

Germanic Studies Honors Program Guidelines

Who Should Write an Honors Thesis?

An honors thesis is for a student who has demonstrated outstanding scholarly promise in the Germanic Studies Department and who is interested in further developing expertise in a content area. The minimum grade point average for applying for honors is 3.5 in Germanic and 3.3 overall. Students who would like to write an honors thesis should identify their area of interest, preferably based on coursework in the department, and collaborate with a faculty advisor to shape an appropriate thesis topic. The student should expect to develop the topic using original research or source material, sound methodological principles, analytical and interpretive writing, additional primary and secondary evidence, and background knowledge from the Germanic Studies Department curriculum. Empirical research should adhere to standard protocols for scientific research in the field. Alternative projects (e.g., film, web) of comparable scope will be considered on an individual basis by the DUS.

Benefits of Writing an Honors Thesis

- Gain an opportunity to explore in depth a topic of personal and scholarly interest.
- Work closely, one-on-one, with a faculty specialist.
- Create a scholarly work that could be used as a springboard into the postgraduate level.
- Gain the experience of presenting work in an academic forum.

Finding a Faculty Advisor

Identifying the faculty advisor is among the most critical tasks for writing an honors thesis. This should be done junior year, preferably on the basis of work completed in an upper level Germanic Studies class or otherwise in consultation with the DUS. If a student is studying abroad during junior year, he or she should contact potential advisors (or the DUS) by email.

G399 and G499 (Honors Tutorial and Thesis)

A student writes a thesis over two semesters. The student enrolls in G399 (1-3 credits) for developing the topic, writing an abstract, collecting a bibliography, and outlining a plan for completion. The student enrolls in G499 the following semester to complete work on and publicly present the thesis. Enrolling in G399 or G499 needs the approval of the DUS.

Timeline

Normally a student decides to write an honors thesis in junior year. If a student is studying abroad during junior year, and decides to write an honors thesis while overseas, we strongly encourage the student to get in touch by email with a faculty member who is familiar with his or her work, in order to make advance arrangements for writing the thesis upon return. The normal completion deadline for an honors thesis will be six weeks before the date of graduation.

Thesis Scope

An honors thesis can be written in one of the Germanic languages covered in the department curriculum or in English. It should be substantially based either on original research or on primary source material in a Germanic language (other than English) and should address a theme relevant to Germanic language and culture broadly understood. A thesis written in a Germanic language (other than English) should in general be between 25 and 35 pages long. An English-language thesis should be between 30 and 40 pages. The format will adhere to the current standard guidelines for academic writing in the field (e.g., MLA, APA, or LSA guidelines). Innovative projects will be considered in consultation with the DUS.

Thesis Colloquium

A thesis will be presented in a one-hour colloquium, open to the public and advertised to all German majors, with the advisor and one additional thesis reader in attendance. The faculty advisor, with the DUS, will help find a second thesis reader, who will read the thesis, and following the colloquium, supply a grade. The final grade will be an average of the advisor and reader's grades.

Co-Honors for Joint Majors

If a student is a joint major it is possible to write an honors theses for two departments, depending on the policies of the cooperating department. The exact arrangements must be worked out individually with the DUS and the cooperating department.