

Thesis Description

The honors thesis provides honors students the unique opportunity to engage in a high quality study of a carefully defined question or problem over the course of 1.5 to 2 years. Based in research, this problem may be critical, experimental, applied, or creative in nature, and should represent an effort to make an original contribution to the field. In an honors thesis, students work with a faculty mentor to explore a topic in their major area of study. In all cases, the honors thesis is a substantial project that **goes beyond normal requirements of the major** and represents the student's best work in their discipline. Each thesis will demonstrate **clear critical thinking, a mastery of disciplinary material, clarity in communication of complex ideas, and professionalism in production.**

Honors thesis projects can vary tremendously. Each department/major on campus developed guidelines for the thesis and where it counts in the course of study within that major. These guidelines are posted on the honors website <http://www.elon.edu/eweb/academics/honors/thesis/deptdocs.xhtml>

In the humanities, students usually compose essays of 60 to 90 closely-edited pages, plus notes and bibliography. Science and social science projects are often based on extensive laboratory or field research and the final product is similar to a scholarly article in the field. Creative projects may be comprised of original work such as a collection of poems, essays, or short stories, or a photographic, sculptural, pictorial or multimedia exhibit. Honors thesis work of this nature, as well as those in the performing arts (music, theater, dance), must be documented via videotape or other appropriate media. **All such creative projects must also be accompanied by a written essay** that provides a historical and contextual justification of the project, an explanation of its significance, and appropriate bibliography.

Thesis - Typical Timeline

2nd Year - Fall	2nd Year - Spring
Thesis Meeting 1: Overview of Thesis & Mentoring	Thesis Meeting 1 (repeated for those who did not attend in the fall)
3rd Year - Fall	3rd Year - Spring
Detailed thesis proposal due in fall or spring of junior year, as soon as you sign up for 498 thesis hours.	Detailed thesis proposal due in fall or spring of junior year, as soon as you sign up for 498 thesis hours.
Thesis Meeting 2: How to write a successful proposal. Semester contract and end of semester reports due.	Thesis Meeting 2 repeated. Semester contract and end of semester reports due.
Honors Advisory Committee evaluates proposals and gives feedback within 2 weeks. Proposals that do not meet standards may merit revision and resubmission.	Distribution of 498 credit hours in 3 rd year depends on timeline, major, study abroad, etc. Might be 2-2 or 0-2 or 2-0, or other variations.
4th Year - Fall	4th Year - Spring
Semester contract and end of semester reports due.	Completion of last needed research; writing and revision supported by significant feedback from mentor.
Majority of research has been conducted; rough draft of much of project completed by end of semester.	Final draft due to committee on date in early April.
Presentations of progress in late October, with mentors and other fellows in attendance.	Defense scheduled near end of April. Complete any revisions specified by defense committee.
Course credit: depends on 3 rd year but at least 4 hours in senior year.	Final copies due in Honors Office on last Monday of classes - with page signed by entire committee signifying approval.
	Recognition/celebration.

Credit will be permitted during the summer only in specially approved circumstances (and if faculty member is available).