

INFORMATION AND GUIDELINES DEPARTMENTAL HONORS IN ENGLISH

The English Department at Illinois State University invites qualified senior English majors to earn Departmental Honors in English. The Departmental Honors option offers University Honors students in English an opportunity to pursue a research interest, for academic credit, more intensively than a regular course normally allows, to apply to a more extensive project the techniques of English Studies developed in the English major, and to demonstrate the capacity to work independently in planning and successfully completing a substantial research project. Beyond the developmental value of completing a Departmental Honors project, the sense of achievement earned, and the satisfaction for successful candidates of leaving behind a lasting memento of yourself and your work, you are likely to find that the distinction of having earned Departmental Honors makes you more attractive to prospective employers and to graduate school admissions committees.

Because Departmental Honors were approved by the University Honors Council as an extension of the University Honors Program, you must maintain your participation requirement in the University Honors Program or join the Honors Program before you can work toward the Departmental Honors designation.

Program Requirements for Departmental Honors

Before you decide whether to seek Departmental Honors, you may find it helpful to review the requirements listed below.

1. Candidates must be senior English majors when they complete their Departmental Honors project. They should plan and propose the project during the last semester of the junior year if they plan to complete it during the first semester of the senior year.
2. You must have a grade-point average of 3.3 or higher overall and 3.5 or higher in your English courses.
3. You must present an Honors thesis (usually 30 to 40 pages) done in a three-semester-hour Independent Honors Study (English 299). The thesis must be of superior quality, meriting a grade of A, as evaluated by a three-member committee that comprises the director of the project, the Coordinator of Departmental Honors in English, and another faculty member named by the Chairperson of the Department of English.
4. You must sustain a one-hour oral examination over the thesis during the last week of classes in the semester when the Honors Thesis is completed.

Formal Requirements for the Completion of the Departmental Honors Thesis

The formal requirements for a Departmental Honors thesis are kept minimal in order to ensure flexibility among the various areas of English Studies and to enable you to devote as much time as possible to quality research and the revision necessary to produce a good written product.

1. Your thesis may involve research in any area of English Studies, including creative writing.
2. You will need to present the thesis in a standard format and, where appropriate, document it in accordance with the most recent edition of the *MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers*.

3. You will need to supply to each of the three thesis committee members one copy of the completed thesis.

Procedures for Initiating Departmental Honors Work

You'll want to review the following procedures so that the planning and proposal stages are properly completed.

1. You will be doing your Departmental Honors thesis during your senior year. This means that you will want to secure a faculty director in the Department of English during the semester *before* the one in which you plan to complete your Departmental Honors project, you should, i.e., during the last semester of your junior year if you wish to complete Departmental Honors work during the first semester of your senior year, and during the first semester of your senior year if you wish to complete Departmental Honors work during the second semester of your senior year.
2. You should present your proposal on the Honors Independent Study form (available from the English Office, the University Honors office, or the Coordinator of Departmental Honors in English). In this proposal you should indicate the nature and scope of your research --- for example, authors or works to be studied in literary research, data or phenomena to be studied for linguistic research, methodology for pedagogical research, genre and quantity of creative writing.
3. You may submit the completed proposal in one of two ways: (1) to the Coordinator of Departmental Honors in English to be forwarded to the chairperson of the English Department for approval or (2) directly to the chairperson with a copy provided to the Coordinator of Departmental Honors in English.
4. You should establish with your director a working relationship and a plan of procedure that includes regular review of your work.

Remember that you must maintain your participation requirement in the University Honors Program or join the Honors Program before you can work toward for Departmental Honors. If you have questions about Departmental Honors or about your work in the University Honors program, please contact the Coordinator of Departmental Honors in English.