

HONORS IN THE BEO-ORGANIZATIONAL STUDIES TRACK

General: In all tracks of BEO, students may graduate with honors if (1) they have excellent grades in concentration courses (2) they find a faculty member or members willing to supervise their work on a honors thesis, and (3) that faculty member (or those faculty members) find(s) the completed thesis to be of honors quality. The thesis supervisor will normally be from the department corresponding to the student's track, but can with the permission of a BEO Track Advisor, be someone from another BEO-related department. Generally, the thesis requires two semesters of work during the senior year and this work is in addition to the non-honors concentration requirements.

An honors thesis must represent a substantial effort in research and exposition. An honors thesis can be descriptive, historical, mathematical, or statistical. It can be oriented toward fact, theory, policy or a combination of these areas. While BEO does not specify page lengths or other requirements, the candidate should establish his or her goals in an understanding with the thesis supervisor.

Organizational Studies Honors Requirements: Students must do the following by the end of the junior year or very early in the senior year:

1. Have at least a 3.5 grade point average (A=4, B=3, C=2) across all letter-graded courses that the student chooses to count toward the concentration, as reflected in the student's current Course Plan. S/NC courses will not be included in this average; however, students who wish to graduate with honors may count no more than three S/NC courses (including Math 0090) toward concentration requirements overall, and may count no more than one S/NC course toward the OrgStudies track.
2. Find a thesis supervisor and a second reader. The supervisor and the reader are chosen by the student and approved by the Track Advisor. This process may begin before the thesis proposal is finalized – and, indeed, most thesis supervisors will want to be involved in the process of formalizing the thesis topic and framing the proposal. The reader is usually selected after (and in consultation with) the supervisor. Like the supervisor, the reader will receive a draft and a finished copy of the student's thesis for grading. During the earlier stages of the project, the supervisor will generally be the thesis-writer's primary source of guidance; however, the reader may also be involved, depending upon the arrangement made between the student and reader.
3. Select a topic. This is usually done in consultation with the thesis supervisor, but must be approved by the BEO/OrgStudies Track Advisor. The senior thesis will normally consist of a major research paper on a topic within the field of Organizational Studies.
4. Submit a written thesis proposal (not more than four pages) for approval by a committee of BEO faculty. The proposal should outline the topic that the thesis will address, the primary bodies of prior scholarship that the thesis will review, and the research design that the thesis will employ.
5. Enroll in the Sociology Department's seniors honors tutorial class (SOC 1950) in the Fall and Spring semesters. If Soc1950 is not being offered, the student may enroll in Independent Studies (SOC 1980-1990) with the thesis supervisor in one or both semesters. Generally, students do not simultaneously enroll in *both* an Independent Study *and* SOC 1950 during the

same semester, although this can be done if the thesis supervisor and the BEO-OS Track Advisor judge it to be appropriate.

The SOC 1950 Seminar: SOC 1950 is an advanced research seminar for students who are working on honors theses. The seminar focuses on finalizing a senior thesis and giving a presentation of the completed work. The Sociology Department requires that all Sociology thesis writers enroll in this course, and BEO requires it for all BEO-OrgStudies thesis writers as well. SOC 1950 is a one credit course that students take across two successive semesters, receiving 0.5 units of credit in each semester.

Due Dates: During the second week of March, a complete draft of the **senior thesis** must be given to the thesis supervisor and the reader for comments, and the final version of the senior thesis is due during the second week of April (the exact dates vary from year to year and are announced at the start of the academic year). These deadlines are essential to allow faculty time to evaluate theses for awards, and to notify the Registrar with recommendations for honors. **NO EXCEPTIONS WILL BE GRANTED**

Graduating with Honors: In order to graduate with honors, the student must complete all of the steps outlined above. In addition, the student must meet the following criteria at the time of graduation:

1. The student must have received a passing grade in Soc 1950 (or, if Soc 1950 was not offered, in an equivalent Independent Study) in both semesters.
2. A final draft of the student's thesis must have been approved for honors by both the thesis supervisor and the second reader.
3. The student must graduate with a grade point average of at least 3.5 (A=4, B=3, C=2) across all letter-graded courses that the student chooses to count toward the concentration, as reflected in the student's final Course Plan. S/NC courses will not be included in this average; however, students who wish to graduate with honors may count no more than three S/NC courses (including Math 0090) toward concentration requirements overall, and may count no more than one S/NC course toward the OrgStudies track.

Frequently Asked Questions:

1. The BEO website says "The thesis supervisor will normally be from the department corresponding to the student's track, but can with the permission of a BEO concentration advisor, be someone from another BEO-related department." What counts as "BEO-related"?

Answer: Generally, the BEO related departments are Sociology, Economics and Engineering; however, in extraordinary cases a thesis writer may seek permission from his/her track advisor to work with a thesis supervisor from another department on campus. In such cases, it is important (a) that the topic of the thesis must be pre-cleared with the BEO track advisor, to ensure that it is appropriate for BEO honors, and (b) that the secondary reader **must** be affiliated with a BEO-related department and qualified to review the thesis by the criteria of the BEO concentration.

2. Are all Org Studies thesis writers required to take Soc1950 (the Senior Research Seminar), or do they also have the option of doing the thesis as a Soc1980-1990 Independent Study with their thesis supervisor?

Answer: All Org Studies thesis writers required to enroll in Soc1950 in *both* semesters. They may also choose to enroll in an Independent Study with their thesis supervisor (for example, in order to bring themselves up to a full credit-load), but this is not required. Credit levels for Independent Study are negotiated between the thesis writer and the supervisor. The usual credit levels are either .5 or 1 credit per semester.

3. Can I use a senior thesis to meet any of my BEO track requirements?

Answer: No. Neither the thesis itself nor the thesis-writing coursework (Soc1950, Soc1980 and Soc1990) can be substituted for any other elements of the BEO concentration; however, thesis-writing credits do count toward Brown University course fulfillment.

4. Will a BEO-OS concentrator encounter any difficulties (pre-requisites, permissions, etc.) in registering for Soc 1950?

Answer: No. But students should be enrolled in Soc1950 from the start. The Soc1950 instructor has discretion to permit or reject late additions.

5. Are all Brown honors awarded at the concentration level, or is there a way to earn University Honors for a thesis outside one's concentration field?

Answer: Thesis honors are only offered at the concentration level; however, students with exceptional GPA's (top 20% in class) are awarded "Latin Honors" upon graduation. The Registrar calculates Latin Honors and no one knows their status for sure until a few days before graduation.