

## **Houghton College Honors Work Guidelines for Students**

### **I. DEFINITION OF HONORS PROJECT**

Honors projects devote particular attention to a special topic in the student's major through primary research. Honors projects are more in-depth and complex than 400 level independent studies and should extend well beyond the scope of normal coursework.

### **II. ELIGIBILITY**

To be eligible to apply, students must have a minimum of a 3.4 cumulative GPA in their declared major and 3.25 cumulative GPA. Permission to apply for honor studies may be limited by available facilities and faculty resources.

### **III. ACADEMIC EXPECTATIONS AND EXPERIENCES**

Normally the honors project will span the last three semesters of a student's college experience and will follow these guidelines:

- A. In the junior year, the student will focus upon the specific problem or question to be investigated and will prepare an honors proposal in consultation with the intended faculty advisor. The student should inform the curriculum advisor and department head of an intention to pursue an honors proposal. This preparatory research may take the form of an independent study.
- B. When the student wishes to officially initiate honors work, the student, in consultation with a faculty member in the discipline of the study, will write an honors proposal. The proposal should include a clear and informative title, a description of the project, the methodology, the proposed form of the study, a preliminary bibliography of sources relevant to the topic, and page numbers on the lower right corner of each page.
- C. If the faculty member agrees to direct the project, the honors proposal will be submitted to the student's curriculum advisor and the appropriate department chair for approval. The student, the honors advisor, and the department chair shall propose an Honors Project Committee, subject to the approval of the Institutional Review Board (IRB). The Honors Project Committee shall consist of the honors advisor as chair and at least two other faculty members, one of these from the discipline of the study and one from another discipline. If the project is the first honors project the honors advisor has supervised at Houghton College, a faculty member experienced in honors projects will also be selected by the Academic Dean's office to mentor the honors advisor.

- D. The honors proposal will be submitted to the proposed Honors Project Committee members for comments, support and signatures. Signed cover sheet and proposal should be turned in to the Registrar's Office by April 1 (see section P for alternative fall submission dates). The proposal will then be submitted to the IRB with all supporting documentation. Honors proposals approved by the IRB will be reported to the Academic Council (AC). The secretary of the AC shall send a written report of AC action to the student, the honors advisor, and the Registrar's Office.
- E. Once the honors proposal has been approved by the Honors Project Committee/IRB and reported to the AC, the student may undertake an independent research study under the direction of the chair of the Honors Project Committee (normally during the student's second-to-last semester). Should they arise, the honors advisor shall report any substantive changes in the topic, scope, or methodology of the study and/or the need for changes in the personnel of the committee to the AC for approval.
- F. During the honors semester of the senior year (the semester the honors project is completed, normally during the student's last semester at Houghton), the student will formally register for three to four hours of senior honors credit. The project will then be completed under the guidance of the chair of the Honors Project Committee. The student and Honors Project Committee may consult with scholars and researchers outside the college.
- G. Should the project not be making satisfactory progress as an honors project, the student and/or the Honors Project Committee may elect to change the honors project into an independent study during the honors semester.
- H. Normally, a final paper will be the primary vehicle for communicating the results of the honors project to the scholarly and academic community. In some disciplines or subject areas a demonstration of skills or performance ability may be required.
- I. The final manuscript of the honors project shall be personally delivered by the student to each member of the Honors Project Committee by April 12.
- J. The oral examination and public performance, if appropriate, must be completed by April 22.
- K. Following the oral examination of the honors paper, the Honors Project Committee shall determine whether the work is of honors quality and

assign a grade. If approved for honors, each Honors Project Committee member shall sign the document. The committee may recommend final corrections to be supervised by the honors advisor.

- L. The Honors Project Committee shall report its findings by April 24. The Registrar's Office will submit to the AC.
- M. The student shall file a copy, with corrections if required, signed by the student and the Honors Project Committee members with the Houghton College Library by April 27.
- N. The final decision for the awarding of credit, grade, and honors rests with the Honors Project Committee. If possible, the honors project title and the name of the faculty member supervising the project will be listed on the commencement program for a student successfully completing an honors project.
- O. The library retains and catalogs copies of all honors papers. The department in which the project is focused should cover the costs of printing and binding the library copy of the paper as well as any required departmental copies. Prior to the deadline, a library representative will contact students with information about binding rates, acceptable methods of payment, and other details. When a student delivers a paper for binding, he or she must provide binding fees for each desired personal copy. To help with shipment to the bindery, a box is available for each copy delivered to the library for binding. This includes the library, department, and personal copies which will be delivered to the library. See a librarian or library staff to obtain the number of boxes you will need.
- P. Alternative dates for those doing an honors project in a fall semester:
  - 1) Proposal should be submitted by November 1
  - 2) Final manuscript delivered to committee by Nov 25
  - 3) Oral exam or performance by Dec 8
  - 4) Honors Project Committee reports findings by Dec 10
  - 5) File corrected copy in the library by Dec 14.