

Linguistics Honors Thesis Guidelines

Revised September 8, 2020

1. The Linguistics Honors Committee oversees the thesis proposal process, the fall semester report, and the appointment of a Supervisor and Thesis Committee for each accepted proposal.
2. Thesis proposal: guidelines and deadline
 - i. A polished, clear, informative, “professional” research proposal (2pps. max), including timeline
 - ii. A personal statement (approx. 1 page): explaining
 - the student’s goals in doing this research;
 - student’s academic preparation: i.e., in Linguistics and other relevant courses
 - how proposed research fits with student’s academic program
 - iii. A current transcript
 - iv. A recommendation from the proposed thesis supervisor (150 words approx.), including itemized expectations for the thesis process and schedule of deadlines.
 - The proposal will be submitted to the Director of the Linguistics Honors Committee via email (Prof. Dan Parker, dparker@wm.edu).
 - Final deadline for submission of thesis proposal: 1st week after graduation (although earlier submission is strongly encouraged, given Charles Center’s March deadline for funding).
 - Committee decision ordinarily within 2 weeks of receiving proposal. Decisions will be communicated to the student via email.
3. In evaluating the proposal, the Honors Committee will look for the following:
 - Evidence of strong performance in Linguistics courses relevant to the thesis.
 - Strong thesis proposal, personal statement, and current transcript
 - Strong recommendation from proposed thesis supervisor
 - Evidence that the proposed project is feasible in the time allotted.
4. On the basis of its evaluation the Honors Committee may accept the proposal, reject it outright, or request revision and resubmission. If the latter, the Committee will send the student and proposed Thesis Supervisor an explanation.
5. A Thesis Supervisor may be any continuing member of the Linguistics Faculty.
 - In appropriate circumstances, joint supervision may be allowed with a faculty member from outside the Linguistics Program
6. Fall semester report
 - By the end of the fall semester, the student should submit a 2-3 page state of progress that contains the following information:
 - An expected section outline of thesis and remaining timeline
 - An explanation of any significant revisions or updates to the project as originally proposed
 - The names of proposed members of thesis committee (made in consultation with supervisor)

- A statement that expectations for the thesis have been discussed with members of Thesis Committee
- A statement from the supervisor stating whether that they support the student's report.
- Submit this report to the Director of the Linguistics Honors Committee via email (Prof. Dan Parker, dparker@wm.edu). A copy of the report should be also sent to the members of the thesis committee.

7. Constitution of Thesis Committee

- 4 faculty: 2 continuing members of the Linguistics faculty, 1 faculty member from another department/program, and the Thesis Supervisor (non-voting).

8. Mid-year review (early January)

- The Supervisor submits letter stating whether he or she supports the student's statement and whether he or she recommends continuation for the final semester.
- The Chair of Honors Committee asks Thesis Committee members of any concerns.
- If Honors Committee approves continuation, a message to this effect is sent to student, Supervisor, and Thesis Committee.

9. Thesis

- Maximum length 70pps -- not including (e.g.) data presentation, appendix(ces), figures, tables, bibliography
- The format of thesis is to be determined in consultation with the Supervisor and may vary according to the topic and methodology

10. Defense

- Opening presentation and oral defense
- Audience may be present for opening presentation if student and supervisor wish, but must withdraw for oral defense

11. Thesis committee deliberation

- Following the oral defense, the student withdraws. The Thesis Supervisor makes a statement to Committee, providing information on the research and writing process. The Supervisor remains in room during the Committee's deliberation and final vote but does not participate except in response to questions from the Committee.

12. Final decision

- The Thesis Committee bases its decision on (i) the written thesis, (ii) the presentation, (iii) the oral defense
- The Thesis Committee (not including the Supervisor) votes for or against the award of Honors.