

# FAQ About the HONORS PROGRAM in English

## **I am interested in doing an Honors Thesis, how do I get information about the program?**

Confer with the Director of Honors (during posted office hours), bring your transcript (or ask the Undergraduate Assistant to print one for you) and receive preliminary acceptance.

## **What is the GPA requirement for the Honors Program?**

You need at least a 3.5 GPA in the major.

## **How do I write an honors thesis if I also plan to study abroad?**

English majors who want to write honors theses as seniors may study abroad as juniors, whether for one or two semesters. To make this process as easy as possible, we encourage you to discuss plans with the Director of Honors as soon as possible. Those who want to study abroad for an entire year take an Honors Seminar in the fall semester (4910) of their senior year. In some cases it is possible to take the Honors Seminar in spring semester of the sophomore year.

## **When do I decide on my topic?**

Many of the most successful theses have come out of past course work that sparked curiosity, that made a student want to go further and to revisit and revise previous work. Students should review their past course work, brainstorm freely, dream, and identify their intellectual interests and passions. *Ask yourself, during the junior year: What project will nurture and sustain my interest for two semesters of independent study?*

## **How do I find a thesis adviser?**

Once you have determined where your interests lie, consult with the Director of Honors for help in identifying faculty members who match or support your interests. Speak to them about becoming your thesis adviser.

## **Can I switch my thesis adviser once I've started work in the Honors Essay Tutorial?**

Most working relationships between Honors candidates and their thesis advisers go well, and the learning is genial, exciting, and mutual. Many Honors students recall their tutorial as a highlight of their Cornell experience, and professors, too, typically enjoy working with intellectually engaged students on a developing thesis. But if you realize that the shape your topic is taking calls on a different kind of expertise from the one represented by your Honors Essay adviser, it is possible to change your advisers. Consult the Director of Honors for advice.

## **What are the guidelines for the format of my Honors Thesis?**

- Approximately 50 pages of text, not including endnotes and bibliography, double-spaced in 12-point type.
- Use either the MLA or Chicago manuals of style for footnotes or endnotes, quotations, internal citations, bibliographical entries, etc. Handbooks are accessible online as well as in printed form which can be purchased or used in libraries.
- **Two bound copies** of your thesis must be handed in to the English Department on the day the thesis is due. In addition, an **electronic copy** is due on the same day, to be sent to Corrine Bruno in the English department, at [cb624](#). You may, if you wish, hand your thesis in earlier than the deadline.



- There are no predetermined formats for the title page, dedication page, or table of contents. The English Department has a number of these written by former Honors students which you may review.

**On-campus copy/print services:** [Cornell Print Services](#)

- Olin Library Copy Center, 255-4700, E-mail: [libcopycenter@cornell.edu](mailto:libcopycenter@cornell.edu)
- Center Sage Copy Center, 254-3502, [sagecopies@cornell.edu](mailto:sagecopies@cornell.edu)

*HINT: Please don't wait until the last minute.*

**Some off-campus copy/print services**

- [gnomon copy](#), 607-273-3333
- [Uncle Marty's Office](#), 607-275-3711

**How is my final Honors grade determined?**

- The thesis writing process is determined in two parts. The entire course (Honors Essay Tutorial I in the Fall and Honors Essay Tutorial II in the Spring) will give you 8 credits. Your first and second semesters will each be graded by your thesis adviser. These may be different grades from that assigned to your thesis by your adviser and second reader.
- The completed Honors Essay is read and assessed by two readers. One reader is the thesis adviser. Both readers write a report and assign a grade to the Honors Essay. You will receive both of the reports.

**How is my final degree of Honors determined?**

The Honors Committee, selected by the Chair of the English Department, assists the Director of Honors in determining the level of Honors (*summa cum laude*, *magna cum laude*, or *cum laude*). They average the major GPA and the two thesis grades for each Honors candidate and rank them. The Honors Committee assesses the theses as a whole. They may also consider the student's performance in the English major and the student's overall transcript.