Honors in Classics

Graduating with Honors in Classics requires writing an honors thesis. The thesis is a substantive and original work of 50-60 pages, normally in the form of a sustained narrative argument. It is normally organized around four or five chapters, each taking up a specific problem or theme that is part of the overall argument. An introduction establishes the relevant historical and scholarly background and the interest and aims of this project; a conclusion pulls together the findings of the individual chapters and develops their significance for the thesis as a whole. The thesis is supported by a research bibliography.

THE TIMELINE:

Junior Year:
Early Autumn Quarter – Search for an honors advisor and begin working with them to craft a preliminary proposal
Winter Quarter – Work with honors advisor developing topic, planning any necessary research, applying for research funding, and finding your second reader
Early Spring Quarter – Work with a graduate student thesis proposal writing tutor on preparing your preliminary proposal
May 8th – 4-page Preliminary Proposal due to Student Services Officer
May 15th – Undergraduate Studies Committee provides feedback
Rest of Spring and Summer Quarters – Preliminary research work recommended by your honors advisor, create a Final Thesis Proposal
(Honors College: Recommended, but may be required)

Senior Year:
First Day of Classes Autumn Quarter – Final Thesis Proposal due to Student Services Officer
Autumn, Winter and Spring Quarters – Enroll in CLASSICS 199 for up to 6 units each quarter, no more than 10 units overall*
May 5, 2021 – Final thesis draft due
June 3, 2021 – Honors thesis presentations

*2 units normally require 15 pages of writing; 3 units normally requires 25 pages; 4 units normally requires 35 pages.

Eligibility for Honors
A minimum grade point average (GPA) of 3.6 in Classics courses is required for students to enroll in the honors program. To be considered for honors in Classics, the student must select a professor who can supervise his or her honors thesis and the professor must agree.
Preliminary work
Developing a solid proposal for a great thesis takes time. This is not something that can be thrown together a week before the deadline; it normally takes months. That means that preparation for an honors thesis begins in the junior year.

In winter, you should be finding and developing a topic, working with a faculty member who agrees to supervise your work, and planning the needed research, especially any work you may need to do over the summer. In addition, you should identify a faculty member who will serve as the second reader of your final draft.

Supervisor
In your proposal, you must name the faculty member who has agreed to supervise your thesis. The DUS or your major advisor can help you in the process of finding a supervisor. Some proposals may be deemed unfeasible if no faculty member with appropriate expertise is available to supervise your project. In some cases, typically for interdisciplinary projects, more than one advisor may be appropriate.

The Proposal
The thesis proposal is a description of your research project; it should be 4 pp. long (double-spaced) but 3-12 pp. can be acceptable. It should be a well-researched and well-written account, including a clear statement of your central question and preliminary argument, an account of the scholarly background that makes this a timely and interesting question, a clear justification of the methodology you will use, your detailed plans for carrying out the needed research, evidence that you have the background you will need to do the work, and a bibliography. The proposal is intended to provide you with a blueprint for a successful thesis; it should also demonstrate that you have that blueprint and are on your way to writing a successful thesis.

The narrative portion of your proposal should be 2-3 pp. long; the bibliography and any needed supporting elements should occupy additional pages. Your proposal should clearly explain the following:

- The broader scholarly question or larger issue at stake
- The focused question your thesis is intended to answer, and/or your central argument
- Exactly what data, evidence or material you will focus on
- Your method, i.e. what you will actually do with this material
- How this material and your method will enable you to speak to the larger issues at stake
- The larger interest or relevance of your proposed work, i.e. what contribution you hope to make
- Your relevant background (courses taken, fieldwork done, other relevant skills)

Make sure your bibliography corresponds well to the content of the proposal, i.e. that you have covered all the relevant bases and can demonstrate that you have done enough reading and of
the right kind in order to carry out your proposed project. You must also name your advisor in
the proposal.

Make sure you give ample time to your advisor to give you feedback prior to submission to the
UG Studies Committee. The UG Studies Committee gives approval only if a suitable faculty
supervisor is available and if it is satisfied that the student has a sufficient basis of knowledge
derived from department course work in the general areas the thesis covers, such as art, Greek,
Latin, history, literature, or philosophy.

The preliminary proposal, approved by the supervisor, is due May 8th to the Student Services
Officer. The Committee will then give the proposals a preliminary review and communicate
their concerns and suggestions to you in writing by May 15th so that you may make appropriate
adjustments in your plan for summer research.

**Honors College**
We highly recommend the Honors College September program for seniors working toward a
senior thesis. If you want to participate, you must arrange for this in the spring of your junior
year. Classics does not run an honors college but can attach you to a department that does.
Please be in touch with the Student Services Officer and Director of Undergraduate Studies by
the preliminary proposal deadline if you are interested in participating. **In some cases, the UG
Studies Committee may require you to attend this program. If this is the case, the Committee
will notify you with their feedback on your preliminary proposal.**

**The Final Thesis Proposal**
The final draft of your thesis proposal is due the first day of fall quarter of your senior year to
the Student Services Officer. Proposals must be approved by the Undergraduate Committee in
order for students to be allowed to proceed with honors work.

The department gives approval only if it is satisfied that the student has a sound research
proposal and sufficient background or training in the general areas the thesis covers. Proposals
may be passed or failed; revisions may be requested before the student is allowed to proceed
with the project.

**Getting Credit for Thesis Work**
If your thesis proposal is approved, you will spend a good portion of your senior year working
on it. Theses are due at the beginning of May; make sure to plan plenty of time in advance for
drafting chapters, giving your supervisor time to read and comment on drafts, and making
revisions. You are encouraged to enroll in CLASSICS 199, with your supervisor as instructor, for
a maximum of 6 units per term, up to an overall total of 10 units. The advantage of signing up
for thesis work is that you build time into your schedule to work on the thesis. Keep in mind
that enrolling in 2 units of work is normally equal to 15 pages of writing, 3 units equal to 25
pages, and 4 units equal to 35 pages.
**Resources** UAR has some general information for honors theses seekers: [https://undergrad.stanford.edu/academic-planning/planning-departmental-honors](https://undergrad.stanford.edu/academic-planning/planning-departmental-honors)
UAR also has a list of funding opportunities for independent projects and research: [https://undergrad.stanford.edu/opportunities/research/get-funded](https://undergrad.stanford.edu/opportunities/research/get-funded)
The Hume Center for Writing and Speaking provides writing tutors for any project, including Honors Theses: [https://undergrad.stanford.edu/tutoring-support/hume-center](https://undergrad.stanford.edu/tutoring-support/hume-center)

**Thesis Deadlines** The thesis will be due May 5, 2021. You should receive a grade and comments from both readers within two weeks. Submit one bound final copy to the Student Services Officer. The Undergraduate Committee will read all the Honors Theses and may select one to nominate for a university medal. The Department keeps a copy of all completed theses on file.

**Evaluating the Thesis**
Honors are awarded only if the essay receives a combined grade of ‘B+’ or higher from the supervisor and a second reader. If you fail to receive honors, you will still retain grades given for work completed in enrolled CLASSICS 199 units.

**Honors Thesis Presentation**
Each honors student is required to present the thesis at a departmental event in early June. The presentation should be 10 minutes in length with 5 minutes of Q & A. Students should consult with faculty advisor/s on format.

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