

## **HONORS: General Guidelines:**

(Please note: the Sociology Department has recently made some changes to the Honors process, so please read carefully).

Completing an honors thesis under the guidance of a faculty member in the department offers a unique opportunity to explore a topic of special interest, and hone research and writing skills.

-directed research efforts and determination, willingness to seek out the expertise of faculty members, ability to listen to advice, and revise and rework ideas within the framework of these standards and deadlines.

To earn Honors in Sociology, a student is required to complete a written project of roughly 30 pages that is based on independent research and demonstrates the ability to clearly articulate a research question, critically synthesize and evaluate various theoretical perspectives and methodological approaches, sustain an argument with appropriate evidence, and situate findings in key sociological debates. Research projects may be based solely on an analysis and synthesis of secondary sources or may integrate secondary and primary data collection and analysis. Honors work requires students to work creatively and independently. Students considering Honors work are strongly encouraged to apply for a summer research fellowship before their senior year.

An Honors Project usually involves two semesters of independent study under the direction of a faculty advisor.

## **PROPOSING HONORS:**

Interested students must submit an initial proposal to pursue Honors in the spring semester of their junior year. Your proposal must be accompanied by your unofficial Bowdoin transcript and (optional) students may submit a brief statement explaining any outside factors that have impacted their academic record. Please refer to the Sociology Department deadline for the submission deadline. Students interested in Honors work should consult a Department faculty member to express their interest and get advice on their project and proposal well ahead of this deadline. All Sociology Faculty members will evaluate the proposals and decide which projects may proceed as Honors Projects based on the strength of the proposal, project feasibility, availability of advisors, and the student's academic trajectory over time. If you are approved to pursue Honors, you will be assigned a Thesis Advisor and one or more additional faculty readers. This group of faculty are your Committee. If not approved for Honors, a project may be pursued as an Independent Study contingent on faculty availability, project feasibility, and the strength of the proposal.

Honors proposals should provide an initial research question, a preliminary literature review, and a detailed research plan for collecting the requisite data to complete an Honors Project. Proposals should be about 2 to 3 pages single spaced and should include a preliminary bibliography of key works (not included in page count). We strongly encourage all students to seek out a Sociology faculty member to review your proposal well before the due date, so that you have ample time to incorporate feedback into your submission.

Due to the demands of conducting research, students are strongly encouraged to begin their research in the summer between their junior and senior years. Summer research funding is <https://www.bowdoin.edu/student-fellowships/summer-fellowships/index.html> ). Research funding is competitive and applications are due in February. Summer research funding is also available through the Sociology Department. These grants are competitive and applications are due in late March or early April (<https://www.bowdoin.edu/sociology/resources-and-opportunities/riley-awards/index.html> ).

Any student conducting research with human subjects must submit their research protocols to submission can occur after the project is approved by the Department). The final IRB meeting before the summer break occurs in early June. Proposals must be submitted at least 3 weeks prior to this date.

### **TIMETABLE:**

Mid February: Deadline for Bowdoin Summer Research Fellowship Applications

Late March/Early April: Deadline for Sociology Department Summer Research Grants

Late April: Deadline for submission of proposals from Junior Sociology majors who would like to pursue honors work during the upcoming Academic Year.

First Friday of Fall Semester Classes: Progress Report Due

Last day of Fall Reading period: One substantial section completed, plus detailed outline of full project

Friday before Spring Break: Draft of Complete Honors thesis

Friday before last day of spring semester classes: Final Honors thesis submitted

Thursday or Friday of Reading Period, spring semester: Honors presentation to Department

Honors Projects follow a rigorous timetable.

By Friday of the first week of Fall classes: Students approved for Honors must provide a detailed progress report to all Sociology Department faculty. This report includes an updated preliminary literature review, a summary of the data collected to that point, any changes to the research question arising as a result, and a detailed projection for completing the research. All Department Faculty will review this report and collectively determine whether a student can continue their pursuit toward Honors. If a student does not meet this deadline, or if the student has not made sufficient progress on the project, the project will not proceed as an Honors Project.

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