

EMORY & HENRY COLLEGE HONORS PROGRAM

Honors Thesis/Project Guidelines Updated Summer 2012

Eligibility and Honors Committees

Any student with a 3.3 cumulative GPA at the college and a 3.5 GPA in their major may request permission to pursue departmental honors in that major. Final decisions about whether to grant or deny these requests *always* rests with the departmental faculty in the discipline in which the student is seeking permission to pursue an Honors Thesis. Permission to pursue an interdisciplinary Honors Thesis under the auspices of the Honors Program rests with the Honors Director and Vice President for Academic Affairs both of whom may seek advice from the Honors Steering Committee or those members of the faculty whose disciplinary work most closely tracks the honors thesis research that is being proposed.

General Description of the Honors Thesis Process

An Honors Thesis/Project is an independent research project culminating in a major research essay or other appropriate research report. Honors Theses/Projects should represent the very best undergraduate work and should be worthy of publication in a disciplinary journal. While it is understood that completely original research is not always possible in an undergraduate project, meta-studies or literature reviews should be of substantial depth and of publishable quality. The appropriate length and format for an Honors Thesis/Project will normally be determined by the publication standards that are followed in the appropriate field of study.

The Honors Thesis/Project at Emory & Henry is normally a six-credit hour project, with three hours credit for work completed in the Fall semester of the senior year and three hours for work completed in the Spring semester of the senior year, but students may complete the Honors Project in the third Summer and the Fall semester of the senior year, or perhaps even in Spring of the junior year and Fall of the senior year. In most cases, the Honors Project should be completed *in addition to the 30 credit hours required for the major*, but the completion of an Honors Project may be used to satisfy a 460/470/480 requirement (provided that the department allows this practice *and* that the student completes 30 hours in the major *without* counting the Honors Thesis/Project credits in that total). Even though students may enroll in an Honors Thesis for less than six hours in order to stay within the limits of the college's maximum credit load limits, registering for a "lighter" Honors Thesis/Project in terms of hours does not diminish the expectations for the project.

The Honors Thesis/Project is *required* for all students planning to graduate with a College Honors Diploma. The three *absolute* requirements for this special recognition include completing 30 Honors Credit Hours, graduating with a final grade point average (GPA) of 3.5 or higher, and successfully defending *either* an Honors Thesis/Project that

is judged worthy of departmental honors by the students' major department *or* an Interdisciplinary Honors Thesis/Project that is judged worthy of honors by a committee consisting of faculty with appropriate expertise that has been approved by and includes at least one member of the Honors Steering Committee.

Normally, departmental committees reviewing Honors Thesis/Projects should include at least one member of the major department at Emory & Henry (who will normally serve as Chair of the thesis committee), one other faculty member in the field of specialization (who may be a member of the major department at Emory & Henry, a member of a closely related or complementary department at Emory & Henry, or who may be in some cases a faculty member at another institution), and one "outside" reader who is not a member of the major department. It is expected that for students seeking to complete the Honors Thesis/Project to qualify for the College Honors Diploma, at least one member of the Thesis Committee will also be a member of the Honors Steering Committee. A unanimous vote of the committee is required to confer Honors.

For 2012-2013, the Honors Steering Committee includes Dr. Joe Lane (Political Science, Honors Director and Chair), Dr. David Haney (Vice President of Academic Affairs, English), Dr. Mike Puglisi (Associate Dean of the Faculty, History), Dr. Scott Boltwood (English), Dr. Shelley Koch (Sociology), Dr. Michael Lane (Chemistry), Dr. Xiaoxue Li (Math), Dr. Felicia Mitchell (English), and Professor Christianne Roll (Music/Theatre). Students should select a member of the Honors Committee whose work and expertise make them an appropriate choice for reading and evaluating the proposed thesis. It is up to the student to secure a member of the Honors Steering Committee for his/her thesis project.

Timetable for an Honors Thesis/Project

A major research project cannot be completed quickly or at the last minute. The distribution of credit for the Honors Project over two semesters is intended to reflect that the candidate has worked on the project throughout the senior year. Therefore, in deciding to pursue Honors, you commit yourself to the following deadlines or those alternative deadlines that are clearly established by your committee. Although these deadlines may be altered by the advisor to match the academic calendar of a particular year or rare special cases that may require accommodation, strict adherence to this suggested schedule is in your own best interests because Honors Projects that are delayed in getting started or that miss the designated targets are those most likely to fail to gain committee approval.

The Honors Thesis/Project is intended for advanced and motivated students who are capable of doing major research work independent of any direct daily guidance from their instructors, and therefore, you should take full responsibility for your own progress and adherence to the following timetable:

- 1) [Optional] The Honors Thesis Workshop (Spring semester, junior year) – Students who expect to complete an Honors Thesis/Project are strongly

encouraged to enroll in the Honors Thesis Workshop in the Spring semester of the junior year. This one-credit course is offered as an introduction to the writing of the Honors Thesis/Project and offers students the opportunity to workshop a proposal, interview possible thesis directors, read and critique successfully completed projects in their field, build a literature review and bibliography for their project, and prepare their applications for the Honors Thesis/Project (see below) in a cooperative environment with other students working on similar projects. This class is normally offered by a member of the Honors Steering Committee and is open to any student (whether s/he is a member of the Honors Program or not) who wants to complete an Honors Thesis/Project. While completion of the workshop is not required for the Honors Thesis/Project, it is highly recommended.

- 2) [Required] Application for an Honors Project (March, junior year) - At Registration for Fall semester of the senior year, a student planning to complete an Honors Thesis/Project must register for the first-semester of the honors thesis for the upcoming semester (normally a 490 course in the student's major department). This process requires submitting paperwork on the topic and receiving permission from the major department, the Honors Director, and the VPAA. Students seeking to complete the Honors Thesis/Project for the College Honors Diploma must also receive permission from the Honors Program Director. You should apply for permission by submitting the "Application for Honors Project (490/491)" form (available on the Registrar's webpage) along with a one-page summary of your work in the department, your academic qualifications, previous research projects, and a very general statement of what you would like to write on (E.g. "Comparative Politics in Western Europe before and after the Expansion of the EU," "Recent Economic Developments in East Asia," "The Chaotic Trajectories of Illegitimate Children in Shakespeare's Comedies," "The Connection between Public/Private Secondary Education and College Achievement," etc.). The major department may require a more detailed application for an Honors Thesis/Project and may meet to discuss applications for an Honors Thesis/Project. At this time you should designate a Primary Advisor assigned to work with you on the project.
- 3) [Required] - Meeting with Honors Advisor (September 1, senior year) - On or near this date, you should meet with your Honors Advisor in order to finalize and approve a plan your honors work for the upcoming year. The goal of this meeting is to clarify your plans for research and to brainstorm about good ways to begin building your research file and clarifying your question. At this meeting, the student and Honors Advisor should finalize the membership of the Honors Committee (see above on the make-up of the committee). Finally, at this meeting, the Primary Advisor and the student will agree on a day and time for weekly meetings that will be held *every week* in which school is in session until the thesis is completed and defended.

- 4) [Required] - Formal Research Proposals Due (October 15, senior year) – On or about this date, you should submit to the Honors Director a Formal Research Proposal that includes a clear statement of your proposed thesis and a plan for arguing that thesis including a general statement of the sources that you plan to use to make your argument. The Formal Research Proposal may not be *long*, but it should be a finished document in polished form, *not a first draft or rough sketch*. Therefore, candidates are encouraged to submit a rough draft of this Research Proposal as early in the Fall semester as possible so that the Honors Director and Primary Advisor can provide guidance on forming a clear and defensible proposal. Once the formal research proposal has been circulated and assessed, a meeting of the candidate and his/her committee should take place so that all the members of the committee can offer advice on the final thesis statement and research plan. By the completion of this assignment, you should know what you are doing.

At this point in the process, you should also have a Working Annotated Bibliography that contains a list of works that you have consulted and/or plan to consult in completing your Honors Project. In including a work in your Working Bibliography, you have made a commitment to consider that work and any other works to which it makes reference that may provide evidence relevant to your thesis. This Working Bibliography should contain a full and correct bibliographic citation to each work in an accepted style (see below). You should also provide a 3-4 sentence statement on each work in your Working Bibliography – 1) a brief description of each work, 2) a brief statement about why you think this work is relevant to your thesis and what you hope to find therein, and 3) a sentence describing whether or not you have taken action to acquire the work (E.g. checked out from the library, requested via Interlibrary Loan, etc.) and whether or not you have read the work or when you plan to do so. You should circulate this submission to all the members of your committee so that they will have the opportunity to provide feedback but do not need to schedule a committee meeting at this time.

- 5) [Optional, but highly recommended] - Partial Draft, Outline, and Updated Bibliography (December 15, senior year) – Before leaving for the Holiday Break, you should submit a revised and polished version of your Introduction and Outline with as many sections of the Outline filled in with draft text as possible. While this will not be a complete draft, it should represent a significant portion of the planned thesis in text form. Every section of the paper that you can complete before Christmas will get one extra round of feedback and will give you more time to re-write problematic arguments and/or polish good ones. You need not schedule a meeting with the committee at this stage, but committee members should try to send out general comments on the progress of the thesis via email so students working on Honors Projects during the break can have the benefit of their advice.

- 6) [Optional, but highly recommended] First Full Draft (January 31, senior year) – At this point, you should submit a full (or very nearly full) draft of the thesis with a complete and correctly styled bibliography to all members of your committee. This submission should be followed as quickly as possible by an official meeting with the entire committee. At this meeting, you should expect to answer questions about why you have proceeded as you have. Furthermore, you should receive very explicit instructions from the committee about how you should revise and enlarge your thesis in order to complete the project. It is in your own best interests to receive very clear instructions about what is needed to make the thesis defensible.

If, at this stage in the project, the committee has doubts about whether or not you can complete an honors-worthy project, they may ask you to withdraw from consideration for honors, change your 490 in the fall semester to a 460 (independent study) and enter a grade for that course based on your work thus far. At this meeting, the thesis committee may also choose to impose other requirements and/or deadlines on your thesis in addition to the March 20 and April 1 deadlines described below.

- 7) [Required] Full Polished Draft (March 20, senior year) About one week after you return from Spring Break, you should be ready to turn in a defensible and complete honors thesis. This submission should be followed as quickly as possible by an official meeting with the entire committee. We hope that the committee will be prepared to schedule a defense after reading this draft, but we reserve the right to have a meeting aimed at explaining why further revisions are necessary and what must be completed/changed in order to make the project worthy of honors. *In extreme cases, the committee may of course change 491 to 461 and place you in an independent study, removing you from consideration for Honors if the completion of an acceptable Honors Project does not appear to be imminent. You are absolutely and solely responsible for presenting a document that is complete and that adheres to the style and citation guidelines contained in Kate Turabian's A Manual for Writers of Term Papers, Theses, and Dissertations, Sixth Edition, or the appropriate stylesheet dictated by your department.*
- 8) [Required] Final Deadline and Formal Defense (April 1, senior year) A final, polished, and complete Honors Project must be presented by the end of the first full week in April. *No exceptions will be made to this rule.* Every thesis that is accepted for the requirements of a College Honors Diploma *must* be defended. The defense should take place before the thesis committee. Students should be required to make a presentation of their work and to answer difficult and pointed questions about their argument, conclusions, methods, and sources. After the presentation, the committee will critique the candidate's performance and offer advice for further preparation for the public presentation. More importantly, they will ask you questions that require you to justify your confidence in that thesis by demonstrating the candidate's familiarity with the relevant scholarly literature and

consideration of opposing viewpoints. This is not an empty or formalistic requirement.

It is imperative that we have a week to schedule formal defenses *before* the public presentation of accepted Honors Theses/Projects, many of which will take place at either ScienceFest or the Emory & Henry College/UVA Wise Undergraduate Research Forum (both are usually held about the week of April 10). We also hope that many of these theses/projects will be submitted for the Emory & Henry College Senior Research Award, the deadline for which is generally around the first week of April.

After the Defense is complete, the faculty members of your committee will confer on whether or not you have completed the stringent requirements for Honors and whether or not to confer *Honors*. You should be notified of the committee decision at the conclusion of the Defense. In the event that the thesis defense is successful, you should have the members of the committee sign his/her title pages for the printing of the thesis. Normally, at least five title pages should be signed – three for submission with the copies for binding (for the Honors Program, Kelly Library, and the candidate), one copy for the Registrar to be submitted with the “Report of Honors Thesis” form, and one copy for the primary advisor’s records.

In the event that no final thesis/project is submitted by April 1 or rare cases in which the thesis submitted is clearly less than professional work, the primary advisor reserves the power to deny Honors even at this stage and to change 491 to 461, but if a candidate has followed all the guidelines contained herein and met the appropriate deadlines, there is very little reason to fear that s/he will fail at this stage in the process.

- 9) [Required] Public Presentation (April 10, senior year (approximately)) – You must make a public presentation of your honors thesis/project. Many theses and projects will be presented at either ScienceFest or the Emory & Henry College/UVA Wise Undergraduate Research Forum (both are usually held about the week of April 10). However, there are many possible venues for public presentation – you may present your work at a departmental gathering or lyceum event, a professional or undergraduate research program in your field, or the NCHC conference undergraduate research panel. To qualify a public presentation, the candidate should make at least a 10-15 minute presentation outlining the research and findings, and the candidate must answer questions from an audience. *If the candidate does not present the thesis or fails to do so credibly, s/he may fail to qualify for honors.*

10) [Required] Submit the “Report of Honors Thesis” Form to the Registrar’s Office (Due May 1, senior year) – You must submit a copy of the “Report of Honors Thesis” form to the Registrar so your thesis will appear in the Graduation Program and the Honors Thesis/Project will be checked as complete on your graduation audit. Failure to submit this form could result in your thesis being omitted from the Graduation Program or an error in printing your diploma.

Final Honors Theses must be submitted to Karin Widener in MS 239 according to the following rules:

- Three clean, unbound copies of the final, fully revised and finalized text of each thesis should be submitted to the Karin Widener by no later than April 15, 2013.

- The Title Page for the submitted copy of the thesis should include the following information, centered:

Title
Author’s Name

Statement reading: “Submitted to the Department of _____ of Emory & Henry College in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the College Honors Diploma for the degree of Bachelor of Arts/Sciences with Honors in _____.”

OR

“Submitted to the Department of _____ of Emory & Henry College in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Bachelor of Arts/Sciences with Honors in _____.”

- Name of faculty advisor with space for signature below or beside
- Names of readers with space for signatures below or beside
- Date of Final Defense

- The title page of each thesis copy must have original signatures in ink of all the thesis committee members. The student is responsible for securing the signatures on the official title page of the thesis that will accompany the completed thesis.

- All theses should conform to one of the recognized research paper style standards as set forth in the *Chicago Manual of Style*, the *MLA Handbook*, or the *APA Handbook*. In some cases, the stylesheet of the leading journal in your discipline will be most appropriate, and departments may specify the format that they choose. The standard under which the student should submit his or her work should be decided by the individual department or division.

- All theses should be word-processed in black ink on white paper.
- All theses should be produced on a laser printer.
- The fonts used should be Arial, Times New Roman, or a similar undecorated font style.
- The standard font size should be 12.
- The margins of the document should be 1” on the top, bottom, and right side. The left margin should be 1.5” to accommodate the binding.
- All tables, appendices, and illustrations must conform to the publication standards expected in the field.

- The Honors Program will arrange the binding of the Honors Theses/Projects and will deliver one copy each to Kelly Library, the Honors Program Archive, and the student.