

## GUIDELINES FOR HONORS

The University specifies that a student who has a superior record in his or her concentration and who completes an Honors thesis may be awarded a degree with Honors. There are some University rules governing Honors degrees, summarized on the next page, and the departmental rules are summarized below. Please note that the student must take the initiative in requesting Honors, and in initiating and completing an Honors thesis.

### **Geological Sciences Requirements for Honors: 2008**

Overview: Honors may be awarded to candidates for either AB or ScB degrees, and the departmental requirements are essentially identical (see below for details), namely: (1) a superior record in the required concentration courses, and (2) the completion of an Honors thesis based on research completed during a GEOL 1970 (formerly GE 191 or GE 192) Independent Study course. ScB students are required to take one semester of independent research, but the Honors requirements are more stringent than just the satisfactory completion of that course. AB students commonly choose to take GEOL 1970 as one of their elective concentration courses; again the Honors requirements are more stringent than just the satisfactory completion of that course.

#### **1. Superior academic record in the concentration.**

In order to qualify for Honors, a student should have a superior academic record in his or her concentration; this shall normally be defined as a grade point average of 3.4 or greater in all of the required concentration courses (including both those within the Geological Sciences Department and those in other departments). In special circumstances, the Undergraduate Concentration Advisors, in consultation with the faculty, may make an exception to this GPA requirement.

#### **2. Completion of an Honors Thesis**

In addition to the usual requirements for an Independent Study course (see separate sheet), there are additional requirements:

**(a)** The student must declare his or her intention for Honors to the faculty sponsor and to the concentration advisors at the beginning of the term in which the GEOL 1970 course is taken. The concentration advisors can evaluate the GPA criterion as of that time. (The student is free to decide later in the semester that he or she does not wish to submit the work for Honors, and in this case it will be completed as a normal GEOL 1970 course. If the student submits the work for Honors but the department decides not to recommend Honors, the student will still receive credit for the GEOL 1970 course, as long as those course or ScB thesis requirements have been met.)

**(b)** An Honors thesis should be more ambitious in scope than the normal independent study project. It commonly is the result of two semesters of work (which may or may not involve formally taking GEOL 1970 over two semesters), perhaps building on field or lab work in the preceding summer.

**(c)** The Honors project will be supervised by one faculty member, but the written Honors thesis will be read and approved by the faculty sponsor and by two additional staff members acting as readers. Most commonly the additional two readers will be other faculty members (tenure track or research), but in some cases it may be appropriate to have a senior graduate student serve as one of the readers. The student seeking Honors should ask these two additional people whether they would be willing to serve as readers by mid March at the latest, and inform the main faculty advisor as well as the concentration advisors.

**(d)** A complete draft of the written thesis should be given to the faculty advisor by mid April, and undergo a first round of revisions in accordance with his or her suggestions, before being given to the two outside readers. The revised thesis must be given to the outside readers (and the advisor) by Friday April 25 (2008), or at least one full week before the deadline for the department to submit Honors recommendations to the University (Friday May 2 in 2008).

**(e)** The student must present his or her work orally to a general audience that includes the faculty advisor and two additional readers. This presentation should be publicly advertised at least a week in advance. It must be scheduled before the date by which departmental recommendations for Honors are due (eg Friday May 2, 2008). The student should aim for a professional presentation of about 20-30 minutes length, and allow additional time for questions. It is imperative to practise this talk in advance, and get feedback from the main advisor.

**(f)** After the oral presentation, the faculty advisor will let the concentration advisors know if he or she and the two additional readers are in agreement that the thesis is of Honors quality. Note that these comments will come directly to the advisors and not to the student. The advisors will look over the student's record as well as the thesis, and make the final recommendation for Honors to the University, and at the same time (May 2 2008) inform the student.

**(g)** It is expected that the student will complete a final revision of his or her written thesis following the oral presentation, taking into account the suggestions of the two additional readers, points that might come up in the questions and discussion associated with the oral presentation, plus any remaining questions from the faculty supervisor. The due date for this final version is at the discretion of the faculty advisor, but can be late in the final exam period.

**(h)** Finally the student should make one bound copy of the thesis for his or her main advisor, plus one additional copy for the department (give to Jan, to be placed in GeoChem room 028).

## **University Rules and Regulations for Honors**

1. The University shall, at graduation, grant Honors to students whose work in a field of concentration has demonstrated superior quality and culminated in an Honors Thesis of distinction.
2. The designation "Honors" shall be included on the student's transcript and diploma.
3. No distinctions shall be made among quality levels of Honors work.
4. Students considering Honors work should consult their departmental or independent concentration advisor. If the advisor accepts the student as an Honors candidate, the advisor will request the Registrar to record the fact.
5. The Educational Policy Committee shall administer the Honors Program. It will:
  - (a) Assume overall responsibility for the Program;
  - (b) Arrange to issue timely procedural reminders to students and to departmental and independent concentration advisors;
  - (c) Act on recommendations for Honors awards(It will *not*: file or specify formats for Honors theses; or maintain records of Honors candidates).
6. Recommendations for Honors awards shall be submitted to the Educational Policy Committee and shall include an evaluation of (1) the student's overall performance in concentration, and (2) the quality of the Honors Thesis.
  - (a) For students pursuing a standard concentration in a department, the Honors recommendation will be made by the department.
  - (b) For students in an inter-departmental program of study, the Honors recommendation will originate in the appropriate committee.
  - (c) For students pursuing an independent concentration, the Honors recommendation will be made by the student's sponsor with the approval of two other faculty members familiar with his work.