

Writing an honors thesis in Spanish or Italian

WHO CAN WRITE AN HONORS THESIS IN OUR DEPARTMENT?

In general students who wish to write an honors thesis in Spanish or Italian must have a major in the department. Under exceptional circumstances non-majors may be allowed to write an honors thesis in Spanish or Italian. Non-majors who wish to write an honors thesis should send a petition to the departmental honors advisor, indicating their qualifications for writing the thesis and a justification for presenting an honors thesis in Spanish or Italian. These materials must be submitted electronically to the departmental honors advisor. Materials must be submitted even if a potential faculty thesis supervisor has been contacted.

GENERAL STRATEGY FOR WRITING AN HONORS THESIS (with thanks to John Ochoa)

- Identify a potential faculty thesis supervisor; make sure that the faculty member is tenure-track or otherwise eligible to direct an honors thesis (if in doubt, contact the departmental honors advisor).
- Have a preliminary discussion with that faculty member, explaining in general the type of research you wish to pursue.
- If the faculty member agrees to pursue the research topic with you, submit to that faculty member your current transcript and a copy of one of your best research papers or projects.
- Once your proposed honors thesis project has been tentatively approved, submit to your faculty thesis adviser a timetable outlining firm dates. You should plan on at least 4-6 months of total work, from beginning research to end product. If you have never worked on an extended project, you should plan on roughly equal time for each of the three stages outlined below. Depending on how good you are at each of these kinds of work, you might require more or less at each one. In general, most students require the most time on either the first or second stage.
- The **final deadline**: you should have arrived at what you consider a completed draft at least two weeks before the Schreyer deadline in mid April.
- Any major departures from the indicated timetable and deadlines may result in the honors thesis not being accepted.

THE STAGES IN WRITING AN HONORS THESIS

Stage #1. Basic primary and secondary research; formulating the general plan, and the general ideas. This involves laying the groundwork. At the end of this stage the student should present to the faculty thesis supervisor: (1) a list of primary works and materials to be used, and (2) an annotated bibliography of secondary sources that might be included; (3) a one-page outline indicating the general direction the thesis will take and how this will be achieved. What will the basic methodology be? (close readings? Archival research? Any kind of evidential material? Historical overview? Fieldwork?). Also, this short outline should include an approximation of the expected formal aspects of the

project, such as total page numbers, number of sections or chapters, with potential titles; a list of any images, graphs, etc.

Stage #2. Composition. Depending on how much guidance is needed at this stage, this is the nuts-and-bolts portion of the thesis. The expectations at the end of this stage are: a nearly-complete document, with minimal grammar, style and composition issues. If there are substantial compositional issues, the thesis adviser may return the thesis for additional corrections before evaluating the content. A senior in the Schreyer Honors College is expected to have the knowledge, experience, and resources to produce clean, professional-level writing.

Stage #3. Revision. Once a grammatically and stylistically acceptable draft has been submitted, the faculty thesis supervisor will read and comment on the thesis and return it to the student, so that all relevant feedback can be incorporated. At least two weeks should be included past the final draft, in order for the faculty thesis supervisor and the departmental honors adviser to approve it as well as to incorporate any final corrections.