

Department of History and Political Science

DEPARTMENTAL HONORS IN POLITICAL SCIENCE

In order to recognize exceptional students, all major programs at LVC provide the opportunity for Departmental Honors work during the junior and senior years. Students who successfully complete and defend their Honors project will receive recognition on their College transcript.

Eligibility

Students with junior or senior standing are eligible to apply for Departmental Honors. Students must have a GPA of 3.5 in Political Science courses and a cumulative GPA of at least 3.0. These requirements must be met both at the time of application and at the time of graduation.

Requirements

In addition to the GPA requirements, the honors program includes a substantial piece of work requiring extensive independent research within an Independent Study program resulting in a high-caliber thesis. A thesis of this quality requires sustained research effort throughout at least one semester and requires identification of a topic of study and research before the start of the semester.

The student must form an Honors Committee consisting of three faculty members. The Chair and Second Reader must be full-time Political Science professors. The Third Reader must be an LVC professor who works in a related area, but in a discipline other than Political Science (e.g., History, Economics, Sociology).

The student is expected to work independently and to meet with his/her Committee Chair on at least a bi-weekly basis. The Chair may require written work for each meeting. If at any time the Chair believes that the student's research effort is insufficient for an Honors project, s/he may recommend cessation of Honors and dissolve the Honors Committee. In this eventuality, the student will still be enrolled in an Independent Study and will receive credit assuming satisfactory completion of the Independent study program.

Deadlines

- The semester **before** the project begins:
 - The student must submit by Dec. 1 (for those pursuing Spring honors) or May 1 (for those pursuing Fall honors) a one-page abstract that describes the proposed project, including research question, objectives, and methods.
 - The student must sign up for an Independent Study in Political Science (PSC 500) with the professor who will chair the Honors Committee.
- Late January (or September): Students will be informed whether their proposal has been accepted for Honors. All proposals must be approved by all full-time Political

Science faculty members. Students whose proposals are not approved for Honors may still complete the Independent Study, subject to approval by the supervising professor.

- Third week of March (or October): Draft submitted to Committee Chair. The body should be at least 7500 words exclusive of notes, bibliography, etc.
- Early April (or November): Draft submitted to full Honors Committee.
- After reading the draft, the members of the Honors Committee make a recommendation to the Chair as to whether or not the thesis is worthy of Honors.
- Third week of April (or November): Final draft submitted to Honors Committee. The Committee members have between one and two weeks to review the thesis.
- Finals week: Oral defense of project.

Oral Defense and Satisfaction of the Requirements for Honors

The Committee Chair will schedule the oral defense in consultation with the Honors Committee and members of the Department of History and Political Science. The oral defense is announced to the public. It will normally take place during the examination period or the week prior.

During the oral defense, the student will present his/her work to the Committee and members of the Department of History and Political Science and respond to questions. The student should expect to be judged on the quality of the analysis and topic as well as the presentation of the research. The student will be expected to respond to suggestions, significant points and critiques of his/her work. The Chair and member(s) of the Committee have no role in defending the thesis. The oral defense may, but is not expected to last beyond one hour in total.

Immediately following the oral defense, the Committee will decide whether the candidate receives Honors (without revision), Honors (with revision), or No Honors. The Chair informs the candidate of the Committee's recommendation. If revisions are required, the student will resubmit the thesis to the chair within one week.

The grade for the Independent Study will be assigned by the Committee Chair.

Copy of Thesis and Other Requirements

The student must file one paper copy and one electronic copy (CD) of the final thesis as well as a signed release form with the College Archives in Bishop Library.

The student should also submit a paper copy of the thesis to the Department of History and Political Science office.