

Department of Anthropology Honors Thesis Requirements and Guidelines

Honors thesis writing and research provides students with a deeper level of engagement with a topic they are interested in than they may get in regular courses. They will have the opportunity to do primary research, which is preferred, or they may do a review of relevant literature, and they can contribute their own interpretation or analysis. An honors thesis is a stepping stone for professionalization in anthropology; it gives students experience for graduate programs and careers involving research and writing. The honors thesis research may be published and presented at academic conferences as well.

Eligible Mentors

Any full-time, permanent faculty who will be able to work with the student from the planning to completion stages of the thesis.

Eligible Students

Junior or senior honors students who have completed at least one course with the professor who they would like to supervise their thesis are eligible. Non-honors students who meet the Honors College requirements (i.e., minimum 3.3 GPA and in good standing) are also eligible. When a student does not meet these requirements but has a willing faculty sponsor, the student and sponsor may make a case to the Director of Undergraduate Studies, and the requirements may be waived when strong preparation and commitment to the project can be demonstrated.

Non-majors also may do an anthropology honors thesis; this would be at the discretion of a faculty member in the Department of Anthropology who agrees to supervise the student's work.

Coursework

Students must enroll in at least 1 credit hour of ANTH 4880 (Honors Thesis II) the semester that they complete their thesis (1-6 are possible). Students have the option to enroll in ANTH 4870 (Honors Thesis I) for another 1-6 credit hours the semester before they complete their thesis. The exact number of credit hours depends on variables such as the amount of room in the student's schedule, financial constraints, and/or mentor requirements. The timetable for the research and writing is not necessarily limited to one or two semesters, however. For example, if a student worked with an archaeological collection as a volunteer or as part of a class project, they may continue to build on this work in the honors thesis.

Proposal and Course Authorization

Students interested in writing an honors thesis in anthropology should meet with a professor to discuss possible projects. After a professor has agreed to work with a student, the student should prepare a short proposal or outline of the work they propose to do. Each professor can decide what this proposal should include, but it should generally include:

1. A brief description of the research topic
2. A discussion of the methods that will be used to conduct the research
3. A timeline for completion of the work

The professor will then meet with the student to discuss the proposal, and if approved by the supervising professor, the student must notify the Honors College of their intent to conduct an honors thesis project by completing the online Intent to Conduct a Thesis Form, which will require that students: 1) Identify the faculty member who has agreed to supervise their project; 2) write a 200-word summary of their project; and 3) provide a tentative title for their project. If a student needs to register for 4870 or 4880, then this form is due **April 1** for summer registration, **August 1** for fall registration, and **December 1** for spring registration. Students who do not need to register should submit this form as soon as they begin the thesis. *NOTE: Students MUST register for at least 1 credit hour of 4880 the semester that they intend to complete their thesis.

If their proposal involves research with human participants, the student should work with their supervising professor to submit an Institutional Review Board (IRB) application.

Final Product

For the Honors thesis, students must complete a paper that is roughly 20 pages or more, not including references. For some projects, there might be another product (for example, a museum exhibit or ethnographic film) that accompanies the paper that is produced in addition to the written thesis, but this is not required.

No later than one month prior to the last day of classes the student will turn in a complete draft of the honors thesis to her/his faculty mentor, after which the student will revise the thesis based on feedback from her/his mentor. The Honors thesis will be evaluated by the faculty mentor. The advising professor should approve all final edits before the student submits to ScholarWorks (if they choose to submit). Students who receive a passing grade must notify the Honors College that they have successfully completed their honors thesis by completing the Certification of Successful Completion Form. This form is due by **the last day of final exams during the semester in which the thesis is completed.**

Required attendance at Honors Thesis Sessions

Students are required to attend three 2-hr sessions led by the Honors College Thesis Team each semester that they are working on their honors thesis. The three sessions are held at the beginning, middle and end of the semester. The last session is the Thesis Pitch, which is an oral competition event where students have 3 minutes to communicate the importance of their research. Presenting at the Thesis Pitch is voluntary, but attendance is required.

Honors College support

Honors College students participating in Honors Thesis are eligible to borrow a laptop computer from the Honors College for the semester, contingent on availability. These students may also apply for financial support to present at conferences and purchase supplies for their research.

In addition to the three required sessions, there are several workshops held in the Honors College each semester to provide support to Honors College students engaged in research and theses activities. The Faculty Associate for Research and Theses and the Research Program Coordinator are available to advise students and their mentors.

Department Support

All students working on their thesis will have access to the Department of Anthropology's ethnographic laboratory, where they can check out equipment for ethnographic research and use the computer software in the lab for data analysis. Students may also have access to archaeology, bioarchaeology, and dental microwear labs under the supervision of their professors.

Questions

For more information, contact the Department of Anthropology Director of Undergraduate Studies, the Department of Anthropology Honors College Affiliate, the Honors College Undergraduate Research Program Coordinator and/or the Office of Undergraduate Research and Fellowships Director.

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