

HONORS: General Guidelines:

(Please note: the Sociology Department has recently made some changes to the Honors process, so please read carefully).

Completing an honors thesis under the guidance of a faculty member in the department offers a unique opportunity to explore a topic of special interest, and hone research and writing skills. Successful projects develop out of students' intellectual passions, self-directed research efforts and determination, willingness to seek out the expertise of faculty members, ability to listen to advice, and revise and rework ideas within the framework of these standards and deadlines.

To earn Honors in Sociology, a student is required to complete a written project of roughly 30 pages that is based on independent research and 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, and situate findings in key sociological debates. Research projects may be based solely on an analysis and synthesis of secondary sources or may integrate secondary and primary data collection and analysis. Honors work requires students to work creatively and independently. Students considering Honors work are strongly encouraged to apply for a summer research fellowship before their senior year.

An Honors Project usually involves two semesters of independent study under the direction of a faculty advisor.

PROPOSING HONORS:

Interested students must submit an initial proposal to pursue Honors in the spring semester of their junior year. Your proposal must be accompanied by your unofficial Bowdoin transcript and (optional) students may submit a brief statement explaining any outside factors that have impacted their academic record. Please refer to the Sociology Department deadline for the submission deadline. Students interested in Honors work should consult a Department faculty member to express their interest and get advice on their project and proposal well ahead of this deadline. All Sociology Faculty members will evaluate the proposals and decide which projects may proceed as Honors Projects based on the strength of the proposal, project feasibility, availability of advisors, and the student's academic trajectory over time. If you are approved to pursue Honors, you will be assigned a Thesis Advisor and one or more additional faculty readers. This group of faculty are your Committee. If not approved for Honors, a project may be pursued as an Independent Study contingent on faculty availability, project feasibility, and the strength of the proposal.

Honors proposals should provide an initial research question, a preliminary literature review, and a detailed research plan for collecting the requisite data to complete an Honors Project. Proposals should be about 2 to 3 pages single spaced and should include a preliminary bibliography of key works (not included in page count). We strongly encourage all students to seek out a Sociology faculty member to review your proposal well before the due date, so that you have ample time to incorporate feedback into your submission.

Due to the demands of conducting research, students are strongly encouraged to begin their research in the summer between their junior and senior years. Summer research funding is available through Bowdoin's Summer Fellowships program (<https://www.bowdoin.edu/student-fellowships/summer-fellowships/index.html>). Research funding is competitive and applications are due in February. Summer research funding is also available through the Sociology Department. These grants are competitive and applications are due in late March or early April (<https://www.bowdoin.edu/sociology/resources-and-opportunities/riley-awards/index.html>).

Any student conducting research with human subjects must submit their research protocols to Bowdoin's Institutional Review Board (IRB) for approval before beginning research (IRB submission can occur after the project is approved by the Department). The final IRB meeting before the summer break occurs in early June. Proposals must be submitted at least 3 weeks prior to this date.

TIMETABLE:

- ◆ Mid February: Deadline for Bowdoin Summer Research Fellowship Applications
- ◆ Late March/Early April: Deadline for Sociology Department Summer Research Grants
- ◆ Late April: Deadline for submission of proposals from Junior Sociology majors who would like to pursue honors work during the upcoming Academic Year.
- ◆ First Friday of Fall Semester Classes: Progress Report Due
- ◆ Last day of Fall Reading period: One substantial section completed, plus detailed outline of full project
- ◆ Friday before Spring Break: Draft of Complete Honors thesis
- ◆ Friday before last day of spring semester classes: Final Honors thesis submitted
- ◆ Thursday or Friday of Reading Period, spring semester: Honors presentation to Department

Honors Projects follow a rigorous timetable.

By Friday of the first week of Fall classes: Students approved for Honors must provide a detailed progress report to all Sociology Department faculty. This report includes an updated preliminary literature review, a summary of the data collected to that point, any changes to the research question arising as a result, and a detailed projection for completing the research. All Department Faculty will review this report and collectively determine whether a student can continue their pursuit toward Honors. If a student does not meet this deadline, or if the student has not made sufficient progress on the project, the project will not proceed as an Honors Project.

By the last day of Fall Semester Reading Period: Honors students should submit work that reflects the work they have done over the previous months. This might include several pieces, but should at least include both of the following:

1. A detailed outline of the entire project/article. This outline can be thought of as a map of the plan going forward, and should thus give detail on how the student plans to incorporate and present the reviewed literature; theoretical framework; data analysis; and other pieces in the final article.
2. One substantial section of the final project completely drafted. Most likely, this will be either the literature review or a draft of the analysis. Because the final submission (in early May) must be succinct (and short!), students should be aware that Fall versions of these sections will likely be lengthier, and will have to be rewritten and crafted for the shorter and more succinct version needed in the spring.

The student's Honors Committee will respond promptly with feedback and decide whether the project will continue as Honors in the Spring semester. If a student does not meet this deadline, or if the student has not made sufficient progress on the project, the project will not proceed as an Honors Project.

A full draft of the Honors thesis is due to your Committee on the Friday before Spring Break begins. The Committee will judge the merits of the work, including the explanation of research problem, logic, use of data, and literature review or bibliography. If a student does not meet this deadline, or if the student has not made sufficient progress on the project, the project will not proceed as an Honors Project (but will automatically continue as an Independent Study).

Honors students in Sociology submit their final thesis (one hard copy and one digital copy) to their committee advisor and the Sociology Department Coordinator (lbracket@bowdoin.edu) by the Friday before the last day of spring semester classes. The advisor will forward the thesis to all Department faculty members for review. On the Thursday or Friday of Reading Period, the student will make a formal oral presentation of their research project to the full Department.

All Department faculty will decide whether the thesis receives Honors.

Details of Honors Projects

An Honors Project should be roughly 30-35 pages (the thesis may not exceed 15,000 words in length including text, references, and footnotes (excluding tables and figures)). These projects will approach the format of an article submitted to a research journal and must include the following:

- **TITLE:** The title should specify the problem the research addresses using keywords that will be helpful in future literature reviews.
- **ABSTRACT:** The abstract quickly summarizes the overall content of the paper. It should include your research question or puzzle, identify your data, and give some indication of your findings and their broader impact. The abstract should not exceed 200 words.
- **INTRODUCTION:** The introduction explores the overall topic and provides basic background information. It then narrows down to the specific research question relating to

this topic. It provides the purpose and focus of the rest of the thesis and sets up the justification for the research.

- **LITERATURE REVIEW:** The literature review will situate your research question in the appropriate sociological and/or academic literature. It should examine the major theories related to the topic to date and their contributors. It should include all relevant findings from credible sources, including academic books and peer-reviewed journal articles.
- **RESEARCH METHODS (AND SITE DESCRIPTION WHEN APPLICABLE):** This section describes the research design and methodology used to complete the study. Where applicable (i.e. you are conducting a neighborhood/community study, or studying a specific organization), you might also include a description of the site where you conducted the research and justification for your site selection.
- **RESULTS:** In two to four discrete sections, this section presents the findings.
- **DISCUSSION/CONCLUSION:** This section should provide a discussion of the results and their implications to the field. This section could relate to the previous research mentioned in the literature review, provide a discussion of the limitation of the findings, and suggest paths for conducting future research.
- **REFERENCE/BIBLIOGRAPHY:** References should be complete and follow the ASA Guidelines (or appropriate guidelines to a specific journal).

Formatting:

ALL TEXT must be double-spaced and typed in Times New Roman, 12-point font size. Margins should be at least 1-inch on all four sides.

The Manuscript must be submitted in the following format:

- Title Page that includes a full article title, author's complete name
- Abstract Page (maximum 200 words) on a separate page and headed by a title.
- Acknowledgments page and credits (if applicable) on a separate page
- Text (Manuscript). The text of your manuscript should begin on a new page headed by a title. All pages should carry a running title at the top of the page and must include page numbers (See header of this document for an example of running title and pagination).
- Except in cases where you are tailoring your manuscript to a specific journal, all citations should be parenthetical, including the author and date of the article. Include page references whenever you think it would help the reader.

- Footnotes in the text should be numbered consecutively throughout the article with a superscript in Arabic numerals. Footnotes should be typed in numerical order as a separate section (headed “Footnotes”) following the references.
- References Page
- Tables, Figures, and/or Appendices

Exceptions to Formatting: Students who are preparing a manuscript for a specific journal (e.g. *Sociology of Education, Gender & Society, City & Community*) whose style guides do not conform to this format may, contingent on approval from their Thesis Advisor, prepare their document in line with the formatting requirements of that journal. In those cases, students should provide a link of that journal’s style guide on the title page of the thesis as a footnote (e.g. ¹This thesis is styled based on the formatting requirements of *Gender & Society*).