

Department of American Studies Undergraduate Departmental Honors Program

Departmental Honors in American Studies is available to American Studies majors through an Honors Thesis program. In order to participate, a student must get permission from the Director of Undergraduate Studies (DUS), find a faculty mentor, and enroll in the American Studies Honors Thesis (AMST 499) for three credit hours.

The American Studies Honors Thesis (AMST 499) is intended as a capstone experience for senior honors candidates who are interested in writing an expanded research project on a chosen topic. Writing an Honors Thesis provides an opportunity to work collaboratively with an American Studies faculty mentor to produce an exceptional American Studies research paper. Compared to the Senior Thesis (as produced in AMST 485), an Honors Thesis is longer, more developed, and more integrative of diverse faculty feedback. The Honors Thesis provides an opportunity to conclude your BA degree with a substantial and note-worthy accomplishment.

The Honors Thesis can be an expansion of the research project produced in the Senior Seminar (AMST 485) or it can be a different research project that was begun in another advanced American Studies course. Oftentimes, students enroll in AMST 499 and AMST 485 simultaneously, although it is possible to enroll in AMST 499 the semester *after* you have completed AMST 485.

To participate in our Departmental Honors program, you must plan and follow these steps:

1. First, meet with the Director of Undergraduate Studies (DUS) at least one semester before enrolling in AMST 499 to see if you are eligible for the Honors Program, discuss possible research topics, and talk over possible faculty mentors.
2. The student will then approach a prospective faculty mentor to talk over the research project and the availability of the faculty mentor. In this meeting, the student and faculty mentor should agree on the research project, create a preliminary research plan, and schedule follow up meetings.
3. The student then completes the “American Studies Honors Program Application,” obtains all required signatures, and returns the Application to the Director of Undergraduate Studies (DUS). Completing this paperwork and meeting with the DUS will give the student permission to register for AMST 499.
4. Students must meet regularly with their faculty mentor during the semester in order to obtain feedback on all drafts of their Honors Thesis.
5. The completed Honors Thesis should be at least thirty, double-spaced pages (approximately 7500 words), not including notes and bibliography.
6. The completed Honors Thesis should be first approved by the faculty mentor, then submitted to the Director of Undergraduate Studies before finals week (aka the last week of classes).
7. All Honors candidates will participate in a short presentation of their research at the undergraduate colloquium, usually scheduled for the last week of classes during the Spring Semester.

After completion of the Honors Thesis and presentation, the faculty mentor, Director of Undergraduate Studies, and/or the instructor for AMST 485 will collectively evaluate the Honors Thesis in order to award the student with departmental honors (*cum laude*, *magna cum laude*, and *summa cum laude*).