

**The Department of African American Studies**  
**The Honors Thesis for African American Studies Majors**

Overview for the Student

The honors thesis should be thought of as the major writing project of your undergraduate education. The subject of the thesis should be of your own choosing, but will be finalized and approved in consultation with your thesis adviser who will be a full-time member of the African American Studies Department. An associate adviser may be chosen from among other faculty or experts if approved by the chairperson of the Department.

Overall, the honors thesis, by focusing on a restricted and specified body of material or subject will demonstrate your degree of achievement as an inquiring mind.

The honors thesis will demonstrate that you have the ability to focus selectively on a compelling topic, research it, organize it, and interpret it in an authoritative manner.

More specifically, the honors thesis will demonstrate your understanding that African American Studies is more than a body of information concerned with Africans and people of African descent. Your thesis will represent your understanding of African American Studies as a discipline, that is, an approach process, or method by which the body of information or materials should be handled and interpreted.

While it represents a culmination point of your learning about African American and African culture, the honors thesis project is also an opportunity for you to continue to refine your skills of discrimination, perception, analysis, and writing. Therefore you will begin collecting the information and interpretive criteria and methods, all of which will ultimately shape your thoughts from the first moments of your contact with African American Studies faculty.

Finally, the honors thesis will represent, to a large extent, the degree to which you can be entrusted to be an ambassador in the world of African and African American Studies scholarship. It will provide a good introduction to graduate work and may very well become your passport into graduate school.

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Guidelines and Procedures

- I. You should begin to think about possible honors thesis research topics at the time that you choose the major. This will allow you time for proper preparation of skills and general acquaintance with requisite subject areas.

Select a subject in which you are interested in expanding and deepening your knowledge, as well as one that will help you to continue to refine your academic skills. Your thesis subject **must** be based on the work that you have done in the three African American Studies courses.

- II. The major faculty adviser must be a member of the core faculty of our African American Studies Department. The major faculty adviser will be chosen based on her/his expertise in the area of investigation chosen by the student.

A second adviser should be chosen from among any of the general University faculty, part-time or full-time, if needed. The major adviser and a second adviser must be involved in evaluating your preliminary application proposal. The chairperson of the department will give final approval to the application with his or her signature.

- III. Before the faculty advisor signs your application form, he/she will make sure your topic is restricted, challenging, and feasible.

You, the student, should be able to manage completion of (A) the basic research and (B) the preparation of a detailed outline of the project by the end of the first semester of enrollment in the 195 sequence.

You and your adviser should work out a calendar of dates tailored to both of your needs.

- IV. Depending on the nature of the subject, the thesis will be a minimum of forty-five full, typed pages.

You, the student, at your expense will have the final draft copied clearly and bound securely at a copying and binding service that you trust to do high quality work.

You will present **the original transcript plus one copy** to your thesis adviser. (It would of course be wise to make a copy for yourself.)

The final submitted copies of your thesis will bear your faculty adviser's final comments and your grade. The departmental chairperson's signature will

also be required but will be requested by the faculty adviser when the major faculty adviser has done her/his final evaluation of it.

The departmental chairperson will turn the signed original and the signed copy over to the Departmental Adviser's office where both copies will remain on permanent reserve.

Your thesis will be available for reading by interested persons, but you, the author, hold copyright. You may indicate this by entering the copyright notation (© 2000, for example).