

B.A. LIBERAL ARTS AND SCIENCES



HARRIET L. WILKES HONORS COLLEGE

ACADEMIC LEARNING COMPACT

CONTENT KNOWLEDGE (Declarative Knowledge, Research Skills, Technical Skills): Through the writing of an honors thesis, students will demonstrate a thorough knowledge of the fundamental concepts and methods in the student's area of study as well as the ability to draw on ideas and methods from related disciplines where appropriate.

COMMUNICATION (Written Communication): Through the writing of an honors thesis, students will demonstrate proper use of grammar, syntax, structure and style in the creation of a persuasive argument, and/or will meet criteria of competent communication appropriate to the concentration for which the thesis is written.

COMMUNICATION (Collaborative Skills): Through the process of conducting research and formulating the thesis in collaboration with the thesis advisors, students will demonstrate the ability to interact with faculty by communicating ideas in the process of researching and writing the thesis, responding to criticisms from faculty advisors, taking the initiative, and meeting deadlines.

CRITICAL THINKING (Analytical Skills; Creative Skills): Through the writing of an honors thesis, students will demonstrate the ability to raise appropriate questions and use in-depth analysis in order to make an original contribution to existing scholarship, and/or demonstrate the application of critical thinking skills to the completion of a creative project.

To prepare for writing a senior thesis, students will complete (1) courses in their concentration aimed at providing the content knowledge needed to write a thesis, (2) writing courses that may include 3-credit writing courses or 1-credit writing in the discipline courses, as well as other writing intensive courses aimed at providing competence in effective written communication, and (3) courses in the core and concentration designed to build critical thinking skills. Students will begin formulating a thesis prior to their senior year. During the senior year they will enroll in thesis

research and thesis writing and will produce a draft honors thesis to be evaluated. Assessment will be done by a primary and secondary thesis reader who will use the following standards:

Honors with distinction

- The thesis demonstrates a profound knowledge of the fundamental concepts and methods in the subject area.
- The thesis shows mastery of grammar, syntax, structure and style: it is lucid, well-organized, and stylistically elegant.
- The thesis engages in sophisticated critical thinking and rigorously considers alternate resolutions of a problem in an exemplary fashion or otherwise shows sophisticated critical thinking in an exemplary manner appropriate to the area of study.
- The student demonstrates excellent interpersonal and collaborative skills by communicating ideas with great precision and thoughtfulness in the process of researching and writing the thesis, responding thoughtfully and rigorously to virtually all substantial criticisms from faculty advisors, taking the initiative to a great extent, and meeting deadlines with minimal oversight from advisors.

Honors

- The thesis shows a thorough knowledge of the fundamental concepts and methods in the subject area.
- The thesis shows effective command of grammar, syntax, structure and style: it is clearly written and sensibly organized.
- The thesis engages in sophisticated critical thinking and explores alternate approaches or resolutions of a problem effectively or otherwise shows sophisticated critical thinking in an effective manner appropriate to the area of study.
- The student demonstrates effective interpersonal and collaborative skills by communicating ideas clearly in the process of researching and writing the thesis, by responding to many of the substantial criticisms from faculty advisors, showing the ability to take some initiative, and meeting deadlines without excessive oversight from advisors.

Unacceptable

- The thesis does not show competent knowledge of the fundamental concepts and methods in the subject area.
- The thesis does not show mastery of grammar, syntax, structure, or style.
- The thesis does not competently engage in critical thinking or explore alternate approaches or resolutions of a problem.
- The student does not demonstrate effective interpersonal and collaborative skills; the student does not communicate ideas clearly in the process of researching and writing the thesis, does not respond to many of the substantial criticisms from faculty advisors, does not take the initiative, and does not consistently meet deadlines.

Students whose thesis draft is deemed unacceptable in one of the outcomes may be required to make satisfactory revisions to receive a passing grade on the thesis. This may require doing additional coursework to acquire the necessary knowledge in the subject area.

Approved by the faculty in the Honors College, October 18, 2005