

# Millsaps College



## Honors Program Information

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2010-2011

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# I. Purpose of the Honors Program

The Honors Program at Millsaps College offers students the opportunity to pursue original work under the mentorship of a faculty advisor. It integrates past coursework with rigorous independent inquiry which leads to more advanced scholarship.

The form of the Honors thesis varies broadly. It may be a theoretical analysis, empirical study, musical composition, body of art work, business plan or another form which allows the student to assert and defend an original idea. The thesis project is similar to a master's project but at a level appropriate for the Millsaps undergraduate student. The thesis is typically in the student's major but may be in another field if the student has sufficient prior coursework or other academic experience. The thesis is written under the supervision of a faculty committee consisting of an advisor, a second reader, and a member of the Honors Committee. The Honors thesis project must be independent of research performed for another Millsaps requirement such as a senior research project.

The Millsaps Honors Program affords excellent preparation for students planning to continue graduate study or corporate research. Of equal or greater importance, however, is the personal satisfaction and academic maturity derived from the intellectually challenging journey. Students successfully completing the Honors Program will be recognized at graduation with an Honors hood, and the designation of Honors is included on the student's official transcript.

The current Honors Program Director is Dr. Holly M. Sypniewski.

## II. Program Requirements

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In the fall of their junior year, students with a GPA of at least 3.3 are invited by the Honors Program Director to participate in the Honors Program. Students must also have demonstrated writing proficiency on their writing portfolio to be eligible.

Eligible students must apply to the program by submitting a written thesis proposal that outlines a question, a method of inquiry, and a committee of advisors who approve the research project. At least one of the committee members must teach in the area in which the student seeks Honors. Please see “Steps to Completion” for suggestions on selecting a thesis committee and the guidelines of the research project proposal.

The Honors program is an eight-credit experience that takes place over three semesters. In the spring of the junior year, students register for Honors I, an Honors research course with their thesis advisors. In the summer, students complete research and write a first draft of the thesis. In the fall of the senior year, all students register for Honors II, a second research course with their advisors. Students complete, revise and defend theses in the fall semester. In the spring of the senior year, students format their theses, deposit the final copy in the library, and present their research publically during the Honors Conference. See “Timeline and Deadlines” for specific details.

# III. Steps to Completion

## 1. Attend Orientation Sessions for Honors Program (Fall, junior year)

Students interested in the Honors Program must attend an orientation session held in the fall semester of their junior year. Before this meeting, students should review the Honors Program guidelines on-line and in the program booklet. They should also read the description of Honors in the appropriate major. The Honors Director will provide students with additional information about the Honors Program, serve as a resource for contacting potential advisors, and provide necessary administrative forms.

## 2. Select an Advisor and a Thesis Topic (Fall, junior year)

Perhaps the most important step in the thesis project is selecting an advisor and defining the thesis topic. Because mentorship is a crucial part of the Honors experience, students should choose their advisor carefully, considering both the faculty member's area of expertise and the potential for a close working relationship. Although it is not typical, a student may choose to have two thesis advisors when the project is clearly interdisciplinary and the expertise of two disciplines is vital to the project's completion.

The thesis topic is usually within the student's major but may be in another area if the student has sufficient background prior to the thesis work. The topic should be broad enough to require a spring semester of research during the junior year, a summer of writing, and several weeks of revision in the fall of the senior year. It should not be so broad as to merit the time required of a Ph.D. dissertation. Students may find it helpful to look through previous theses which are available in the archives room of the Wilson Library. The student and advisor work together to narrow the thesis topic down to a manageable set of issues.

## 3. The Honors Project Proposal (Fall, junior year)

The project proposal explains the topic and focus of the thesis project. It is completed by the student and the advisor and is due to the Honors Program Director by two weeks prior to pre-registration for spring courses. All submissions must be electronic. While some portions of the proposal are completed by the student and some by the advisor, it is imperative that the two meet to discuss all areas of the proposal before the student prepares it. The Honors Committee will read and evaluate all proposals. Revisions may be requested for proposals judged insufficient or unclear.

The proposal **MUST** be typed and **MUST** include the following:

**To Be Completed by the Student:**

**A. General information:** Title of the project and advisor's name  
Student's name, e-mail address, campus box number and telephone number

**B. Project description:**

This should be as detailed as possible but at a minimum must answer the following:

1. What is your topic question?
2. What methods of research will you use to answer this question?
3. What courses have you already taken that will support your research? What other academic experiences have you had to support your research?

**C. Specific plan for completing project, including answers to the these questions:**

1. What specific tasks must you complete in order to write this thesis? What is general your timeline for the project?
2. Which specific tasks will you have completed before spring break?
3. Which specific tasks will you have completed before the end of spring semester?
4. When are your meetings with your advisor for the spring term and when possible, the summer?
5. What specific tasks will be completed over the summer? Please list all other summer commitments you will have besides the thesis. (E.g. work, summer school, travel)

**D. The name and the department of the second reader:**

The second reader should be a full-time member of the Millsaps faculty unless an outside professional is approved. The student should explain briefly how the second reader's expertise will benefit the project. The second reader must be asked in advance and agree to serve in this capacity.

**To Be Completed by the Advisor:**

**E. Basis of evaluation:** The advisor will specify methods and criteria of evaluation, as in any directed study agreement. Please answer the following questions:

1. What evidence of progress must the student show by the spring assessment meeting?
2. What methods will you use to assess the student's work?
3. What practices will you use to support the student's research and writing? (How frequently will you meet with the student? What kinds of written work will the student submit to you? How often?)
4. How will the completion of each task weigh in the grade for Honors-I in the spring semester? Please specify.
5. In the event that the honors thesis is not completed, how will the student's work be credited?

## **F. Description of the advisor's role:**

How do you see your role in guiding the student's work?

**Both the student and the advisor must sign and date the proposal document.**

### **4. Thesis Research and Progress Assessment Meeting (Spring, junior year)**

During the spring of the junior year, students research their thesis projects under the direction of the thesis advisor while enrolled in Honors I.

By the Monday following spring break, each student must present written evidence of progress to all members of their thesis committees. Failure to complete this report on time could result in termination of the Honors project. The progress report must contain the following information:

- Description of the development of the research question and method of inquiry
- Discussion of what work has been completed
- Discussion of the work yet to be completed and a time frame for completion
- A bibliography and discussion of how these sources support the research project.

Following spring break, the thesis committee meets with the student to assess the student's progress and to address any problems. The committee judges whether adequate progress has been made for the project to be continued. The advisor is encouraged to participate fully and actively in the discussion. Within two weeks of the meeting, the Honors committee member must submit a written assessment to the director of the Honors Program, the student and all thesis committee members.

### **5. Writing the Thesis (Summer)**

It is strongly recommended that the student use the summer to write the thesis. The thesis should be written in the style appropriate to the discipline. Many students find it helpful to model the paper on a particular journal format. See the "Overview of Honors by Major" for more style and format guidelines. The student and advisor should discuss writing style before significant writing has begun.

Generally speaking, the thesis should include a table of contents, a thesis body, accompanying material (graphs, tables, etc.), and a bibliography. While the primary audience is professionals in the discipline, keep in mind that others not as familiar with the area will be readers as well (for example, Honors Committee reader, other students, etc.) As a result, even though it is not standard in academic journals, the paper should include a glossary to explain any terms or procedures not easily understood by the lay reader.

## **6. Thesis Completion and Defense (Fall, senior year)**

A substantial draft of the thesis should be completed and submitted to the committee no later than the end of the first week of the fall semester. Students performing field or lab research in the summer may request an extension until October 1 by writing to the Honors Director and all members of the thesis committee. The defense draft of the thesis, signed by the advisor, must be given to all thesis committee members by the Friday prior to fall break. Students who have received formal extensions may turn in the defense draft by Nov. 5. The members of the thesis committee inform the Honors Committee member if there are serious problems. If the thesis is fatally flawed, then the student will not be allowed to proceed with the defense.

The thesis defense is a 45-minute conversation between the student and the thesis committee about the thesis topic. Held in the weeks between fall break and Thanksgiving break of the senior year, the thesis defense provides an opportunity for students to present their work to a group of knowledgeable and interested researchers in the field. Typically students give a short (roughly 15 minute) presentation of the thesis followed by questions from the thesis committee.

Students are expected to incorporate any necessary changes into the final version of the thesis which is due in February of the senior year.

## **7. Honors Conference (Spring, senior year)**

The Honors Program hosts an Honors Conference in the spring semester of the senior year. Honors students are required to participate in the conference and present their research before an audience of peers, the campus community and family and friends. The conference is the capstone experience of the Honors Program.

### **Final Words**

**Please be aware that each thesis committee evaluates projects at several stages which may result in the termination of an Honors project:**

1. At the Spring Assessment meeting: If the spring semester research did not provide an adequate basis for moving forward with the project, the project may be terminated and the Honors-I course will be converted to an independent study.
2. At the beginning of the fall semester: If the student did not complete sufficient research and writing during the summer, he or she will not be permitted to enroll in Honors-II during the fall.
3. During the fall semester: If the work did not provide an adequate basis for defending the project in the fall semester, the project will be terminated and the Honors-II course will be converted to an independent study.

## IV. Overview of Honors by Major

**Accounting:** Contact faculty members in Else School of Management directly.

**Art – Art History:** An honors thesis in art history should have a clear, central argument that is well supported by primary evidence derived from substantial analysis of art works and/or theory. The argument should be set within a theoretical framework, when possible. Theses in art history are usually in the range of 50-75 pages, divided into appropriate sections or chapters. MLA format is the norm in art history, with parenthetical citations (and supplementary footnotes for additional content, if necessary), and a Works Cited section that is at least 2-3 pages. Illustrations should be attached at the back, with references to figure numbers in the text.

**Art – Studio:** An honors thesis in studio art consists first and foremost of the art work itself, rather than the supporting written thesis. When considering the vast differences in scale, process and concept, it becomes very difficult to make a concise statement about what is a sufficient amount of art work for an honor's project. However, using the Lewis Art Gallery as the gauge, an honors student's exhibition should comprise approximately one half of the gallery, with additional works that have been edited out of the show as they have been deemed less successful attempts towards building a cohesive body of work. Honors students are expected to exhibit their work in the Lewis Art Gallery or another appropriate space on campus, and they are also expected to present a gallery talk about their work. Additionally, the student will write a written thesis which has a clear, central argument that is well supported by primary evidence derived from substantial analysis of art works and/or theory. The argument should be set within a theoretical framework, when possible. Theses in studio art should be in the range of 15 – 20 pages, because the major component of the thesis is the art work itself. MLA format is the norm in studio art, with parenthetical citations (and supplementary footnotes for additional content, if necessary), and a Works Cited section that is at least a full page in length. Illustrations of both the student's work and their artistic references' artwork should be attached at the back, with references to figure numbers in the text.

**Biology:** In the Biology Department, an honors thesis takes the form of a research report similar in format to an article in a scientific journal. The style, length, and format will depend on the nature of the research and is best determined in consultation with the thesis advisor. In all cases, however, the thesis should include an extensive review of the literature pertinent to the study. It should include a thorough description of the methods and results and a thoughtful discussion interpreting the results and evaluating their significance and implications.

**Business Administration:** Contact faculty members in Else School of Management directly.

**Chemistry and Biochemistry:** The honors research topic in Chemistry or Biochemistry is chosen with the help of the faculty mentor who can identify and suggest feasible projects. The honors project is often a continuation of ongoing research by the student with the faculty mentor, but new projects can also be started. The typical Honors project will involve original research in experimental (lab based), theoretical (computer-assisted), or educational chemistry.

Typical Timeline: The Junior Spring semester is used to become familiar with background literature and laboratory procedures. Some basic experiments might be performed. Almost all of the experimental work is done during the summer months. The write-up begins during the summer months (usually involving the introduction and methods sections) and is usually completed later in the fall term. Often extra experimental details are collected during the first few months of the fall semester.

Thesis: The typical thesis contains between 30-60 pages of content including an introduction, results (graphs, reaction schemes, figures), discussion of experimental work, and bibliography. The data collected represents a significant part of the body of the thesis and is very time-intensive and requires a significant commitment on behalf of the student.

Presentations: Chemistry/Biochemistry Honors students work closely with their faculty mentors. Most of these students will present their work at local, regional, or national meetings and several will be co-authors with their faculty mentors on peer-reviewed publications.

**Classical Studies:** An honors project in Classical Studies consists of original research, analysis, and argument based on primary sources including Greek or Latin texts, ancient art or architecture, or other forms of material culture. Students must use disciplinary print and electronic research databases to situate their research in appropriate scholarly and historical contexts. Students are also expected to identify and apply critical theories relevant to the sub-field of inquiry. Students writing philological theses must have sufficient reading fluency in Ancient Greek or Latin. Honors theses in Classical Studies are typically 50-75 pages. They should follow the *Chicago Manual of Style*.

**Communications:** The honors thesis in Communications will situate original research of a communicative phenomenon within a relevant theoretical paradigm. There are a number of methods available, though qualitative, interpretive methods are the primary methodological choices. The work should be framed theoretically and interpreted through that frame. In this way, the honors thesis is notably different from in-depth journalistic writing, which focuses on description alone and not theoretical interpretation. There is not a set length requirement for the thesis, but the expectation is that the candidate will offer a final product that approaches the theoretical and methodological standards of peer-review communications journals.

**Computer Science and Computer Information Systems (CIS):** An Honors Project in Computer Science (and in Computer Science with a Concentration in CIS) consists primarily of the implementation of a computer project to solve a given problem. Service-learning projects (which result in the delivery of a complete project to a non-profit or school-related organization) are highly recommended, but any large project will be considered. Project ideas can come from the student or the faculty mentor. The student will conduct background research on the topic, complete several rounds of design of the project, implement the project, present it at an appropriate forum, and write the Honors thesis, which includes the background research, a discussion of the design process, a full description of the implemented project, an experiential description of the process of completing the project, and appendices which include design documents and a complete users guide. Honors projects in Computer Science are often extended or implemented for a new platform as a Senior Project.

**Economics:** Contact faculty members in Else School of Management directly.

**Education:** An honors thesis in Education involves the pursuit of an empirical question related to teaching, learning or the contexts of education, including educational policy, practice, sociology, or history. Honors students conduct a thorough review of existing research and theoretical literature related to their question, and then design and conduct original laboratory or field-based research in order to provide new insight on their topic. These efforts are synthesized into a thesis paper. Since education is so interdisciplinary, these projects could take a wide range of forms. Style will be APA format.

**English:** Honors Projects directed by members of the English Department come in two kinds, scholarly and creative, though some fall in between, combining both approaches. Scholarly projects typically begin with the student identifying an issue in a text or set of texts that he or she wishes to explore more fully than has been possible in class. In consultation with a member or members of the department, the student articulates a research problem, identifies appropriate secondary sources and undertakes a literature review, working toward the articulation of an original thesis. In a Creative Project, students commonly express the desire to explore a particular literary genre as a writer. Although such projects most often include a scholarly component as well—via background research in theory and practice the genre in question—the focus of the creative thesis will be on the student’s production of a significant work or body of works. In consultation with their mentors, some students blend scholarly and creative work in a more hybrid fashion, their goal being not so much to produce literary criticism or a literary work as to explore both analytical and creative ways of engagement.

**European Studies:** European Studies is interdisciplinary in nature, drawing on a variety of disciplines including Art History, Classical Studies, Economics, English, Geography, Geology, History, Modern Languages, Music, Philosophy, Political Science, Religious Studies, Sociology/Anthropology and Theater. Thus, an honors thesis in European Studies is defined by its focus on a topic that is relevant to Europe. Disciplinary approaches should be determined based on the nature of the topic and student’s area of interest. The thesis should follow the research standards and stylistic conventions of the primary disciplines in which it is written. Students should possess sufficient language ability to conduct research in their area of interest. They are encouraged to conduct research and/or acquire primary materials (such as newspaper articles, recorded music, oral interviews, and campaign/political advertisements) during study abroad.

**French:** An honors thesis in French should have a clear, central argument that is well supported by primary evidence derived from substantial analysis of primary texts. The argument should be set within a theoretical framework and should be situated within the body of scholarship that has been published to date. Theses in French are usually in the range of 40 – 50 pages, divided into appropriate sections or chapters. You must use MLA format with parenthetical citations and you are required to include a Works Cited section of at least 2 – 3 pages.

**Geology:** Honors in Geology typically consists of five components: field research/data acquisition, data or sample analysis, interpretation, writing, and presentation of results at the Annual Meeting of the Mississippi Academy of Science. Project proposals may be originated by the student or a faculty member. Research is chosen that will result in a paper that is formatted and written in a style that would be acceptable for submittal to a peer review journal. This translates into a manuscript that is between 20-25 pages of text followed by figures, tables and appropriate appendices.

**History:** An honors project in history is normally a research project into an historical issue about which there is a potential for some new ground (however small) of knowledge or interpretation can be broken. A review of the relevant existing scholarly literature on the topic will be undertaken at the outset. The Honors paper should have a clear thesis, which the student tests against evidence from primary source material. Completed Honors theses in history usually run in the range of 50 to 60 pages and follow the *Chicago Manual of Style*.

**Latin American Studies:** Latin American Studies (LAS) is interdisciplinary in nature, drawing on such fields as Political Science, History, Literature, Religious Studies, Sociology, Anthropology, Biology, Economics, Business Administration, and the Performing Arts. Hence, an honors thesis in LAS should be grounded in the scholarship of a particular field, while exhibiting an awareness of issues in relevant supporting fields. An LAS thesis should focus on a topic that is relevant to Latin America; topics limited to the Latino experience in the USA are not usually acceptable. The thesis should follow the research standards and stylistic conventions of the primary discipline in which it is written, and it should be roughly 50-60 pages in length. Students should possess sufficient ability in Spanish or Portuguese to include at least some secondary sources from the region, and we encourage the acquisition of primary materials (such as newspaper articles and oral interviews) during study-abroad classes. Finally, in addition to the Honors Conference, students will present their work at the annual LAS Symposium at Birmingham-Southern College.

**Mathematics and Applied Mathematics:** Honors research in Mathematics affords opportunities for students with exceptional mathematical skills to read and research under the guidance of an instructor in a field of special interest which is not included in standard curricular offerings. The student will use deductive reasoning to extend a concept which would naturally arise from an article, a course, or area of mathematical interest to the student. Students must make a significant contribution to the project.

**Music:** An honors thesis in Music may be written with a focus in the disciplines of musicology, theory, or performance practice. Those that are focused on music history or theory are generally expected to be approximately 50-75 pages (not counting illustrations or musical insertions) and must be organized around a clear central argument, supported by primary and secondary sources and close analysis of musical examples. Honors theses in Music that involve creative work such as composition or performance must also be accompanied by a written thesis (generally around 15-20 pages) that analyzes the author's creative work and sets it in context, with substantial analysis of at least one significant comparative piece, musician, and/or composer. For easy reference musical examples should be scanned and inserted into the body of the text. Citations and Bibliography must be formatted according to the *Chicago Manual of Style*, the standard for music history. The text should use footnotes rather than endnotes, where appropriate.

**Neuroscience and Cognitive Studies:** Contact Dr. Melissa Lea, director of the NCS major / minor.

**Philosophy:** An honors thesis in the department of Philosophy consists of original research, analysis, and argument on a topic of the student's choosing that results in a paper ranging from 50-75 pages. The paper must show a good understanding of the primary and secondary materials, show original thought and analysis, be developed over time in consultation with the student's director (typically meeting at least every two weeks to discuss progress and rewrites), and will likely end up being revised 4-5 times before the defense.

**Philosophy – Religious Studies:** See the descriptions for each major.

**Physics:** An honors project in physics will involve being directly involved in the research of a faculty member. The student will be expected to be an active participant and contributor to the scientific work being conducted. In order to have the minimum physics background to actively participate in research, no student will be allowed to commence an honors project in physics without being at least concurrently enrolled in either Applications of Modern Physics or Quantum Mechanics. Additionally the student must have completed Calculus I-III and Differential Equations prior to beginning work on the honors thesis. Other additional background may be required by the thesis advisor depending on the nature of the student's research project. In general, a successful honors thesis in physics will include an overview of the relevant broad arena of the Science, an examination of the literature within the area of the specific research problem being addressed, the results of the particular research undertaken, an interpretation of these results, and an indication of future work in the area that should be pursued. The thesis will be prepared using the LaTeX document markup language. This is the default manner in which nearly all mathematics and physics articles are prepared and will be required of the student. Additionally the thesis will be prepared using the rthesis style file that will be provided that will enforce certain margin and typeface guidelines. It would be expected that a physics honors thesis would exceed 30 pages of text in length (not counting figures or tables) but only in rare circumstances exceed 100 pages.

**Political Science:** Honors theses in Political Science may be theoretical or (more commonly) based on empirical research. In either case, students pose a research question and are paired with the faculty member whose research interests or methods expertise fit most closely with the project. The resulting thesis should move beyond replication of previous research; it may be (and often is) a variation on a theme currently being explored in the discipline.

In political theory, honors projects typically involve analyzing one or more primary and secondary philosophical texts. Theory theses should advance a strong central argument and demonstrate original thinking on the topic at hand. Theory theses go through an extensive drafting process and should represent masters' level command of the analyzed texts. They typically range from 50-75 pages in length. Students who are considering completing a theory honors project should complete the department's Political Theory course during their sophomore year.

Empirical honors theses in Political Science involve either qualitative or quantitative analysis of original data. Honors students with empirical theses complete a review of relevant literature and develop their research question into one or more testable hypotheses in the spring of their junior year. By the end of the spring term, students should have a summer research plan in place. During the summer, students conduct research and analyze data with regular communication with their faculty advisor. The write-up of empirical research should follow the format of a typical journal

article in political science and should range from 30-40 pages in length. Students who are considering completing an empirical honors project are strongly encouraged to complete the department's Research Methods course during their sophomore year or the fall of their junior year. Faculty members may decline to work with students who lack the necessary methods training to properly investigate their research question.

**Psychology:** Honors projects in Psychology typically have 2 main criteria: 1) The student must, in consultation with a faculty mentor, design, conduct, and present a completed research project. The research should be novel or at the very least a variation of a previously reported research finding, and 2) the Level of the project must be Senior or preferable Masters level. Students must use proper research design, do a comprehensive literature search to find what is already known, collect pilot data, modify the study, then test the main hypothesis. The scope of the project must be very narrow in an effort to eliminate extraneous variables that may be responsible for or altering results. Under the guidance of the thesis advisor, students are required to perform appropriate statistical analysis of data. The thesis length ranges from 30 to 60 pages depending on the project's scope.

**Public Management:** An Honors project in public management requires an independent research project which bears upon a topic of importance to public policy and governance. It can focus on what policies are desirable or how policies are best implemented. The project should advance the knowledge and practice of government by analyzing past errors or best practices in public policy or administration. The project should advance our knowledge either by bringing new evidence to bear on old questions or by asking new questions of existing evidence. While there is no quantitative requirement per se, the project uses the evidence that is most convincing to neutral observers, which, in this field will almost inevitably involve the presentation of some quantitative data. The research must be situated in the existing theoretical literature in as much as it must acknowledge past contributions and show how the student's research contributes to that literature. Finally, the research should be in a form accessible to policy makers by using clear and measured language and including recommendations for specific changes in the policy or practice of government.

**Religious Studies:** An Honors thesis in religious studies consists of original research, analysis, and argument on a topic of the student's choosing normally resulting in a paper ranging from 50-75 pages. The paper must show a good understanding of the primary and secondary materials, show original thought and analysis, and be developed over time in consultation with the student's director (with regular meetings to discuss the research, writing, and rewriting).

**Religious Studies-Sociology/Anthropology:** See the descriptions for each major.

**Sociology/Anthropology:** Honor projects in Sociology and Anthropology require students to test their thesis through field research and collection of primary ethnographic, archaeological, or sociological data. As a general rule we discourage library-based thesis topics that rely on secondary sources of information. Field research is usually undertaken overseas during the summer months, though majors presumably could conduct research projects in Jackson completed during the school year. Because most of our Honors students conduct their research over the summer, they typically do not write until school resumes. This means that Sociology-Anthropology majors should be given extra time to write; most in recent years have submitted drafts and defended in December. Most Sociology-Anthropology theses average 75-100 pages in length, or longer.

**Spanish:** An honors thesis in Spanish should have a clear, central argument that is well supported by primary evidence derived from substantial analysis of primary texts. The argument should be set within a theoretical framework and should be situated within the body of scholarship that has been published to date. Theses in Spanish are usually in the range of 40 – 50 pages, divided into appropriate sections or chapters. You must use MLA format with parenthetical citations and you are required to include a Works Cited section of at least 2 – 3 pages.

**Theatre:** The nature of theatre demands an organic approach to the honors research topic. Students can focus on acting, arts management, dramaturgy, ethics and theatre, playwriting, stage management, scenic design, technical theatre, theatre education, theatre and religion, or theatre history. Typically students research, analyze, explain, manage, and carry out some important aspect of a theatrical production. To satisfy the written portion of the honors project, students write a thesis paper. The paper serves as a synthesis of the project, and includes theatrical references, a works cited page, in-text citations and properly labeled images of both the student's work and the work of any artist that the student references. The required length of the thesis paper depends on the project focus and is best determined in consultation with the thesis advisor.

# V. Support Mechanisms

## 1. The Thesis Committee

A student's thesis committee consists of the thesis advisor, a second reader, and an Honors Committee reader appointed by the Honors Program Director. The Honors Program Director will serve as this reader on some but not all thesis committees. All thesis committee members must be full-time Millsaps faculty, unless an outside professional is approved as a second reader.

## 2. The Thesis Project Advisor

The thesis project will be conducted under the supervision of an advisor/ mentor selected by the student. The student and the thesis advisor should meet regularly (at least once a month) from the time they agree to undertake the project until its completion. Greater interaction between the student and the mentor will lead to a better product and more rewarding experience.

The advisor helps the student refine and focus the student's ideas into a feasible project and develops a timetable for completing the thesis by the deadlines set. The advisor assesses the student's work at several stages, reads and gives detailed feedback on drafts of the thesis. The thesis typically goes through several iterations. Students are expected to give the advisor ample time to read and comment on each revision.

Should insurmountable problems occur, it is the responsibility of the advisor to convey this to the student and end the thesis project.

## 3. The Second Reader

The second reader is selected by the student and the advisor as part of the initial Honors project agreement. While second readers do not need to be experts in the thesis topic area, they should have enough expertise to offer productive feedback. The second reader's responsibility is not as great as that of the thesis advisor and thus should not read every draft of the project. They should have the opportunity to comment on major stages of the process, however, so that there are no surprises at the end.

## 4. The Honors Committee Reader

The Honors Program Director assigns one member of the Honors Committee to serve as a third thesis reader after the initial Honors Agreement has been approved. While this reader will have substantive feedback, she/he also serves as liaison to the Honors Committee and ensures the integrity of the process. The Honors Committee reader serves as convener for the assessment meeting and Honors defense and conveys the results of these meetings to the Honors Director in writing.

## 5. The Honors Program Director

While actually serving on only a small number of Honors thesis committees, the Honors Program Director serves as a resource for all Honors students and members of thesis committees.

# VI. Timeframe and Deadlines

## Fall - 1st Semester Junior Year

- Attend orientation session on Honors Program
- Select a thesis advisor and a thesis topic
- Select a second reader
- Submit Honors thesis proposal to the Honors Program Director two weeks prior to pre-registration
- Pre-register for Honors I

## Spring - 2nd Semester Junior Year

- Enroll in Honors I
- Conduct research under direction of the thesis advisor
- Attend Junior Colloquium meetings with Honors Director
- Submit Progress Report to thesis Committee and the Honors Program Director by Friday prior to spring break
- Meet with thesis committee for Assessment Meeting
- Pre-register for Honors II

## Summer - Summer between Junior and Senior Years

- Complete research and write thesis

## Fall - 1st Semester Senior Year

- Enroll in Honors II
- Distribute a substantial draft of the thesis to all committee members by end of first week of classes, or submit request for an extension.
- Revise thesis.
- Submit defense version of thesis to all committee members by Friday prior to fall break.
- Defend thesis in the weeks between fall break and Thanksgiving break

## Spring - 2nd Semester Senior Year

- Attend and present research at the Honors Conference
- Submit final version of thesis to the Honors Program Director by February
- Deposit final draft of thesis with Acquisitions Librarian

# VII. Guidelines for Advisors

## 1. General Comments

The thesis advisor wears many hats. First and foremost, the advisor models the process of academic inquiry for the student. It is largely through the advisor that the student learns to frame a question, to troubleshoot problems, to celebrate unexpected findings, and to produce a paper which effectively relays the discovery. The advisor should help the student meet deadlines imposed by the Honors Program. Students often find it difficult to pace themselves in a project which spans an entire calendar year, and the advisor should help the student set intermediate deadlines.

Additionally, the advisor is responsible for ensuring the quality of the project. If the project faces insurmountable obstacles, the advisor should end the project. Finally, the advisor provides moral support, encourages in the face of setbacks.

## 2. The Thesis

First-time advisors often question what degree of rigor is required of an Honors thesis. As the name implies, it is a baccalaureate level thesis, not merely an extended term paper. It may be thought of as a process similar to a master's project but pitched to the undergraduate. See "Overview of Honors by Major" for specific guidelines on what constitutes an appropriate Honors project in each academic discipline.

## 3. Administrative Issues

Scheduling Honors I: The Honors Thesis Proposal, signed by both the student and the advisor, must be submitted to the Honors Program Director no later than two weeks before registration. The thesis advisor must inform the department chair that Honors I be added to the list of the department's course offerings. The Records Office provides the department Chair with the appropriate form.

Grading: The thesis advisor is responsible for assigning a grade for Honors I and Honors II. While there may be a tendency to give the student an "A" for effort, please consider the following in assigning grades: To what extent was the student's work truly "original" vs. implementing the ideas of the advisor? How well did the student complete the assigned tasks? Did the student complete assignments by the agreed upon time? How successfully did the student incorporate the advisor's suggestions during the different stages of the process - researching, writing, and revising?

## 4. A Final Word to Advisors

Thank you for your time and your commitment. While you could be seeking your own objectives, you have chosen to mentor a student's intellectual pursuit. Undertaking this role indicates the value you place on working with students who are enthusiastic about learning. The impact you have on your Honors student both personally and scholastically is profound.

# VIII. Research and Presentation Grants

The Honors Committee is pleased to announce financial grants to enhance the Millsaps Honors experience. Two types of grants are available to all Honors students and will be awarded on a competitive basis. Applications will be evaluated by the Honors Committee with priority given to projects which can be significantly enhanced with the funds. Successful applications will generally be funded in the \$250-\$750 range.

## **Junior Honors Research or Artistic Funding Grants**

These grants may cover research-related expenses that aid in realizing the stated objectives. These expenses may include but are not limited to travel, meal, and hotel expenses for trips specifically related to the stated objectives, project supplies, copyright/patent costs, permissions, photocopying, transparencies, photographs, mailing, faxing, relevant membership fees, proofreading and indexing, printing (e.g. of survey instruments), subject payment and conference calls, etc. Books and software essential to research projects may be purchased if this is the most cost-effective way to achieve results. Equipment purchases such as computers and microscopes will not be funded. The deadline for applications for a Junior Research or Artistic Funding Grant is February 15 of the spring semester. Funds must be used by September 1 and reimbursement requested by September 15 of the fall semester.

## **Senior Honors Conference Travel Grants**

These grants will support student travel to professional conferences at which the student will present Honors work. Reimbursable expenditures include travel, meal, and lodging accommodations. Applications for Senior Conference Travel Grants are due October 15. All travel must be completed by May 15 of the senior year. A student may receive both a Junior Research Grant and a Senior Conference Travel Grant.

## **Criteria for Grants**

In order to be considered, a grant proposal must include the following:

- A description of a well-developed project with concrete, realizable objectives and the status of the project to date. This should include a brief justification of budget items and the funding's importance to the project.
- A time line for expenditure of funds.
- An itemized budget which estimates specific reimbursable costs and names the total sum requested.
- A statement evaluating the request from the student's Honors advisor. In the case of a Travel Grant, the faculty statement should include an assessment of the student's potential for being accepted as a presenter.

# IX. Grant Guidelines

## Advances

You may receive an advance for funds up to the full amount of your grant; however, you are personally responsible for spending the funds correctly and turning in receipts to account for all the funds. To receive an advance, complete an Advance Request form and attach your funding letter (or email) before submitting it to Dr. Sypniewski, the Honors Program Director, for approval (Box 150215). The Academic Dean's office will not accept your request without her approval. After you have completed your research or purchased necessary supplies, follow the steps below.

1. Complete the Travel Expenditure Form or the Accounts Payable Voucher (non-travel related expenses) and submit it to the Honors Program Director along with dated receipts.
  - a. *Include a check for the amount to be returned for unused funds.*
  - b. *You must submit a receipt for every purchase.*
2. The Honors Program Director approves the reimbursement and forwards the request to the Academic Dean. The Dean's office will clear the receipts. All receipts must be turned in by the Sept. 15th deadline.

## Reimbursements

You may request your grant funds as a reimbursement without requesting an advance. After you have completed your research or purchased necessary supplies, follow the steps below. Complete the Travel Expenditure Form or the Accounts Payable Voucher (non-travel related expenses) and submit it to Dr. Sypniewski, the Honors Program Director, along with dated receipts.

- a. *No reimbursement will be made without receipts.*
- b. *You must attach your funding letter (or email) to your request for reimbursement.*
  1. The Honors Program Director approves the reimbursement and forwards the request to the Academic Dean.
  2. The Academic Dean countersigns and forwards the paper work to the Business Office who issues the reimbursement check.

## Rules to remember

- Grants cover expenses incurred between January 1 and September 1. All requests for reimbursement must be made by September 15.
- Expenditures must be consistent with those outlined in the original application for funding.
- Because of the paperwork involved, save receipts until you have at least \$40 in expenditures before requesting a reimbursement.

### **What's reimbursable?**

- Justifiable expenses outlined in proposals are generally reimbursable. Speak with your advisor or the Honors Program Director if there are questions about an expense. A good rule of thumb is "If it seems unreasonable, it probably is."
- Remember that travel-related expenses can include airport parking fees and taxi fees. Car travel is reimbursed at a mileage rate of 50 cents per mile.
- Meals associated with travel can be reimbursed (within reason). The College will not fund expenditures on alcohol.

**NOTE: Advances/Reimbursements may take up to 1 month to receive due to processing through multiple offices.**

## **X. Committee Members**

### **Honors Program – Fall 2010 – Spring 2011**

- Holly Sypniewski, Director
- Ajay Aggarwal (Spring 2011 only)
- Kristen Brown Golden (Fall 2010 only)
- Ray Grubbs
- Brent Hendrixson (Spring 2011)
- Wolfgang Kramer
- Melissa Lea
- Anne MacMaster
- Ashleigh Powers
- Shadow Robinson
- Ming Tsui
- Steve Smith