

ANTHROPOLOGY HONORS PROGRAM GUIDELINES

An excerpt from the Anthropology majors handbook

Eligibility, Time Schedule, and Format:

Eligibility

Honors in Anthropology involves both demonstration of acquired knowledge (based in part on GPA) and a report on an original research project. University Latin Honors requirements are: 3.5 for “Cum laude;” 3.65 for “Magna cum laude;” and 3.8 for “Summa cum laude.” The student is required to obtain these GPA levels both overall and in Anthropology. Honors students planning to graduate in May take 4951 in the fall and 4961 in the spring of their senior year. Your thesis advisor is responsible for assigning a grade. Students are expected to meet with their advisors frequently and to have written a substantial portion of the thesis by the end of the fall semester.

If you are interested in working for Latin Honors you need to select a departmental professor willing to sponsor your honors project. This may be as early as the sophomore year, but ideally will be during the junior year. The first semester of the senior year is late to begin planning an honors thesis.

You should fill out the accompanying Anthropology Honors Program registration form and return it to the Honors Coordinator. Specific questions about eligibility or requirements should be addressed to the department Honors Coordinator (Professor Gayle Fritz, McMillan Hall Room 126, extension 5-8588).

Time Schedule

Once you and your sponsoring faculty advisor have agreed upon a thesis topic, you must inform the Departmental Honors Coordinator. Two courses, Anthropology 4951 and Anthropology 4961, are available to allow you to secure appropriate credit for the extra research involved in the honors thesis.

For students graduating in May: The Honors Coordinator must be informed in January of the thesis title and your intention to defend the thesis that semester in order to properly register you as an honors candidate with the University. Most advisors ask for a near-final draft in mid-February in order to read it carefully, suggest revisions, and give the student time to make necessary changes before early March, when the other committee members must receive their copies. A defensible draft of the thesis must be completed no later than March 20, the Monday after Spring Break.

The honors thesis is evaluated by a three-member examining committee whose members are selected by the sponsoring advisor in consultation with the student and the Honors Coordinator. This three-member committee decides on the quality, suggests revisions, and makes its recommendations to the department no later than March 27 on the level of Honors to be awarded. The final copy, with all changes required by the committee, is due April 21. For students graduating in December: please see the Honors Coordinator for time schedule.

Thesis Format and Length

As a rough guide, honors theses typically consist of about 60 pages of text. In consultation with his or her thesis advisor, each student should choose a professional stylistic format and follow standard bibliographic and citation techniques appropriate for the relevant subdiscipline. The published style guide of a lead journal such as *American Anthropologist* (for cultural), *American Antiquity* (for archaeology), or *American Journal of Physical Anthropology* can provide necessary details. The student is required to supply the department with a final copy of the thesis to be filed in the anthropology library. This copy must be spiral bound with a clear plastic cover. It is customary to provide the thesis advisor (and often committee members) with final copies.

Advantages and Disadvantages:

Advantages

New graduate students often discover on reaching graduate school that there is a considerable gap between what they have learned about a subject from books, and actually formulating and carrying out original research in the field. Making this transition is one of the most important challenges that they face as a graduate student. Doing an honors thesis gives you the chance to take this step as an undergraduate through participating in original research in an area in which you are especially interested. There are also several practical benefits to doing an honors thesis:

In the process you learn how to frame a research question, develop methods and analytical techniques with which to address it, and to discuss your results in the context of relevant anthropological literature. In doing so you work closely with one or several faculty members.

- 1) If you are potentially interested in going on to graduate school, this experience helps you to evaluate whether or not you are really interested in research.
- 2) This experience also enables faculty members to get to know you well, and to make any recommendations that they may write much more substantive.
- 3) You receive university recognition for this work in the form of university Latin Honors.
- 4) Sometimes undergraduate honors research can be published.

Disadvantages

Doing an honors thesis is very demanding academically and takes a great deal of time and effort. Students find that doing the research not only takes time, but writing and even the mechanics of making proper citations, putting together extensive bibliographies, and creating and referencing figures and tables is much more time consuming than they had ever imagined. Occasionally, students are unable to complete the thesis in time for the spring deadline. As the program guidelines suggest, it is best to start honors research in your junior year.

There are two other factors you should consider when weighing the advantages and disadvantages of honors research:

- 1) Although faculty will help you as much as they can, you will have to learn to work independently more than you may be used to.

2) Since the final results of your work towards an honors thesis are not known until after applications for graduate school are due, the fact that you are doing an honors thesis may not help with those applications.

Mechanics:

Choosing a Topic: It is important to work in an area in which you are especially interested, and with which you have a solid academic groundwork, i.e., on which you have completed upper level coursework, written a paper, or done some preliminary research in class. Before agreeing to supervise an honors thesis, your faculty advisor will generally expect you to have taken upper level courses that relate to your topic. Past honors theses are on file and can be accessed through the Anthropology office. These are useful for ideas about topics, as well as for many aspects of working on a thesis, such as methods, length, and format. You will need to discuss potential thesis topics and the data that may be available to address them with faculty before they agree to advise an honors thesis.

Research Method: Methods will vary greatly with subject, and should be discussed in detail with your advisor. Methods classes in the relevant subdiscipline of anthropology will be helpful.

Human Subject/Studies Approval: Students conducting research that involves interviewing or surveying people must obtain approval from the Hilltop Human Studies Committee (HHSC) before beginning research. Copies of the guidelines are available online at <http://hhsc.wustl.edu>. You should consult with your advisor about making this application, and allow some time for the procedure. The Hilltop Human Studies Committee meets once a month to review applications. See the Anthropology Department guidelines on pages 18-19.

Access to Laboratory Facilities: Those of you who are doing laboratory-based theses will need to obtain special permission for extra access hours to laboratory facilities. You will need to discuss this with your advisor and other professors ahead of time.

Expenses: You should consider applying for research funds from Sigma Xi. Short proposals are required and you should discuss these with your advisor. The deadlines for proposals are in November each year. Forms are available in the Anthropology office. You should also bear in mind that you get academic credit for doing honors research, but do not have normal expenses such as the purchase of textbooks or laboratory fees. You should save this money toward research expenses such as photocopying.

**TIMETABLE SUMMARY FOR SENIOR HONORS THESES
2005-2006**

Sept. 2005	Students must be clear about thesis topics and have advisors willing to work with them. The form entitled "Anthropology Honors Program" should be turned in to Professor Fritz by Sept. 14 from each student conducting thesis work. Use the form on the next page or get a copy from Professor Fritz.
Sept. 2005- mid-Feb. 2006	Research and writing of the thesis. Given the diversity of possible research topics, some students might be able to complete the research in the fall semester and some might need the winter break for conducting fieldwork or completing analysis. In cases where the research will not be completed until the beginning of spring semester, there are still parts of the thesis, such as the literature review and background that can be written in the fall semester. Students should have frequent meetings with their thesis advisors throughout this period.
Mon., Sept. 26, 5:30 P.M.	(Place TBA). First general progress meeting for all Anthropology Majors writing Honors theses.
Mon., Nov. 7, 5:30 P.M.	(Place TBA). Second general progress meeting for thesis writers.
Nov. 21 (Mon. before Thanksgiving)	Agreement form with detailed outline or in-depth description of thesis signed by students and their 3-person committees, and turned in to Professor Fritz.
Mon., Jan 30, 2006	Third general progress meeting for all students writing theses to share information and ask general questions.
Early Feb. 2006	List of Honors students given to College Office (for purposes of determining GPAs).
Mid-Feb. 2006	Given the firm College Office deadlines over which we have no control, students are advised to finish and turn in to their advisor by mid-February a near-final draft of the thesis. This gives the advisor at least one week to read the thesis and to return it with suggested revisions. Major revisions could be necessary. Then the student has time to make changes and complete the thesis before a defensible draft is given to all three committee members no later than March 20.
March 20, 2006	(by end of Spring Break). A defensible draft of the thesis must be completed, with copies given to all three committee members.
On or before March 27, 2006	Committee members agree upon the level of Honors to recommend for each student. This is the College Office deadline for Departments to recommend levels of honors.
April 21, 2006	Final revisions due. Spiral-bound copy given to Professor Fritz for Anthropology Library. It is customary for copies also to be given to the thesis advisor and the two other committee members.

Department of Anthropology
Human Subjects/Studies Research for Student Investigators
especially during semester abroad research projects

- All students, faculty, and staff carrying out research involving interactions with human communities or individuals must go through the Human Subjects/Studies Review process, which is designed to protect research participants from risk.
- You must have HHSC approval in before recruiting any research participants or beginning your observations.
- Guidelines and downloadable forms for Washington University students are available on the Hilltop Human Studies Committee (HHSC) website at <http://hhsc.wustl.edu>.
- Most ethnographic research will be eligible to apply for “Exempt status” because the standard methodology for such research is usually participant observation of cultural practices or events. Projects that are Exempt involve observations, interviews, and/or surveys of public behavior and practices where any disclosure would not place subjects “at risk of criminal or civil liability or be damaging to the subjects’ financial standing, employability, or reputation.” (45 CFR 46.101) Exempt status may only be granted by the HHSC.
- If minors (under age 18) will be involved in any interviews, or if the individuals involved in your research are *both* identifiable *and* at possible risk to reputation or otherwise potentially at risk, you should use the Expedited review application instead of the Exempt application.
- Student, faculty, and staff researchers are required to complete an online education module to learn more about their responsibilities as human subject investigators and the rights of research participants.
 - Students will need a User ID number to access the education module. Contact Elaine Beffa in the Anthropology Department at 935-5346 to obtain your User ID and password.
 - Login to the online education program at: <https://aisinfo.wustl.edu/ra.html>
 - It may take up to 3-4 hours to complete the education requirement.
 - Your project will not be approved until all members of the project team have completed the mandatory education.
- When completing the application, you should be designated as the Project Director.
- Both the department chairperson and your department faculty or thesis advisor must sign the cover sheet of your HHSC application.
- Most anthropological fieldwork involves oral consent. In such cases, the participants are free to respond or not to the researcher’s questions, to tell the truth or otherwise, and to determine the level and nature of their interaction with the researcher. Participation is voluntary; participants maintain the freedom to disengage from research activities at any time. Oral consent is considered very appropriate for ethnographic research.
- The HHSC application requires a brief description of the research proposed, a list of the questions (or at least the topics) that will be covered in group or individual interviews, and a copy of surveys that may be used. Knowledge of local regulations and research contexts is required.

(rev 7/05)

A sample research description with open-ended interview questions is provided to assist you.

Sample Proposal for Ethnographic Research

Provided by an Anthropology Graduate Student

**If you have any questions about the HHSC application process,
contact their office at hhsc@msnotes.wustl.edu.**

Project Description for pre-doctoral funded research:

I am going to two sites in Andean Argentina (Andalgal and Esquel) to try to understand the relationships between the cultural, social, economic, and political life in these communities and the processes of multinational mining. The two sites are very different, as Andalgal has been connected to the biggest mining project in Argentina for the last seven years, while Esquel citizens have successfully mobilized politically (for the time being) to prevent a new project from opening in their region. I will include below a generalized list of questions I might ask, but as the situations vary greatly and I do not know what I will find exactly until I get there, I cannot provide anything more specific.

During my stay in Argentina at these two sites, I will be seeking both information and data. Through intentioned interactions, informal conversations, and public observation, I hope to get a general snapshot of life in these communities as well as background information on their histories, especially the recent history pertaining to interactions with mining corporations. Through this process of observation and participation, I will be able to assess the validity and feasibility of these sites and the question in general. With this information, I hope to generate a more specific research question for my dissertation project.

During these intentioned interactions, individuals will be informed of my identity, research interests and general purpose, and the topic(s) I hope to discuss with them, most likely involving a general description of their community. Questions guiding these interactions would be very open-ended but eventually could lead to more specific questions in any of the areas to be covered.

List of possible open-ended interview questions:

- 1.) What is life like in this community?
- 2.) Tell me about the local history of your community.
- 3.) What do people here say about mining?
- 4.) What are the problems people face in this community?
- 5.) What kinds of local organizations are there? What do they do?
- 6.) How do local leaders interact with mining companies and their representatives?
- 7.) How does this community relate to the rest of Argentina?
- 8.) What generates conflict here?
- 9.) How do people make a living in this community?
- 10.) What are the most well known forms of local identity?