citations) must be reviewed and accepted by the SMAD Honors Committee four (4) semesters before graduation. Note: Faculty advisor must notify the SMAD Honors Committee and schedule a review/acceptance meeting.

### **Thesis/Project Expectations**

A. Student must meet with his/her faculty advisor at least two (2) times, four (4) semesters before graduation. These meetings will review the honors proposal, schedule a review/acceptance meeting by the Honors Committee and schedule a chronology for completion of the project. A document will be signed at that time and kept on file by the faculty advisor:

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ GPA: \_\_\_\_\_ Semester \_\_\_\_\_ Year \_\_\_\_\_

Proposed Project Title: \_\_\_\_\_

Short Project Description:

Projected chronology for completion of project:

Student Signature \_\_\_\_\_, Faculty Advisor \_\_\_\_\_  
Accepted as Honors Project by SMAD Honors Committee Date \_\_\_\_\_

B. Student must show advisor his/her current grade sheet and GPA before registering for SMAD 499A for one (1) credit in the third semester before graduation. Student must secure two additional thesis/project readers from the JMU faculty. Note: readers may or may not be SMAD faculty. Student must have a rough outline/mock-up/storyboard of his/her project completed for review by his/her advisor before the end of the semester.

C. Student must show advisor his/her current grade sheet and GPA before registering for SMAD 499B for three (3) credits in the second semester before graduation. Student must meet with faculty advisor in the fourth week of the semester with evidence of progress on the project. Student must meet with faculty advisor in the eighth week of the semester with more evidence of progress on the project. Student must have a draft of the final project/thesis turned in to his/her advisor on the last week of classes before exam week. It

is strongly suggested that student attends an Honors Program formatting workshop before submitting his/her end-of-the semester draft.

D. Student must register for SMAD 499C for two (2) credits in the final semester of graduation. Student must submit his/her final project to advisor for final revisions the second week of classes. Student must have revisions complete and submit the final project in the fourth week of classes. Student must submit his/her project to readers the fifth week of classes requesting that suggestions and or revisions be returned by the eighth week of classes. Student will finalize, rework, format and present his/her project by the end of the semester in accordance with final submission timelines set by the Honors Program.

### **TIMETABLE**

#### **Junior Year Semester 1 (two meetings)**

Secure advisor and give proposal for project  
Project accepted by SMAD Honors Committee

Set up chronology for completion of project

#### **Semester 2**

Secure two additional readers for project

Formal Proposal/Abstract with supportive research  
must be reviewed with advisor

#### **Senior Year Semester I**

4th week in semester-evidence of research/progress

8th week in semester rough draft/project due

Attend Honors Program formatting workshop  
or consult with Honors Program staff  
regarding final document format

#### **Semester 2**

2nd week submit final draft to advisor for review

4th week submit revised draft to readers for  
further revisions--ask for return by 8th week

8th week--deadline for readers to return revisions  
Submit final project to advisor

Submit final project to Honors Program according  
to Honors Program timelines