

DEPARTMENT OF ANTHROPOLOGY
GUIDELINES FOR SENIOR HONORS PROJECTS

The senior Honors project is a major opportunity and responsibility for Honors students. The Honors project is no mere term paper. Instead, it is the product of a student's guided but substantially independent research over a span of time that typically exceeds one semester and may exceed one academic year. In the process, the student first defines and justifies the problem focus, then sustains a program of study, research and writing. The student's ultimate goal is to craft a defensible Honors thesis or paper of publishable quality that is the product of her or his independent work under broad faculty supervision.

The Honors project identifies an important issue or question of current concern in Anthropology. The student may propose and refine a question on her or his own, or may consult with one or more Anthropology faculty members. In view of our discipline's breadth, it is impossible to specify the scope or nature of such questions. Instead, there is tremendous latitude within which the student may define a significant research question of personal intellectual interest. *However, a member of the full-time faculty may guide, and must approve, the student's definition of problem or question.* This requirement ensures that students will select problems that are current in our field, not fully explored and plumbed, and that are balanced in scope to form a suitable project topic.

Original scholarship doesn't just happen; it requires planning and foresight. To ensure a successful Honors project, the student consults faculty to assemble a group who will guide him or her in the research process. The chief member of this group is the student's Honors advisor. The student must recruit two other Anthropology faculty members (and, as topics and circumstances warrant, outside members) as thesis readers. Faculty supervisor and perhaps readers then will work with the student to establish a schedule and timetable for completion of all tasks from problem definition to project completion.

The conduct of research almost always begins with substantial reading of relevant, current literature. Depending upon the question, research may continue with collection of qualitative or quantitative data or some combination of the two, and then with study, evaluation and analysis of those data. Acquiring and analyzing data may require fieldwork, laboratory or experimental work, or library work. Skills learned in field, methods, and theory courses may prove essential to these steps in the research process.

Only after literature review and data collection will the student begin to craft the Honors paper. This step must begin with a detailed outline, which both provides structure to the paper and helps to clarify the student's thought. The finished draft of the paper should range between 7,500-10,000 words (approximately 30-40 ds. pp.) of text, not including figures, tables, and bibliography. The paper should cite at least 10, preferably many more, original, refereed scholarly papers (i.e., not websites, although judicious use and citation of few websites is permitted). Anthropology papers must use American Anthropologist citation style.

Scholarly writing in any field is a collaborative process, as the author submits his or her work to independent evaluation by reviewers. One essential responsibility of Honors project advisors and readers is to provide such advice, so that the first draft may be critiqued and returned to the student for further work. This cycle may be repeated two or more further times. This process of peer review is exactly like the process to which faculty themselves submit among the community of scholars when they write scholarship for publication. Accordingly, time is required for completion of this peer-review process, as incorporated into and described in the timetable below.

TIME TABLE. This timetable assumes Honors project completion and graduation in Spring semester, and must be adjusted accordingly in other cases. The student should complete the following steps in sequence, each step *no later than* the specified date or interval.

SPRING OF YEAR PRECEDING PROJECT COMPLETION:

1. Register for 1-3 cr in ANTH:497, Senior Honors Project in Anthropology *for the following Fall semester*. Registration for the course is by consent of faculty supervisor. Typically, the student will register with the faculty member who will serve as her or his supervisor. (No more than 3 cr in the above course can be applied to major requirements.)
2. Consult with Anthropology faculty on problem or topic. *Do this before the start of the following Fall semester.*

FALL SEMESTER, SENIOR YEAR:

1. In Week 1, submit a 1-pg. prospectus that identifies and defines a relevant problem, states its theoretical or intellectual significance to a branch of anthropology, states its data or analytical requirements, the methods used to acquire data and conduct analysis, and lists no fewer than five relevant scholarly publications.
2. By Week 4, submit an Honors College project-proposal form signed by the student's faculty supervisor and readers.
3. In consultation with the student's faculty supervisor, establish a detailed schedule or plan of work for all stages of research.
4. From Week 4 onward, the student should begin, continue, and sustain work according to the schedule established with the faculty supervisor.

SPRING SEMESTER, SENIOR YEAR:

1. By Week 4, submit a first draft of the Honors project to supervisor and readers.
2. Between Weeks 4 and 12, work in close consultation with supervisor and readers on necessary changes, additions, expansions, deletions or other changes that may be required. As above, this process may require submission of further drafts.
3. By Week 12, submit an approved final version of the Honors project.

For general reference, please consult the Honors College's "Honors Research Projects" website. There you will find links to other required forms (e.g., thesis title page).