

**Blackboard course site:** Please see the Blackboard site “Senior Research” for an electronic copy of this syllabus.

### Deadlines

#### *Summer-Fall Senior Year*

Students should begin conducting research as soon as possible. The summer is an ideal time to do field work related to the project. Historically, the best projects have started data collection early and continued throughout the academic year. Most Honors research students have presented the results of their work at professional meetings: the deadlines for these meetings are typically many months beforehand. Thus, to present one must have the research to an advanced state by the deadline, not by the meeting.

#### *Wednesday, August 25*

Honors students must apply to the geology department and the Charles Center for honors eligibility. Application forms are available on the Charles Center website:

<http://www.wm.edu/as/charlescenter/honors/index.php>

#### *Friday, October 8*

Honors students must submit a progress report to the Chair and their advisor. This report should include: title of their thesis research, description of their research questions/goals, a statement on their progress thus far, and a statement on what remains to be accomplished. Advisors may request additional information (e.g., data, figures) to be included in this report. This report should be submitted via Blackboard.

#### *Friday, December 17*

Honors students must submit their introductory sections (including Introduction, Background, Previous Work, Geologic Setting, and **ANY** other sections before Methods), Methods section, and one results figure (illustrating their results) to the Chair and their advisor(s). Please note that the Introduction and Methods sections should be complete, including all figures and references. This material should be submitted via Blackboard.

#### *By Monday, January 17*

Honors students must have successfully completed the departmental written exam (see below).

#### *Friday, February 11*

Honors students must submit their Results section to the Chair and their advisor(s). Please note that this section should be complete, including all figures and references. This material should be submitted via Blackboard.

#### *Monday, February 14*

Honors students must submit a list of potential committee members to their advisor(s). The committee should consist of at least three faculty, including 1) faculty research advisor, 2)

another geology faculty member, and 3) a non-geology faculty member. This third committee member can be from any department on campus, although many students elect to have other science faculty (e.g. chemistry, physics, biology) on the committee. The committee may consist of more than three members and a number of Geology Honors committees have included scientists from outside William & Mary (VIMS, VDMR, USGS). The student should consult with their research advisor about the committee, but it is the student who asks other faculty to serve on the committee. Once the members of the committee have been identified, the advisor forwards those names to the Director of the Charles Center for approval. More info is available on the Charles Center website:

<http://www.wm.edu/as/charlescenter/honors/planning/index.php>

*Friday, March 4th*

Honors students must submit their **COMPLETED THESIS** (with figures, plates, etc.) to the Chair, and their advisor(s). This material should be submitted via Blackboard. This version of the thesis is not a rough draft and should have already undergone several revisions with advisor input.

*Friday, April 15<sup>th</sup>*

Honors students must submit their **COMPLETED THESIS** (with figures, plates, etc.) to their honors committee. Please contact each committee member to ask what format (paper or electronic) they prefer.

*Week of April 21st*

Honors students present their thesis as a public event that is advertised to the departmental community. In addition to the Honors committee, other geology faculty, students, and friends are commonly in attendance. The purpose of the presentation is for the student to communicate to the William & Mary community; the nature of their project, the results, and the overall significance of their findings. The talk should be approximately 30-40 minutes in length and make use of the media available for delivering a visually stimulating presentation. A time for questions from the general audience follows the presentation. Afterwards, the general audience is dismissed and the Honors researcher fields questions from the committee. These questions are designed to give the committee a better understanding of what the student knows and their ability to think quickly and efficiently. After the committee's questions are complete, the student will be dismissed and the committee will decide whether the project is worthy of Honors. After the committee has made its decision, the student will be called back and informed as to the outcome. The whole proceeding (from the start of the presentation to the committee's decision) generally takes about 90 minutes.

It is the Department's hope that all Honors projects that reach the presentation stage are Honors worthy (that is why there are so many other hurdles along the way). In the rare case in which a project, at this stage, does not merit Honors, the appropriate actions will be taken to drop Geo 495-496 from the student's record and to add Geo 491-2 (note: this will result in a change from six credits to four).

*Friday, May 6<sup>th</sup>*

Honors students must submit thesis cover sheet to the Charles Center.

*Friday, May 13th*

Honors students must submit:

- Two paper copies and one electronic CD copy of their final corrected theses plus a copy of the honors cover sheet to Carol Roe (McG1 228). Please turn in your paper copies loose in a large envelope, do **not** bind or staple it, and put both your and your advisor's names on the front of the envelope. Please write your name and year in Sharpie on the CD and put it in the envelope.
- One paper copy plus original cover sheet with signatures to the University Archives in the Special Collections Research Center on the first floor of Swem Library. This copy must be printed on acid free paper and not bound in any way.
- Paper and/or electronic copies to their advisor (**check with advisor for number of copies and formats**).

**Description:** Honors research is a yearlong program of research and study that students with a keen interest in the earth sciences might want to consider. Honors research is intended to be a self-motivated and self-driven project that is conducted in close cooperation with a faculty advisor. The Department views Honors as a significant academic achievement and has set high standards. Honors research entails 1) writing and presenting a strong research proposal, 2) data collection throughout the academic year (and commonly during the summer), 3) a comprehensive written examination based on course work, and 4) a thesis and final presentation to a faculty committee and the department. Students completing Honors research earn six credits (three per semester) for their effort. Honors research is a great way to immerse yourself into the research process and delve deeply into a problem or topic that you find exciting: it is a significant undertaking, but there is also much to be gained from such an effort.

### **How Does Honors Differ From Senior Research (Geo 491-2)?**

The Geology Department considers research experience to be a valuable part of the curriculum, thus all Geology concentrators are required to complete a research project during their senior year. But how does Honors research (GEO 495-496) differ from Senior research (GEO 491-2)? The simple answer to that question is Honors Research requires more time, a greater commitment, and a few more challenges (e.g. minimum G.P.A., comprehensive written exam, thesis committee) than Senior research. Honors research also entails more credits (six versus four) than Senior research. The Department thinks that Honors researchers should have a greater depth to their knowledge about both geology in general and the particulars relating to the project. Honors projects should be broader in scope and more ambitious than Senior research. Honors researchers are very independent and capable of making progress without having their faculty advisor laying out every step of the research. In contrast to some departments, Geology Honors researchers are collaborating with a faculty advisor, not serving simply as faculty research assistants. Many William & Mary geologists who have completed Honors research and then gone on to graduate study have commented that the work associated with Honors research was similar to the effort involved in obtaining a Masters degree.

### **Is Honors Research Right For Me?**

Before initiating the process of enrolling in Honors research you should consider a number of factors. Honors research requires a great deal of time and effort; it can also be stressful. If you are committed to diligently working for an entire year on a single research project, Honors might

be just the thing for you. You should, however, not choose to enroll in Honors just because you have done well in your course work. Not all students who earn high marks in their courses are well suited to conduct intensive research. If you are not passionate about a research topic or willing to put in the time required to the project then it would be best not to enroll in Honors. Conversely, some students have done competent work (perhaps not stellar) in their courses, but are very much interested in dedicating themselves to research. If you find yourself in that situation, you should discuss the possibility of Honors research with the faculty. The department encourages students to challenge themselves and do Honors research, but we want students conducting Honors research for the right reasons.

### **Eligibility and Admission to Honors Research**

- A. Students must have (1) a 3.0 cumulative Grade Point Average, or (2) a 3.0 Grade Point Average for the junior year alone, or (3) special permission of the Committee on Honors and Interdisciplinary Studies (this only works in rare cases and the appeal must be initiated by the student and the department).
- B. If the G.P.A. requirement is satisfied the student should consult a faculty advisor and the chair to declare their interest in Honors research as early as possible (early in the spring semester of junior year).
- C. Admission to Honors research will occur when: (1) their eligibility is certified by the Director of the Charles Center and (2) their written research proposal and formal discussion with the faculty has been completed and accepted by the Geology faculty. Note: a student could meet the G.P.A. requirements, but not be granted permission to enroll in Honors because the faculty deems either the proposal or candidate's geologic background of insufficient qualify.

### **Department Written Exam**

Before the start of the second semester of the Senior year, Honors students are required to take a comprehensive written examination on the Geology course work they have completed. The examination is composed of exams from each of the core courses and up to two elective courses. Students need to inform the Department Chair as to 1) when they will take the examination and 2) the courses that they will be examined on. Individual exams are designed to take ~40 minutes to complete and the entire examination will consume the better part of a day. The faculty will grade the examination promptly and the Chair will tally up the score. In order to pass the examination the student must earn a B average or higher ( $\geq 80\%$ ) for the entire exam. A student may pass the examination if their cumulative average is  $\geq 80\%$  even if they score  $< 80\%$  on some individual examinations (Table 1-student X). Students who earn an overall average of between 75-80% will be allowed to retake subject examinations, but must raise their overall score to  $\geq 80\%$  in order to pass (Table 1-student K). Students who earn  $< 75\%$  on the examination have not demonstrated the required proficiency in geology and will not be given the opportunity for a retest (Table 1-student F). Students that earn less than a 70% on any examination (even if their overall average is  $\geq 80\%$  must retake those subject tests; upon reexamination, these students must score better than 70% (Table 1-student Q). Students who do not reach the 70% threshold on any of the reexaminations will not be allowed to continue with Honors research (regardless of their overall score).

Student	320	321	322	323	303	423	AVG	Outcome
X	83	88	91	82	78	86	84.7	Student Passes
Q	82	65	73	89	85	91	80.8	Student must retake Geo 321 and earn >70%
K	82	73	68	82	82	67	75.7	Student must retake Geo 322 & 423 and earn >70%. May retake Geo 321. Overall average must > 80%
F	78	62	66	73	80	77	72.7	Student Fails

Students who do not pass the exam must drop Geo 495-496 and enroll in Senior Research (Geo 491-2). The examinations, grading, retakes, and final outcome need to be completed before the end of the add-drop period during the spring semester.

### Student responsibilities

1. Communicating regularly and effectively with your advisor
2. Surveying and evaluating the primary literature pertaining to your research
3. Refining your research questions/goals
4. Learning and applying data collection and analysis techniques
5. Collecting data throughout the year
6. Analyzing and interpreting those data
7. Writing a formal thesis (see format provided below)
8. Presenting your research to your peers and faculty in the geology department

### Grades

The assignment of grades for senior research is a collective effort involving all faculty members. At the end of the spring semester, we meet and review the work of each student, and attempt to arrive at some consensus regarding an appropriate grade. Our judgments are based on the tangible results of your work, and a variety of additional indications of your engagement with your project. Much of the input in our discussions obviously comes from your advisor. The list below includes many of the components that we consider and discuss in assigning your grade.

1. Quality of the final written thesis: including writing, figures, overall scientific quality, and how much effort was required by your advisor to edit your work
2. Quality of the final oral presentation: including professionalism, quality of oral component (organization, clarity, timing, etc.), quality of visual component (PowerPoint ± slides), overall scientific quality, response to questions
3. Did you have regular meetings with your advisor throughout the year? How many times did you cancel, or just not show up?
4. How successful were those regular meetings? Did you come prepared with questions, new results, new insights, or any indication of progress? Or, did you come having done little, just expecting your advisor to give you another task?
5. Did you complete various tasks in a timely fashion? How much did you do at the last minute?

6. How well did you master the literature on your topic? How diligent were you in seeking out material on your own? Did you read things without being continually bugged about it by your advisor?
7. How successful were you at making the project "your own"? In other words, did you show initiative, or simply go from one assigned task to the next without much independent thought? Your advisor has probably gone to a considerable amount of effort to come up with a project idea for you, and will also spend many hours helping you. We need to see that our efforts are matched by yours.
8. Did you do a brown bag?
9. Did you submit a minor research grant proposal (or any other proposal)?
10. Did you participate in the undergraduate research symposium?
11. If you received financial support for your project during the summer, did you maintain a strong commitment to your work during the academic year (i.e., when you weren't getting paid!)?
12. Did you present the results of your work at a professional meeting? We realize that not everyone is in a position to do this, and it certainly is not a requirement. However, this accomplishment is an indication of early progress, diligence, and . . . *results!*

In the list above, numbers 1 and 2 are obviously the most important. If you are making good progress throughout the year, as reflected in the other items, the final results of your work will almost certainly be of high quality. Unfortunately, the opposite is also true.

**Honor Code Policy:** The geology faculty are strong supporters of the William and Mary Honor Code. If you have any questions about the code, please see:

<http://www.wm.edu/offices/deanofstudents/services/studentconduct/documents/honorcode.pdf>

If you have any questions about what constitutes plagiarism, please let your advisor know and they will discuss it with you.

## Formatting Your Senior Thesis

Your thesis is the written legacy of your research at William & Mary. Therefore, it needs to be loaded with data, well organized, and well documented. Here are some handy hints to help you format and organize your thesis.

### **Formatting instructions**

*Margins:* 1.5" on the left and 1" on the top, bottom, and right sides.

*Line spacing:* double-spaced

*Font:* Times or Times New Roman

*Font size:* 12pt for normal text, 14-18pt for title page

*Page numbering:* centered at the bottom of the page (on all pages following the title page)

### **Outline**

Please use this outline to help you organize your thesis-- but be sure to review your potential outline with your advisor before you start writing! Not all theses will include every section and some may include different sections. All theses should include: a title page, table of contents, list of figures, list of tables, abstract, conclusions, acknowledgements, references cited, and appendices. The sections should follow this general order:

- Title page: must contain the title of your project, your full name, Williamsburg VA, and the date (see Charles Center website for format:  
<http://swem.wm.edu/departments/special-collections/files/thesis-example.pdf>)
- Table of Contents: see sample Table of Contents for format
- List of Figures
- List of Tables
- Abstract: no more than one page
- Introduction
- Background (and/or Geologic Setting)
- Methods (or alternative heading)
- Results
- Discussion
- Conclusions
- Acknowledgements
- References Cited
- Appendices

### **Figures**

Figures should be high quality and as large as is practical. They should be numbered consecutively and inserted into the text (on their own pages) following the first reference to the figure in the text. More than one figure can be included on a page. All figures need detailed captions, which should be included at the bottom of the figure. Most figures should be in black and white, but color figures may be used. Photomicrographs are best as color figures. Inserting photographs as figures looks good, but is expensive for multiple copies. Scanned color images must be printed at the highest possible resolution (these typically look washed out). Color photocopies are also acceptable.

## **References Cited (reprinted from the Information to Authors: GSA Bulletin)**

All references must be cited parenthetically in the text and listed in the References Cited section. List references alphabetically by author's surname. For references with two authors, list alphabetically by first author's surname and then alphabetically by second author's surname. For references with more than two authors, list alphabetically by first author's surname and then chronologically, earliest year first. Distinguish by addition of letters those references that would otherwise have identical citations (e.g., Smith, 1979a, 1979b). Do not abbreviate journal titles or book publishers in references. For references that do not match any of the examples given here, include all information that would help a reader locate the reference.

### *Abstract*

Sammis, C.G., 1993, Relating fault stability to fault zone structure: Geological Society of America Abstracts with Programs, v. 25, no. 6, p. A115-A116.

### *Book*

Vail, P.R., Audemard, F., Bowman, S.A., Eisner, P.N., and Perez-Cruz, C., 1991, The stratigraphic signatures of tectonics, eustasy and sedimentology-An overview, *in* Einsele, G., et al., eds., Cycles and events in stratigraphy: Berlin, Springer-Verlag, p. 617-659.

### *Journal*

Doglioni, C., 1994, Foredeeps versus subduction zones: *Geology*, v. 22, p. 271-274.

### *Comment, Discussion, Reply*

Retallack, G.J., 1993, Classification of paleosols: Discussion: Geological Society of America Bulletin, v. 105, p. 1635-1636.

### *Guidebook*

Blackstone, D.L., Jr., 1990, Rocky Mountain foreland exemplified by the Owl Creek Mountains, Bridger Range and Casper Arch, central Wyoming, *in* Specht, R., ed., Wyoming sedimentation and tectonics: Casper, Wyoming Geological Association, 41st Annual Field Conference, Guidebook, p. 151-166.

### *In Press*

Hoffman, H.J., and Masson, M., 2002, Archean stromatolites from Abitibi greenstone belt, Quebec, Canada: Geological Society of America Bulletin, v. 114 (in press).

### *Map*

Abrams, G.A., 1993, Complete Bouguer gravity anomaly map of the State of Colorado: U.S. Geological Survey Miscellaneous Field Studies Map MF-2236, scale 1:500,000, 1 sheet.

### *Open-File Report*

Alpha, T.R., 1993, Landslide effects: U.S. Geological Survey Open-File Report 93-0278-A, 43 p.

### *Proceedings from a Symposium or Conference*

Baar, C., 1972, Creep measured in deep potash mines vs. theoretical predictions, *in* Proceedings, Canadian Rock Mechanics Symposium, 7th, Edmonton: Ottawa, Canada Department of Energy, Mines and Resources, p. 23-77.

*Thesis*

Wopat, M.A., 1990, Quaternary volcanism and tectonics in the Mexican volcanic belt near Tequila, Jalisco, southwestern Mexico [Ph.D. thesis]: Berkeley

*Websites*

USGS website. <http://www.usgs.gov/>. Accessed 1/1/05.

**Appendices**

All of the data you collect during the course of your senior research should be included in your thesis as appendices. These should be laid out in table form and serve as a data repository.

**Digital Archive**

All of your work (including your data and analyses) should be saved in electronic format. See your advisor for information on which folders and files to include and what format should be used.

(sample)

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