

Honors and Departmental Distinction in Spanish

Writing a Thesis to Achieve Distinction/Honors

1. Requirements to participate in the program:

Any member of the University Honors Program majoring in Spanish may write a senior honors thesis. Additionally, any Spanish major with a GPA of 3.30 or more, and a major point average of 3.6 or more (at the end of their junior year), may earn departmental distinction by completing a senior thesis.

2. General description of the thesis:

2.1. The thesis is conceived as an extended analytical and argumentative paper based on individual research. It should be written entirely in Spanish, however, it is left to the discretion of the advisor to determine if any English language sources could be used and, if used, whether or not direct quotes should be translated.

2.2. The thesis topic should be an original formulation on the part of the student and engage him or her with critical perspectives in the chosen field. Topics may have to do with literature, culture, civilization or language and, with the approval of the faculty advisor, may combine interests from another major as long as the topic is focused on the Spanish-speaking world. The student is encouraged to explore a theme that is not covered within the current course offerings of the section. It is possible to work starting from a subject already touched upon in a class, in which case the project should involve a substantial expansion beyond any previous work.

2.3. Format and technical requirements:

2.3.1. The thesis should be formatted according to the then current edition of the *MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers*; minimum of 20 pages, double spaced, font size 12 (Times New Roman), one-inch margin on all sides.

2.3.2. The number and type of sources required may vary depending on the specific project and what is agreed between the student and the advisor. However, it should be consistent with expectations for Honors. A minimum of 20 sources in Spanish would be typical. If justified, a limited number of sources in English could be allowed at the discretion of the advisor.

2.3.3. An English abstract/summary of the thesis should be included with its final version.

3. Process and timeline:

3.1 Junior year. During the junior year, a student should select an area of interest and look for an advisor among the faculty who regularly teach courses at the advanced level. The topic would be determined in consultation with that advisor, who will also oversee the completion of the project.

3.1.1 Generally, a faculty member would supervise projects within his or her own specialty area. The student will work with the advisor in the same way that it is done with independent study courses. They will hold formal meetings regularly, and the advisor will be responsible for the final evaluation and grading of the project.

3.2. By the end of spring quarter of the junior year, the student will submit a short statement summarizing the topic and stating possible questions or ideas to develop, together with a preliminary annotated bibliography of at least 5 titles. The faculty advisor will meet with the student to discuss the statement. This will be an opportunity to generate feedback for the student, raising concerns or suggestions regarding the research project. Together, they will outline a work plan for the completion of the thesis.

3.2.1 The advisor will keep a file with the original statement, the successive versions of the work in progress, and other documentation pertaining to the project.

3.3. Summer. Students are advised to dedicate at least part of their time during the summer to advance their research project.

3.4. Fall of senior year is a time for fine tuning ideas and for research. By the fifth week of the quarter the student will submit a formal proposal outlining the thesis of the project and highlighting the main ideas and arguments, together with an updated working bibliography.

3.5. The thesis will be researched and written during fall and winter quarters with the spring reserved for revision. A thesis is expected to go through several drafts, which will be evaluated by the advisor. An excellent level of work is expected (a thesis deserving Honors has to be worthy of an 'A'). If the work is deficient or somehow lacking, the student will be advised as to necessary changes and corrections. Even a high quality and well-developed work is not necessarily a finished product. The advisor will provide corrections and suggestions to improve the project. A final version is due not later than May 15th.

3.6. Students may choose to sign up for senior thesis credits (SPAN 3998) or not, depending on their course load. Two credits during fall quarter and two in winter is the standard procedure. It is recommended that the student sign up for at least one credit at

some point during the senior year so that the work receives proper recognition on the permanent transcript.

3.6.1 A student who signs up for SPAN 3998, Honors Thesis, and completes a paper worthy of college credit, but fails to meet the high standards of an honor thesis will be awarded credit for the course, but will not be granted Honors or Distinction.