

## **Honors Guidelines – Department of Sociology and Anthropology**

### **General Guidelines**

Completing an honors thesis under the guidance of a faculty member in the department offers students a unique opportunity to explore a topic of special interest and to further hone research and writing skills. To earn Honors in Anthropology or Honors in Sociology a student will ordinarily complete a written project (of approximately 75 pages) that is based on independent research and that demonstrates the ability to clearly articulate a research question, critically synthesize and evaluate various theoretical perspectives and methodological approaches, sustain an argument with appropriate evidence, understand broader problems within the discipline, and follow scholarly standards of presentation (such as table of contents, proper footnoting and citation). Research projects may be based solely on an analysis and synthesis of secondary sources or may integrate secondary and primary data collection and analysis. Students considering honors work are strongly encouraged to apply for a summer research fellowship prior to their senior year. Honors work requires the student to work creatively and independently. At the same time students should expect to refine goals and revise written text in response to faculty suggestions.

Ordinarily, the student must have earned (and must maintain) a 3.5 GPA or better in the courses taken for the major to be eligible for honors. An honors project will normally involve two semesters of independent study under the direction of a faculty advisor. The faculty advisor will determine the course grade. A consultative committee consisting of at least three faculty members (including the faculty advisor) will make the decision to award honors. The decision is made after the student's oral presentation of the project at the end of the spring semester.

### **Procedures**

1. A sociology or anthropology major who aspires to write an Honors Thesis should propose a research topic to a department faculty member before registering for the fall semester of the senior year. The written proposal should articulate a focused problem or question(s) and include a working bibliography on the topic selected. Once the potential faculty advisor has approved this submission, the student can register for a one-semester advanced independent study.
2. By the second week of the fall semester, two additional faculty members, chosen in consultation between the student, advisor, and department Chair, must be presented with a detailed written proposal describing the theme, scope and central questions to be addressed by the project. This consultative committee will assess the quality and feasibility of a proposal.
3. On the last day of classes of the fall semester, polished drafts of the first two chapters, or their equivalent, will be turned in to each member of the committee. The chapters may

include, as appropriate, a thesis statement or discussion of the problem, literature review, bibliography to date, presentation of the theoretical foundation, and methodology.

A discussion of the project will take place with the student, advisor, and committee before winter break. At that time, the committee will determine whether or not the project shows sufficient promise, and, if so, invite the student to continue it in the second semester as a potential honors thesis. Students who do not continue in the second semester will receive course credit for independent study for their fall semester work and a course grade assigned by the faculty advisor. For those projects continuing to the spring semester, the advisor, by mutual agreement with the student, may assess the performance during the first semester as “Satisfactory” and assign a regular course grade for both semesters at the completion of the project.

4. A complete draft of the thesis is due the Friday before spring vacation begins. Committee members will respond within two weeks with written comments. The committee will determine whether or not the thesis remains eligible for honors. If so, the student will have the opportunity to revise the thesis during the month of April.

5. The final thesis draft is due on the Friday before the last day of classes, usually at least one week before the Honors Colloquium. The student will present his/her research question, analysis and conclusions in an open forum of faculty and students and engage with the audience in discussion of the thesis. The faculty will meet after the colloquium and make a recommendation to the consultative committee on whether the project merits honors.

6. The thesis is due in Hawthorne Longfellow library on the Friday one week before graduation. The committee may suggest minor editorial changes no later than one week before the thesis is due in the library. H-L Library distributes guidelines for format, title page, and deadlines for submission of the final version accessible through their website at <http://library.bowdoin.edu/honors/index.html>.