

AFRICANA STUDIES HONORS PROGRAM

AFRS Honors Procedures: From Honors Admission to Honors Graduation

Once admitted into the Honors Program, the student will determine, in consultation with the Honors Director, which of these two preparatory honors courses to take in the first semester of the senior year.

- (a). Research Methods Honors (AFRS 3290-H), or
- (b). African Diaspora Theory Honors (AFRS 4100-H)

The preparatory honors-designated course should be taken in the first semester of the student's senior year, and the Senior Honors Project/Thesis in the second semester.

**First semester: AFRS 3290-Honors (Research Methods)
OR
AFS 4100-Honors (African Diaspora Theory)**

During the first semester of your senior year you will do the following:

- *Once classes start, choose an honors faculty advisor.* The selection of an honors faculty advisor will be based on the student's topic of interest and faculty expertise, and it must be done in consultation with the AFRS Honors Director. The faculty advisor will normally be a full-time instructor in the Africana Studies Department.
- *First two weeks of class:* In conjunction with your honors advisor, *decide on a topic* that is feasible for a thesis or a project (for more information on the thesis or the project, scroll down to the appendix). The topic might change later on, during the design of the thesis/project. Please notify the honors director of your choice.
- Once a topic is decided, *form a committee* consisting of three members: your advisor, the honors director, and the AFRS 3290-H or AFRS 4010-H instructor. If the same faculty is serving in two of these roles, the Honors Program Director will ask another faculty member or the Chair to join the committee. Optionally, the student may also invite faculty from another department to join the committee, for a total of four members.
- *During the semester,* at either AFRS 3290 or AFRS 4100, you will work on producing a research proposal (plus a layperson summary, or abstract of it). The proposal will constitute the basis of your grade in either AFRS 3290 or AFRS 4100.
- *By November 15/March 15, you will submit a first draft of your proposal* to your committee. They will send feedback within ten days.
- *December/April 1: Submit your final proposal and layperson summary to all committee members* to read before they sign the Honors College form (see below). (NOTE: The layperson summary is essentially an abstract of your proposal, so you can write it after finishing the proposal).

Before Reading Day, you will turn in the following materials to the Honors College:

- *Thesis or Project Proposal (approx. 10-12 pages):* The proposal should state the research question, justify its importance, review key literature, present core hypotheses, explain the

research design, and discuss the significance of the project. The proposal serves as the basis for your grade in the honors course.

- *Layperson summary (max. 500 words)*: This should include a statement of the research question, explanation of methodology, and summary of the project in non-specialist terms. Guidelines can be found on the Honors College site.
- *Application to Candidacy (Page 1)*: The first page must be filled out and signed by your advisor and reader(s). The Program Director will complete the coursework section and sign the form. You must upload completed documents in PDF format to the Honors College system by Reading Day and send copies via email to the AFRS Honors Program Director.

Second semester: AFRS 4790 – Honors Thesis or Project

During this semester you will produce the following items:

- For those conducting research involving human subjects (ask Honors Director if you have doubts about this), *IRB clearance* should start *as early in the semester as possible*.
- *Full draft of thesis: Due to committee members by end of October/March (specific date TBD each semester)*. This draft should include all of the necessary sections (see appendix of this document) and should be as polished as possible. The honors faculty advisor and readers will review it and provide feedback to make final revisions before the oral presentation and submission of the final thesis.
- *Oral presentation to your Honors Committee: Mid November/April (specific date TBD each semester)*: The Honors Program Director will work with you and your committee members to schedule a time for your oral presentation. You should present the results of your research in approximately 15 minutes, followed by time for questions and answers.
- *Final Thesis, Abstract, and Application to Candidacy (Page 2): Due to committee members by end November/April (specific date TBD each semester)* Final Thesis: This is the final version that will be shared with the Honors College, so make sure it is clearly written and does not have any grammar or spelling errors! Your thesis must earn a grade of “A” from your Honors Committee for you to graduate with honors.
 - Abstract (max. 200 words): This should provide a succinct summary of your research, its importance, your methodology, and key findings in terms that non-specialists can understand. This will be posted on the Honors College website.
 - Application to Candidacy (Page 2): Complete the top part of this page and secure the necessary signatures from your advisor and reader(s) before submitting to the Honors Program Director, who will fill in the thesis grade once received from committee members.

You must upload completed documents in PDF format to the Honors College system by the last day of class for the semester and send copies via email to the Honors Program Director.

Appendix: Suggested Outline for Theses and Other Honors Projects in Africana Studies

For a formal thesis, based on the social sciences and the humanities, please follow this outline:

- I. Introduction: This section introduces the topic and explains why it is important to study. It may also include an overview of the subsequent sections of the paper.
- II. Literature review: This section provides an overview of existing academic research about your topic. Focus on how other authors have answered your research question. It helps to divide the literature into categories based on articles/books that offer similar explanations, and the goal is to synthesize the key findings (not just discuss each work in turn).
- III. Theory and hypotheses: In this section, you should lay out the logic for the hypotheses that you plan to test and present them clearly and succinctly. Your hypotheses may flow from some of the literature findings that you presented in the previous section, but you may also develop your own hypotheses that have not been examined previously (which is a sign of doing unique research).
- IV. Research design (methodology): In this section, you should explain how you plan to answer the research question. This involves, most importantly, operationalizing (explaining how you will measure or assess) the dependent and independent variables (for a quantitative analysis) or justifying your selection of cases (for a comparative case analysis). You should also explain the source(s) of your data.
- V. Analysis: This is the heart of your paper. In this section, you will systematically examine your data, and discuss how it supports, refutes, or modifies your hypothesis. Be sure to be systematic in your approach; in other words, don't just discuss data that support the findings you want to prove.
- VI. Conclusion: In this section, you will summarize your findings and discuss their implications. These could include suggestions for further research. You can also use this section to look toward the future for a particular case or issue that arose in your paper.
- VII. Bibliography: This should include all of the sources that you have cited in the paper. Please use either Chicago or MLA for your bibliography format.

For a creative, digital, database, or community-based project, the product must show evidence that the honors project is driven by the quest to solve an applied problem or develop a better understanding of a theoretical or practical issue. It must include research/inquiry, written product, and oral presentation. The specific requirements for this endeavor will be discussed with the Committee members.