

International Studies Honors Program

The International Studies Honors Program offers qualified students the opportunity to work intensively on a research project during their entire senior year under the close guidance of one or two faculty members. Students who think they might want to pursue this option should consult early with the director, preferably before going off-campus in their junior year, as the study abroad experience will usually shape or inform the honors project in a critical measure, including providing some of the research for the project. Honors students will produce a written work of an appropriate length in their thematic track (usually a minimum of 80 pages) as determined in consultation with their advisors. In the spring, the department will invite an outside examiner to read and assess each student's work, and they will suggest the degree of honors to be assigned to each student's honors thesis. To clarify the stages of the program and the expectations of all participants, the department has composed the following guidelines.

Admission requirements and procedures

GPA: A student must have a minimum cumulative grade point average of 3.5 at the end of junior year in order to be eligible for Honors.

Nomination: Each spring, prospective Honors candidates are identified by International Studies faculty and invited to apply for participation in the program based on their grade point average. All selected candidates who plan to pursue Honors must make contact with a member of the faculty by the summer and discuss potential research topics.

Preliminary proposal: Once candidates have discussed plans for Honors with a faculty member and have received positive encouragement to proceed, they should submit a proposal to the director of International Studies by mid-August, either by email or in person, and then meet with the director to discuss it no later than the first week of the fall semester.

Proposal format: A proposal for a prospective Honors project should include the following:

- ~ concise statement of proposed research problem or topic as it relates to the student's track
- ~ description of how study abroad and language study will contribute to or inform the project
- ~ name(s) of faculty with whom the student proposes to work, with whom the student has already consulted, and a summary of the project's potential problems and strengths
- ~ preliminary bibliography of secondary and primary sources (at least 10-12)

Registration: Once a student has been approved for Honors, s/he may enroll in INST 497Y.

Senior Seminar: Honors students will also enroll in the Senior Seminar (INST 401).

Structure and Expectations of the Honors Program

Schedule of meetings and submissions

1. First fall meeting: normally held in the second week of classes

All prospective Honors students and the INST Steering Committee will meet together to discuss the students' thesis proposals and research plans. Depending on the number of Honors students, small support groups of students and faculty may also be formed to work together.

2. Second fall meeting: early October

Students will present a thesis proposal revised as a result of discussions at the first meeting, including an expanded bibliography. At this point each student should be able to clearly articulate their project's lines of inquiry and analytical framework, and have sufficient sources to enable them to successfully complete the first stages of the project.

3. Third fall meeting: early November

Students will present a chapter (it may, but need not, be the first chapter). If there is a group of Honors students, they must read all the chapters presented to their group, and everyone is expected to contribute to the discussion of each chapter.

4. Second chapter: due before December break

Small groups will NOT meet to discuss the second chapter, but students MUST turn in a complete draft of a second chapter before leaving campus for the winter vacation. Non-submission of a second chapter will result in withdrawal from the Honors program.

5. Fourth meeting: early February

All students and advisors should meet once as a single group in the early part of the second semester to share progress and frustrations in research and writing. Any student who wishes to have the group read part of work in progress, or a revised chapter, may submit that to the group at this meeting. Students and advisors should construct a schedule specifying dates for submission of chapter outlines and/or draft chapters.

6. Final Submission: late April

It is critical that advisors maintain close contact with students in the final stages of writing, revising, and preparing a polished version of the Honors thesis.

7. Outside examination: at the end of the semester

An examiner from outside Kenyon College will read the thesis and come to campus to conduct an oral examination. At the conclusion of the oral examination, the outside examiner will advise the department on the degree of Honors awarded to each student, and the department determines the letter grade. The degree of Honors may be: highest, high, and honors. It is also possible that a student may receive no honors.

Withdrawal from the Honors Program

Students may withdraw voluntarily at the end of the first semester. They will receive credit and a letter grade for the fall honors seminar, INST 497, based on their advisor's evaluation of the work completed in the first semester. Students who fail to submit a second chapter before winter vacation will be asked to withdraw from the program. Students who withdraw later in the spring will likewise receive appropriate credit and a grade for a senior seminar based on their advisor's evaluation of their work.

Advisors may sometimes suggest that a student withdraw from Honors. In such a case, the director of International Studies should review the case and make a final determination.

Expectations of Students

“What is an honors thesis?”

An honors thesis is a product of original research based upon the use of appropriate primary sources and relevant secondary materials. The thesis should articulate a clear argument or conceptualization of an issue or set of issues. The focus of the argument should be narrow enough to allow the student to finish the thesis within the allotted time and in about 80-100 pages, but broad enough to allow the student to consider the scope and significance of the argument being developed.

The honors thesis provides the student with an opportunity to polish writing and composition skills, and construct a coherent narrative and a unified argument supported by an analysis of varieties of evidence. It will have a beginning, a middle, and most importantly an end, which students should strive always to keep in mind, indeed to visualize.

“How can I possibly write a thesis?”

Experience shows that the success and satisfaction of the Honors student’s experience will depend largely on their relationship with their advisors. Choosing a topic, finding and using materials, identifying and developing the argument, writing and revising the various parts, then assembling them into a completed manuscript are all stages of the process that students should negotiate with the advisor’s help. Students should therefore arrange with their primary advisor a regular schedule for meeting and discussing progress on the project.

The process of researching and writing is often a solitary one, but to the extent possible we encourage students to share their experiences with each other and to seek the advice of faculty members as well as their peers. Thus we stress the importance of promoting solidarity in the small groups, reading each other’s work, offering helpful and friendly criticism or praise, and sharing methodological or documentary discoveries.

Expectations of Advisors

The single most important task of the primary advisor is to establish and maintain regular contact with the Honors student. This contact, however it takes place, is critical to the success of the student's project. Advisors should help students to assess the viability of the project and the availability of the sources, to define and clarify topics and arguments, to use and to cite properly primary and secondary sources, to compose chapters, to revise arguments and to correlate the overall structure of the thesis. Advisors should make written comments on submitted chapters and return them to students in a timely fashion (within two weeks). In the fall, advisors should read and prepare oral comments on all the first chapters submitted to the small group; in the spring advisors will read all completed theses submitted by students within the small group.

Expectations of Outside Examiners

1. Read the thesis, assess its merits in reference to the various qualities mentioned above..
2. Prepare questions and comments to initiate and guide discussion during the oral examination.
3. Prior to the campus visit, should questions or concerns arise over a student's work, consult with department members.
4. On the basis of a comparative evaluation of the senior theses, initiate suggestions for the degree of honors in consultation with members of the department, keeping in mind that an oral examination can only help a student; it cannot lower a prior evaluation of the written work.

General criteria for degrees of honors

Highest – Student demonstrates creative use of primary and secondary sources, displays strong interpretative and analytical skills, and crafts an original thesis. The writing is excellent.

High – Student makes more than competent use of primary and secondary sources, and makes a good attempt at crafting an original thesis. The paper is very well-written and is of even quality.

Honors – Student uses primary and secondary sources competently and constructs and sustains a coherent argument. The paper is well-written, but of uneven quality.

No honors – Student fails to use primary and secondary sources competently and does not construct and sustain a clear argument.

Guidelines for Thesis Formatting and Submission

Theses are to be double-spaced (except for reduced quotations), copied front and back, and in black ink. Print copies should be 16 or 20# white bond paper of good quality, 8 ½ x 11 inches. Footnotes and matters of style should conform to Kate Turabian's *Manual for Writers* or the *Chicago Manual of Style*.

Reference notes may appear on the proper pages, or they may be collected at the end of each chapter, and may be numbered by either pages or chapters. The thesis concludes with appendices, if any, and then a bibliography of works consulted that is divided into primary sources and secondary studies. Left-hand margins must measure 1 ½ inches, the other 1 inch. Page-numbers appear in upper right-hand corners and run consecutively throughout, including appendix and bibliography pages.

The title on the spine of the bound copy can accommodate only 65 characters including the author's last name and a space between each word. It is advisable that the first part of the title be indicative of the content of the thesis.

By an appointed **deadline in mid-April**, honors students will submit two hard copies of their thesis and one electronic copy as follows:

- 1) Outside examiner copy : Arrange for binding with College printing services (clear cover, black spine). If your reader prefers to receive a PDF version, you must supply this to the International Studies administrative assistant. This copy should be delivered to the administrative assistant (Seitz House #10).
- 2) International Studies program copy: Arrange for binding with College printing services (clear cover, black spine). This copy should be delivered to the International Studies administrative assistant (Seitz House #10).
- 3) Olin Library copy : Students who write honors theses at Kenyon are required to submit an electronic copy to the library for inclusion in the College Archives digital collection, as described at: <http://kenyon.libguides.com/thesissub>.