



Handbook for Students Writing an Honors Thesis
Department of Germanic and Slavic Languages and Literatures
University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill

General Description:

Students who wish to undertake a senior honors thesis project must have a cumulative GPA of 3.3 or higher and a GPA of 3.5 or higher in their GSSL major. In order to receive departmental honors, students in their senior year sign up for a two-semester sequence of independent study courses under the direction of an advisor, GSSL, GERM, RUSS or SLAV 691H-692H. During the two semesters, the student will write an honors thesis and defend it in an oral examination on the basis of which course credit, or honors or highest honors will be awarded. The two semesters of honors work—691H and 692H—may count towards courses required for the GSSL major.

Students taking 691H and 692H meet with their faculty advisors for one 50-minute session each week at a regularly scheduled time. In keeping with general practice in the College of Arts and Sciences, students are expected to devote at least 3 hours of independent work per week for each unit of credit; in the case of 691H and 692H, this means students should plan on spending 9 hours per week each semester, working independently on their honors thesis.

Occasionally, the department may offer a section of GSSL 693H, in which case a number of students working on honors theses meet weekly to discuss research techniques and report on their progress. (Students in 693H must also have an individual faculty thesis advisor.)

Requirements:

- 3.3 overall GPA and 3.5 minimum GPA in GSSL (as of beginning of the first semester of honors work; these GPAs must be maintained throughout both semesters)
- Declared major in GSSL
- Signed permission by GSSL Director of Undergraduate Studies and thesis advisor
- 691H and 692H (or 693H) to be taken during senior year. Occasionally, a student may be permitted to begin a thesis in the second semester of the junior year. See below for a detailed description of what is expected over the course of these two semesters.
- A thesis of a substantial length (generally 40-60 pages), to be completed by March of the spring semester, senior year. (In the case of a December graduation, this would be October of the fall semester.)
- Oral defense: one-hour meeting with a minimum of two readers (including the thesis advisor) by the end of the first week of April to discuss the completed thesis (or November in the case of a December graduation).

Grading and Evaluation:

- Student will receive a temporary grade of an SP upon successful completion of 691H.
- Should a student not make satisfactory progress in 691H, (s)he will be informed at the end of that continuation of the honors thesis will not be possible, and will receive a permanent letter grade for the work that has been completed.
- Upon completion of 692H (or 693H), final letter grades will be submitted for both courses.
- After the successful oral defense of the thesis, students will be eligible for honors or highest honors in Germanic and Slavic Languages and Literatures.

Students are encouraged to consult <http://honorscarolina.unc.edu/current-students/honors-thesis-and-undergraduate-research/honors-thesis/> for more information, including information about research grants and detailed information about how the final version of the thesis should be formatted.

Honors Thesis Procedures: Timeline and Checklist**Spring Semester, Junior Year**

- Choose general thesis topic and meet with DUS
- Select advisor and discuss the topic further
- File honors thesis application with DUS in GSLL.
- Request registration for 691H (honors reading and special studies) for fall semester (a fully-approved honors thesis application form must be on file before the department can enroll a student in 691H.)
- Create summer reading list with advisor before classes end. The summer reading list generally consists of 5-10 works.

Fall Semester, Senior Year

- Take 691H and schedule one-hour weekly meetings with advisor.
- Turn in 5-page prospectus by fourth week of classes: 2 pages should address the general outline of your topic, approach, and thesis and a breakdown of the chapters; 3 pages should provide an annotated bibliography.
- Secure approval of prospectus by advisor and DUS
- Seek out a second committee member who will read your work, provide you with feedback, and participate in your oral defense at the end of the year.
- Turn in a final draft of a first chapter to advisor and DUS by end of Thanksgiving break
- Complete an honors thesis application form for the second semester of thesis work.
- Request registration for 692H (writing of honors thesis) for spring semester (a new, fully-approved honors thesis application form, for the second semester, must be on file before the department can enroll a student in 692H or 693H.)

Spring Semester, Senior Year

- Take 692H (or 693H) and schedule one-hour weekly meetings with advisor.
- Meet with DUS regarding defense procedures.
- Turn in draft of second chapter by the second week of classes.
- Turn in draft of entire thesis to advisor by spring break
- Speak to your advisor, other committee member(s), and the DUS to schedule a defense date by end of March. Defenses should be held no later than the first week of April.
- Submit a final draft of thesis to your committee 10 days before the scheduled defense.
- Conduct a one-hour oral defense with both thesis readers by end of first week of April.
- Submit your thesis online at <https://cdr.lib.unc.edu/forms/honors-thesis.form>, including a scanned copy of your thesis cover page signed by your thesis advisor.
- Details about these requirements and about the formatting of the final version of your thesis can be found at <http://honorscarolina.unc.edu/current-students/honors-thesis-and-undergraduate-research/honors-thesis/>

N.B. These dates are all based on the assumption of a May graduation. Different deadlines will apply to a December graduation.