Department of Modern Languages Guidelines for Honors Projects

Ursinus College Guidelines and Requirements

Departmental and Interdepartmental Honors (*approved April 2013*)

The goals of the Honors Program at Ursinus College are to encourage academic excellence, to promote original research and independent study, and to reward scholarly achievement. Students with high overall academic standing who have demonstrated an exceptional competence, the capacity for independent, original research and disciplined scholarship may be awarded departmental honors or distinguished honors in the department of their major or minor fields of concentration. Students may also be awarded interdepartmental honors or distinguished honors, if they are double majors and complete the requirements for honors in both departments. Interdepartmental or distinguished honors may also be granted to students who complete the requirements for honors in the departments of their major and minor, subject to approval of both departments. Students may receive honors or distinguished honors in their minor departments or programs, with the approval of both their major and minor departments/ programs. Students' eligibility to do honors outside of their major or minor must be pre-approved by the department in which the honors project is conducted and by the Academic Standards and Discipline Committee.

All these awards are made subject to the following regulations:

1. To be eligible for departmental or distinguished honors, students must have a 3.5 cumulative average based on their last four semesters. Exceptions may be made by the Academic Standards and Discipline Committee at the request of the department.

2. To be admitted to candidacy for departmental or interdepartmental honors or distinguished honors, students must enroll in a first semester of Research/Independent Work 491. By the middle of their first semester of Research/Independent Work 491, a candidate for honors submits a formal proposal including a bibliography and research plan to the department(s) for approval. Near the end of the 491 course, the candidate submits a written status report and makes an oral presentation to the department(s). Upon completion of 491, the student may be invited by the department(s) to pursue honors in the following semester.

Students must obtain written consent of a faculty member who will serve as the project adviser, have their candidacy certified by the chairperson of the department in which they wish to pursue honors. In the case of interdepartmental honors, students must obtain written consent of a faculty project adviser from each department/program, have their candidacy certified by the chairperson/coordinator of one of these departments/programs, and have the research or individual projects approved by both departments/programs.

Students who receive such approval by the end of the first semester will complete a second semester of Research/Independent Work 492W.

3. The Honors Project, completed in the second semester of research/independent work, must demonstrate disciplined, independent and original scholarship or creativity. If the candidates receive a passing grade, they will earn credit hours toward graduation, even though their work may not be recommended for honors.

4. An honors committee consists of at least three faculty members, at least two from the department(s) and at least one from outside the department(s). If the committee agrees the project

is moving towards consideration for distinguished honors, an outside evaluator will be secured at least one month prior to the project's defense and added to the committee. The committee evaluates the project and an oral presentation, and examines the candidate by early to mid- April. This committee is chosen by the adviser(s) in consultation with the department chair(s) and the student. Departmental or interdepartmental honors will be awarded on the recommendation of this committee and the department(s), and the approval of the faculty.

5. After the student submits the final paper and passes the oral presentation, the committee may decide to award distinguished honors, if the student has demonstrated exceptional scholarship, originality, and/or thoroughness, and the project has been vetted by an outside reader. The Honors Committee including the outside reader must be unanimous in their decision to award distinguished honors to the student.

6. Departments specify the date for the candidate to submit a completed thesis. In order that the faculty may consider the awarding of honors or distinguished honors, the candidate must deposit the completed thesis in bound form following the format established by the Myrin Library, the written recommendation of the project adviser, and approval of the department(s) and of the outside evaluator for distinguished honors in the office of the dean of the College by the Monday of the last full week of classes.

Honors timelines based on Honors guidelines approved by faculty 4/25/13

Spring – Junior Year

- Students with a cumulative average of at least 3.5 in their last four semesters may register for Independent Research with the approval of a faculty mentor for fall term senior year.

- Department chairs and faculty mentors are responsible to check GPA and prerequisite requirements for preliminary eligibility.
  - Department chair will validate both GPA and prerequisites when signing the Honors registration form late in fall term.
  - 3.5 GPA is based on last four semesters (i.e., Fall and Spring sophomore and junior years).
  - Exceptions to 3.5 minimum GPA must be approved by Academic Standards and Discipline Committee at the request of the Department and/or faculty mentor..

- With consent of the research adviser and prerequisites met, students may register for 491 in their major department, minor department, or Interdisciplinary Studies in the case of two departments (approval of both departments required). Students may not pursue Interdepartmental Honors in more than two departments.

- Students may consider pursuing Honors level research in another department (i.e., neither the major nor the minor department) where the student has approval of a research adviser and the department but must also have approval from Academic Standards and Discipline Committee. This request should be initiated by the department.

First Semester Senior Year

- Student is registered in 491

- Mid-semester (approximate)—student submits proposal including bibliography and research plan for department approval.

- Student may register during preregistration for 492W but final enrollment will be contingent upon successful completion of department requirements set for 491. This is determined at the end of the semester.

- End of semester- student submits written status report (form determined by the department) and makes an oral presentation.

- With Department and mentor consent, department may <u>invite</u> the student to pursue honors in the following semester and register for 492W. If more than one department/program involved, both departments must agree to move the candidate forward.

- By mid-December the student should complete the [Honor's Preregistration Form](#) (available to faculty on the Dean's Office website) and secure the appropriate signatures including validation of the GPA and pre-requisite requirements.

- The Honors' committee should be identified by this mid-point in the yearlong honor's process. If the project is moving toward distinguished honors, the non-Ursinus outside evaluator should be identified and added to the committee no later than one month prior to the April presentation.

Second Semester Senior Year

- Departments, mentor and student set the date for the final oral presentation/defense and submission of the final draft.

- Final Paper due in the Dean's Office on the Monday of the last full week of spring semester classes.

Additional points for students pursing honors:

Outside evaluators for Distinguished Honors will read the final draft of the research and may participate either in person or virtually, e.g., Skype. Note: the Dean's Office does not provide stipends for outside evaluators.

Honors and Distinguished Honors candidates must deposit the completed thesis in the format established by Myrin Library, and the written approval of the mentor and the department chair(s) (and outside evaluator for distinguished honors) in the office of the Dean of the College by the Monday noon of the last full week of classes.

After approval by the faculty, the Dean's Office will forward the Honors papers to the Myrin Library along with a list verifying Department acceptance and Faculty approval from the May meeting.

The Dean's Office will provide a standard form for Honors preregistration, which will require a brief description of the project and the signatures of the project adviser(s) and the department chairperson(s). [See: Dean's Office website]

All research involving human subjects requires review and approval by the Ursinus Institutional Review Board in accordance with federal law and Ursinus policy. The goal of these regulations is to ensure the safety, respect, and dignity of human subjects who volunteer to participate in scientific research. http://www.ursinus.edu/netcommunity/irb

All departments and programs in which honors are granted will offer two courses in research/independent work (numbered 491/491W, 492/492W) of at least four semester hours credit each. Candidates for honors must complete two semesters of research/independent work.

Expected Learning Outcomes for Honors in the Department of Modern Languages

Students are expected to demonstrate:

- An advanced level of reading, writing, and speaking in the target language.
- Ability to formulate a research question in the form of a thesis.
- Ability to create an outline for the entire project.
- Ability to apply a specific and systematic scholarly approach to the research question.
- Ability to use relevant primary and secondary sources in an appropriate way.
- Ability to integrate scholarly sources in the interpretation or analysis of their thesis.
- Ability to discuss in depth and integrate cohesively theoretical concepts or approaches to the topic researched.
- Ability to draw logical and significant conclusions.
- Ability to formally present their research project to our academic community.

Evaluation of Honors Project

Each of the 491 and 492W courses requires a visible written product and an oral presentation done at the Department of Modern Languages.

491

Visible Product:

1. The visible written product of the 491 course will consist of 10-15 pages (formatted according to guidelines stated below) of body content presented to the Honors faculty adviser.

2. One week prior to their oral presentation the Honors student will submit to the Honors Committee an outline and the list of works cited.

Oral Presentation:

Students will present the results of their research by reading a 5-6 page paper. Students will then answer questions from the Honors Committee.

The Honors student will then leave the room for a few minutes and the Honors Committee will discuss whether to allow for the continuation of the Honors project.

The student will be called back in and will be notified of the Honors Committee's evaluation as follows:

Satisfactory: Honors project fitted for continuation.

Unsatisfactory: Honors project not fitted for continuation. In this case, 491 will not fulfill the capstone 440W requirement.

The Honors Committee will explain to the Honors student the reasons for its evaluation; it can also make recommendations to the student about how to improve the project.

The chair of the Department of Modern Languages will communicate in writing the decision adopted by the Honors Committee. Copies of this official evaluation will go to the student, the Honors faculty adviser, and the Department of Modern Languages.

An Unsatisfactory evaluation does not imply a failing grade in the 491 course. The faculty project adviser, based on the evaluation of the written product, the oral presentation, and the overall performance of the student during the semester, decides the final grade for 491; all evaluation guidelines must be included in the official syllabus of the 491 course.

492W

Visible Product:

The visible written product of the 492 course will consist of 35-40 pages (formatted according to guidelines stated below) of body content presented to the Honors faculty adviser.

Oral Presentation:

Students will present the results of their research by reading a 7-9 page paper. Students will then answer questions from the Honors Committee.

Student will then leave the room and the Honors Committee will deliberate.

The student will be called back in and will be notified of the Honors Committee's decision:

> Honors Granted: equivalent of A

> Honors not Granted: grade granted by faculty adviser (minimum C-). If Honors is not granted, student's work is nonetheless substituted for the 440W capstone requirement.

Honors Papers-Organization, Length, and Submission

All Honors papers should adhere to the College's Honors Paper Formatting Guidelines.

All Honors papers in the Department of Modern Languages should additionally adhere to the following organization and formatting:

1. Signature Page
2. Title Page
3. Abstract
4. Acknowledgements
5. Table of Contents
6. Introduction
7. Chapters
8. Endnotes

9. Works Cited

Each of these sections will start in a new page. Students must familiarize themselves with their own text processing program to create the section headers and automatic pagination.

All honors papers will have this **format**:

a) Font type and size: Times New York, 12.

b) Double-spaced with no extra space between paragraphs.

c) All margins set at 1".

d) Header and Footer set at 0.5".

e) Page number centered in footer.

f) Page 1 starts in "Introduction" section.

All Honors papers will be between 35 and 40 pages long, excluding the Table of Contents, Acknowledgements, End Notes, and Works Cited.

Approved Honors papers will be submitted electronically to the Digital Commons at Ursinus College. Follow submission instructions.

Interdepartmental Honors

The Department of Modern Languages helps our Ursinus College students to conduct research projects that effectively integrate different scholarly areas and perspectives.

Interdepartmental Honors Registration

Students eligible to pursue Interdepartmental Honors register in the IDS-491 and IDS-492W sequence.

The Interdepartmental Honors project is usually based in two areas of study. As in the case of the Honors and Distinguished Honors programs, French, German, and Spanish are considered separate areas of study within the Department of Modern Languages and, therefore, can be integrated in an Interdepartmental Honors project. Thus, not only can be there be an Interdepartmental Honors project in French, German, or Spanish and another academic field, such as History, Sociology, or International Relations, but also in French and Spanish, German and French, or of any other two combined foreign languages.

Please note that the Interdepartmental Honors program fulfills the capstone requirement in both departments but does *not* confer two different Honors degrees--i.e., "Honors in Spanish" and "Honors in History"--but *one* degree in two areas, for example, "Honors in Spanish & History" or "Honors in German & Politics".

Guidelines for Interdepartmental Honors in the Department of Modern Languages

Interdepartmental Honors oftentimes involve the application of research methodologies and academic writing styles specific to the inquiries and disciplines outside the traditional studies in modern language literatures and cultures.

For Interdepartmental Honors project written in English, students must also produce a visible product and an oral presentation in the target language.

All Interdepartmental Honors projects in modern languages will undergo the same evaluation process as stated above for Honors in the Department of Modern Languages with the following exceptions:

- For IDS-491, same written product and presentation requirements apply as in regular honors in the Department of Modern Languages. However, visible product can be handed in in English.

- For IDS-492W, in addition to the project written in English, students will include the project's introduction and conclusion in the target language.

- The oral presentation for an Interdepartmental Honors will follow the guidelines laid out for honors in the Department of Modern Languages.

Working on the Honors Projects

Thesis Statement and Outline

All Honors projects must have a working thesis that is clearly stated at the beginning of the paper. This working thesis may change during the writing of the paper as new information arises and connections are formed.

This is how the *MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers* defines the thesis statement: "a single sentence that formulates both your statement and your point of view. In this sense, the thesis statement is your answer to the central question or problem you have raised" (42).

In addition to a thesis statement, students will create an outline of their project. This outline represents the structure or general organization of the project. All parts of the outline must relate to the thesis statement.

The manner by which these parts are integrated to the paper is the argumentation of the ideas related to the main thesis statement. Argumentation holds these pieces together through logical connections as supported by the discussion and interpretation of primary and secondary sources.

It is, therefore, crucial that students revise the original thesis statement as they incorporate new sources and advance their writing. Theses affect writing and organization, and vice versa. Therefore, revising the thesis and the outline is inseparable from the process of writing and researching.

Method and Theory

Students have to clearly establish the way they intend to conduct their research. There are two main components relevant to this task: the method and the critical theory or critical apparatus utilized.

All areas of knowledge have a method of investigating a particular question or project. Both the nature of the researched question and the author's position influence the type of approach to the project.

Theory and the critical apparatus produced on a particular topic help the project to gain depth and intellectual rigor. Terminology and concepts differ from discipline to discipline; students should be aware of the potential implications of this in their research.

Working closely with faculty from the beginning is the most effective way to avoid frustration and shortcomings later.

Writing Process

All Honors papers will adhere to the *MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers* (currently, the 7th edition), which must be consulted by Honors students before meeting their faculty adviser for the first time in 491.

Writing is a continuous process, not a phase in the Honors project. For example, it involves note taking, analysis, critical thinking, summarization and commentary of primary and secondary sources, drafting and redrafting of the main paper, creation of the bibliography.

Unless otherwise decided, the visible product will be written in the target language. Punctuation will follow the norms of the target language.

All students will submit grammatically polished drafts to their faculty advisers; extensive and detailed review of the target language must be done before any draft is sent to the faculty adviser.

Working with Bibliography

Creating a bibliography is one of the first steps students must take. As the paper itself, the bibliography is a working document which will evolve.

Students should make an appointment with a Myrin librarian at the Reference Desk in order to perfect their research skills and have a realistic understanding of the availability and possibilities of secondary sources; this initial step can save much time later.

Students should document all bibliographical entries following the MLA style and keep notes and quotes for future inclusion and discussion in their project.

The final paper will only include *cited* works (not *consulted* works), that is, primary and secondary sources referred to or cited in the paper.

Always use parenthetical documentation when possible.

Endnotes or footnotes should not be used to display a bibliography entry. See section 6.5 of the *MLA Style* for information on how to use content and notes.

Useful Documents

The following documents can be found on the [Honors Projects](#) website:

- Honors Pre-registration Form (due December 15)
- Guidelines for Formatting Honors Papers
- Instructions for Submitting Honors Papers to the Digital Commons