

Dartmouth College Women's, Gender, and Sexuality Studies Program **Honors Thesis Guidelines (Two-Term Senior Project)**

This guide is intended to help potential honors students in the Women's, Gender, and Sexuality Studies Program to choose an advisor, formulate a topic, and navigate the research, writing and presentation of the Women's, Gender and Sexuality Studies Honors Thesis. The Program encourages students to meet weekly and work closely with their advisor throughout the Honors project.

Eligibility

To be admitted to the honors program, thus qualifying for Honors or High Honors, a student must have taken at least 4 WGSS courses, have a 3.3 GPA in the major and satisfy the minimum college requirement of a 3.0 general College average at the beginning of the senior year, or when application to the program is made.

Coursework

The Honors Program consists of a **two-course sequence** above the minimum course requirement in the major. The first of these courses is WGSS 98; the second is WGSS 99. Honors students arrange a program of study and research during any two terms of the senior year on a tutorial basis with individual faculty members. Credit for WGSS 99 depends upon successful completion of the thesis. A student will receive an incomplete for WGSS 99 until such time as the thesis is filed and approved for Honors credit. Students will receive college credit for both courses (WGSS 98 and WGSS 99) though only **one** course will count towards the major.

There is a two-stage process for thesis proposals:

Preliminary Proposal.

Thesis projects should be worked out in conjunction with your advisor during the winter or spring term of your junior year. Preliminary proposals are submitted in spring term (see Step I) so that the Steering Committee may make comments and suggestions for revisions and so that you can use the summer to read and prepare for your project. Preliminary proposals should include the following:

- Brief Abstract of Project
- Draft Bibliography
- Advisor Endorsement Form (an email is ok)

Formal Thesis Proposal (see Step II).

These need to be approved by your advisor and then submitted to the Program for final approval by the end of the second week of classes, fall term, senior year.

Preparation: Junior Year – winter/spring Term

Choosing an Advisor — Choosing a Topic

Plans for writing an honors thesis should be made during the junior year—the earlier the better. Begin by meeting with that faculty member in the Program with whom you expect to work.

If you have already selected a topic.

Find the Women's, Gender, and Sexuality Studies faculty member most knowledgeable in that area and discuss plans for your approach, do preliminary readings, and compile a tentative bibliography. If you do not know which faculty member you would like to work with, ask the Women's, Gender, and Sexuality Studies Chair or Coordinator and they will suggest appropriate faculty members with expertise in that field.

If you know the faculty advisor you wish to work with, but do not have a topic.

Ask your advisor for help. Propose possible topics that interest you (see Ways to Brainstorm About a Thesis Topic, below) and ask your advisor to help you narrow your focus and define your topic.

Your main thesis advisor should be an affiliated faculty member in the Women's, Gender, and Sexuality Studies Program. You may choose a second faculty member who will be a "resource" person rather than an advisor. This person can be from WGSS or outside the Program.

NOTE: Not all faculty are available every term or even every year to supervise work. It is imperative that you locate and approach the faculty member you would like to work with as early as possible.

Ways to Brainstorm About a Thesis Topic:

- Think back to previous courses, course readings, or topics that have interested you.
- Think about your outside interests, extra-curricular readings, hobbies, or organizations you have joined.
- Think about past internships, employment situations, volunteer work or social activist activities.
- Think about your post-Dartmouth vocational plans.

STEP I Preliminary Proposal: Honors Thesis

- ☐ Decide how to situate your project in the field of Women's, Gender, and Sexuality Studies
- ☐ Choose an advisor and consult with them about your ideas
- ☐ Create a rough timetable for your research and writing
- ☐ Establish your summer research and reading list
- ☐ Plan for needed resources for your project/thesis such as lab space, use of computers, funding for travel, duplication costs for questionnaires, creative supplies, archival needs.
- ☐ If you will be gathering data from human subjects (i.e., questionnaires, interviews on sensitive personal issues), contact the Committee for the Protection of Human Subjects. You will need the CPHS's approval to have your thesis proposal accepted. To review their guidelines for undergraduate student researchers, go to: <http://www.dartmouth.edu/~cphs/tosubmit/students/>

Preliminary Proposal

- ☐ A draft of your proposal should be shown to your advisor **BEFORE** you submit your proposal to the Steering Committee. Effective proposals are brief and clear (maximum 2 pages) and should include the following:
 - ☐ A clear statement of the topic
 - ☐ Mention of the texts you plan to include
 - ☐ Your approach: questions you plan to ask; methodology; theoretical framework
 - ☐ The relationship of the topic to the courses you have taken or to your major;
 - ☐ What prepares you for this project?
 - ☐ Any anticipated conclusions

Proposals MUST be accompanied by the following additional materials:

- ☐ DRAFT bibliography (A list of reading you need to do to address the topic—background reading, criticism, historical sources, etc.)
- ☐ Terms you plan to take WGSS 98 and WGSS 99
- ☐ Advisor endorsement form (or email from the advisor to the Program)

The Steering Committee will review and comment on the proposal, timetable and bibliography and make comments or suggestions. The Steering Committee may ask students to revise and resubmit their preliminary proposals, if necessary, before the end of spring term.

STEP II Final Proposal

Due Date: End of the second week of classes, fall term, senior year. (Please check with the WGSS office for the specific due date for final proposals.)

Students will submit a revised final proposal to the Women's, Gender, and Sexuality Studies Steering Committee. The proposal should address any concerns from the Steering Committee's spring term review, and be revised and expanded as a result of summer research. Proposals should include the following:

- ☐ Revised project timetable
- ☐ Updated advisor endorsement form (blitz version is o.k.)
- ☐ Extensive **annotated** bibliography
- ☐ Student course profile
- ☐ Approval from the Human Subjects office if applicable.

STEP III Research, Writing and Creation:

Completed at the end of the first term of thesis (WGSS 98)

- ☐ Develop questionnaires (if using): pre-test and administer
- ☐ Interviews
- ☐ Surveys
- ☐ Archival work
- ☐ Participant observation
- ☐ Lab Experiments
- ☐ Reading and research
- ☐ Drafts of chapters
- ☐ Permissions received to reproduce photographs
- ☐ Copyright permissions acquired
- ☐ Final approval from Human Subjects office

STEP IV Analysis and Writing: Second term of thesis (WGSS 99)

STEP V Thesis Completion: Revision and Final Draft: Second term of thesis (WGSS 99)

A complete and final draft of the thesis must be submitted to the advisor by approximately the 6th or 7th week of spring term in senior year. Please contact the WGSS program for the exact deadline. Note: You should think of this draft as a complete version of your thesis. You will be expected to revise it further based on the comments of your readers.

Oral Presentation:

All Women's, Gender, and Sexuality Studies Honors Majors will give oral presentations of their thesis. Arrangements will be made for research results to be presented to a group of Women's, Gender, and Sexuality Studies faculty or in a public forum.

Final Submission:

THREE final bound copies of the thesis are due in the Women's, Gender, and Sexuality Studies office **no later than the week before the last day of classes in spring term:** One for your advisor, one for the archives in

Rauner Library, and one for the Women's, Gender, and Sexuality Studies office. The WGSS Office can fund the printing of the three required copies; extra copies must be paid for by the student.

Note: Normally an honors thesis would be no less than 50 pages and no more than 100 pages. If it seems likely that your project will fall significantly outside this norm, please consult your advisor and the Program chair. This is most likely in projects that will involve significant research components other than library research and writing. Once you have handed in your thesis your advisor will evaluate your final version and make their recommendation to the Program based on the quality of your work. During the two-day period just prior to final exams, the Women's, Gender, and Sexuality Studies Steering Committee will consider the recommendations of all advisors and then will vote on regular or high honors for all Honors Program participants. Your final grade will be assigned by your primary advisor reflecting your overall participation in WGSS 98 and 99.

Further Recommendations

- **Have regular and substantive meetings with your thesis advisor.**

One of the most significant elements of the Honors program in Women's, Gender, and Sexuality Studies is the collaboration of the student with their faculty advisor. There is no substitute for a good working relationship with your advisor and receiving their feedback. Students should plan to work closely with their advisor from defining their topic to the oral presentation and completed thesis. Advisor and student generally meet once a week over the two terms of WGSS 98/99, and in those meetings often establish a close intellectual relationship that many graduates feel is one of their most valuable experiences.

- **Let your proposal (and time frame) be your guide.**

Preparation is crucial. Leave plenty of time to find your advisor and define your thesis topic. A well-thought out proposal is the strong foundation for a successful thesis. Once you have a good and effective thesis proposal, allow it to guide your thinking over the next two terms of work. You are by no means bound to replicate precisely the kind of arguments you set out in the proposal, but do not wholly abandon your research and thinking. Develop and expand the ideas in the proposal. Over time, the changes in the thesis should be gradual and come out of further research rather than any abrupt changes mid-project.

- **The thesis is not a recapitulation of sources you've read.**

The Honors thesis is your original and thoughtful contribution to the field of Women's, Gender, and Sexuality Studies. It is not a recapitulation of sources you have read nor is it an exercise in pure creativity or simple data gathering.

- **Leave time for revisions!**

As you go along, develop your chapters in an overall progressing argument and leave time for revisions. The spring term of your senior year will be busy. You will have to devote a substantial amount of time toward your thesis work, and a crucial part of the writing is revising.

- **Be aware of deadlines.**

Note the deadlines as indicated in these guidelines. It is your responsibility to know when things are due. Do not expect your advisor or anyone in the Program to remind you. Program faculty and staff will not respond to crises due to lack of planning or missed deadlines.

- **Anticipate Problems and Don't Wait Until the Last Minute.**

Leave time for inter-library loans; requests for copyright permissions; approval from the Human Subjects office. Leave time for identifying and interviewing subjects; gaining access to field sites; and return time for questionnaires, transcribing etc. Leave time for any computer issues—hard drives crash, software gives out. Back up your data as you have never done before; have alternative computing arrangements. Problems are inevitable, but they can be resolved if you don't wait until the last minute.

Final Thesis Formatting and Copies

THREE final bound copies of the thesis are due in the Women's and Gender Studies office (Carpenter 2) in late May (the date will vary depending on the term schedule): One for your advisor, one for the archives in Rauner Library, and one for the WGSS office. If your thesis is being written in conjunction with another department or program, additional copies may be required; please consult with the WGSS Program Coordinator on this if needed. The copy for Rauner library should be delivered to the WGS office.

WGSS can help fund the final printing of student theses. Students should work with the Program Coordinator to arrange the final printing.

Access and Restrictions

The copy of a student's honors thesis submitted becomes the physical property of Dartmouth College. The student retains all copyrights to the work unless alternate arrangements are made by the student.

Photocopying from theses is done only within the restrictions of copyright law and in keeping with the physical preservation of the theses. Reproductions may be made for Interlibrary Loan. The author may dispose of other copies of his/her thesis as desired, may publish the thesis, and register the copyright at any time.

Students should be aware that thesis recommendations apply to the record copy of the thesis in the Archives; it is the responsibility of the student to become familiar with the policies of academic departments that require separate copies of the thesis.