

Guidelines for Faculty Directing Honors Theses

The semester before the independent study process begins:

- Meet with student, discuss parameters of the project:
 - Topic and scope
 - Requirements (faculty member should consider what these will be)
 - Timeline
 - Frequency of meetings
 - How progress will be measured
- Working with the student, you should put a schedule in writing or even craft a syllabus of sorts. You should **definitely** come to an understanding with the student about how the final grade will be calculated; it is best to put this agreement in writing. Such a document could always be revised as the work progresses, but it can be helpful to keep the student on track and to give the faculty member a concrete document to refer to. Such a document can also be vital if there is a grade dispute later on. The resulting agreement should be submitted to the Department Chair.

The Course Catalog says the following about University policy regarding Independent Studies:

Independent study enables a student to pursue individual research and reading in a field of special interest under the guidance of a faculty member. As an independent study involves relatively self-directed student effort in the pursuit of some clearly defined goals, it is important for the student to specify the learning objectives of the study. A proposal for an independent study project must be accepted in advance by the faculty member who agrees to serve as the project advisor. The project must also be submitted to the department chairperson for approval prior to the student's registration.

Independent Study (ENG 4444 or ENG4440):

- Come to a consensus about what the end product will be (i.e. what the independent study will accomplish). This could include any or all of the following:
 - Annotated Bibliography
 - Several page proposal of thesis project
 - Detailed outline of thesis project
- The faculty member should remind student that each credit hour reflects 3 actual hours of work per week. So, the 3CR associated with the Independent Study should translate to nine actual hours of work per week.
- Meet regularly with the student to monitor progress. It can help to set concrete weekly or biweekly reading/writing goals for the student.
- Some faculty recommend doing close reading activities with the student to guide him/her through critical and theoretical texts with which they might not have much experience.
- Near the end of this semester, establish what the work requirements and timeline will be for the student while he/she writes the thesis. As before, a written schedule can be helpful to keep work on track.
- Faculty member must ensure that the agreed upon work is completed *before* assigning a grade.

Thesis (ENG 4644):

- Consider having student write a short piece over the break between the Independent Study and the Thesis semesters. This piece could serve either as a thesis paragraph or the first several pages of the thesis itself.

- Meet with student early in the semester to review what he/she wrote and/or to ensure that the student has begun writing the thesis.
- As with the Independent Study, the thesis work earns the student 3CR. So, while assigning a particular page number for a thesis may not be feasible, it is important to keep in mind that the finished thesis project should reflect 9 actual hours of work per week over the course of the semester. The faculty member serves as the arbiter of what the final project will entail in order to comply with that requirement.
- It should go without saying that the faculty member must ensure that the thesis is completed *before* assigning a grade. Completed theses must be turned in both to the Honors College and to the English Department's Director of Undergraduate Studies.

General Expectations for Honors Theses

Critical/Theoretical Theses:

A critical/theoretical thesis should be more developed than a tradition conference-length seminar essay and should demonstrate critical thinking and a clear and deep understanding of the relevant issues and research surrounding the chosen topic.

Creative Writing Thesis:

A thesis in creative writing should represent a thoroughly revised and unified body of work. The creative thesis will also include a critical introduction that contextualizes the thesis project amid textual history and provides a framework for the author's craft and literary purpose.

Applied Writing Thesis:

An applied writing thesis project (whether professional writing, composition or pedagogical) would include an extensive project and a substantial critical and/or theoretical framework that demonstrates the rationale for the project, and its suitability for both the client and the field in general. Work for the applied writing thesis may not come from projects for which the student is already receiving credit in another class, including internships and client-based projects