

Women's and Gender Studies Department (WGST) Honors Guidelines

Effective 9/1/2020 .

Department Honors

There are two routes to honors in the major. Under **Program I**, a student completes two semesters of independent research (WGST360 and 370) culminating in an honors thesis. Under **Program II**, a student completes one semester of fieldwork or independent research (WGST313) related to previous 300-level course work, and then submits to an examination in Women's and Gender Studies that includes the topic covered in the 313 project.

Requirements. To be admitted to the WGST honors thesis program, a student must have a grade point average of at least 3.5 in all work in the major field above the 100 level; the department may petition on the student's behalf if the student's GPA in the major is between 3.0 and 3.5. Students considering department honors should read carefully the [College information](#) on Honors. WGST students must follow these College guidelines as well as the WGST specific guidelines, below.

Ordinarily, students are also expected to have completed one 300-level WGST course before enrolling in the honors program. Students interested in pursuing honors should discuss their plans with an advisor during the fall of their junior year.

Ruhlman Conference. The Department asks that WGST honors students apply to present their research at the Ruhlman Conference as part of their honors work.

Two Routes to Department Honors

The department offers two programs for pursuing departmental honors:

Program I: Senior Thesis (WGST 360/370)

Students pursuing departmental honors under Program I enroll in a full year sequence (WGST 360/370) in which they write a senior thesis. Thesis work is supervised by one WGST faculty advisor. College Legislation, Book II, Article IV describes the rules governing thesis options and the awarding of Honors in more detail. WGST students writing an honors thesis must follow these College guidelines as well as the WGST specific guidelines, available from the Department.

Writing a thesis can be an enormously rewarding experience. Students considering writing a thesis should consult faculty advisors and students currently writing theses in the WGST Department. We also encourage you to examine previous Senior Theses which are available in the Clapp Library.

Program II: Fieldwork (WGST 313) and Exam

Under this program, students qualify for honors on the basis of a one semester (WGST 313) fieldwork project and an exam. WGST 313 as a route to departmental honors differs from WGST 313 taken solely to fulfill the Capstone Requirement in two key requirements:

[1] WGST 313 as a route to department honors should be a direct follow-up to a 300-level course in the department, and should generally be done under the supervision of the faculty member with whom the 300 level course was taken. (In some cases, the honors work could be a follow-up to a 200 level course, in those fields in which the department does not have a 300 level offering.) As part of WGST 313, the student produces a final paper.

[2] At the end of the semester, the student takes a written or oral examination in the broad field of Women's and Gender Studies that includes the topic covered in the 313 project, as well as questions from the broader field of Women's and Gender Studies. Receiving honors depends upon satisfactory performance in both the 313 project and the examination, but a student receives credit for WGST 313 even if honors is not awarded due to failure to pass the examination.

Students considering WGST 313 as a route to departmental honors should consult faculty advisors in the WGST Department to learn more about these requirements.

Research Grants

The Department does not have grants for honors work. The [Pamela Daniels Fellowship](#) offers funding of an original senior project. The [Jerome A. Schiff Fellowship](#) funds senior honors projects. See the Office of the Provost and the Dean's webpage for more information on these and other possible grants.

Preparation and Honors Proposal

For both routes to honors, students are expected to have an appropriate background in the area of research, as demonstrated by completing a 300-level course in the department that is related to the honors topic (or a 200-level course, if no 300-level course is offered in WGST). In the spring of junior year, the student should discuss their ideas for a thesis or 313 project with one or more WGST faculty members, and seek help (as needed) with finding an appropriate WGST faculty member to be the Honors Advisor.

Honors Proposal

Eligible students who wish to propose a WGST 313 as a route to honors ordinarily do so in the semester prior to registering for WGST 313. WGST 313 can only be taken for honors in the student's senior year.

WGST 313 as a route to department honors should be a direct follow-up to a 300-level course in the department (200-level accepted if no 300-level). Students should begin the process of taking WGST 313 for departmental honors by meeting with the faculty member with whom they took that 300-level course to discuss their 313 project.

After that discussion, including a discussion of the expectations for a 313 project eligible for honors, the student should submit an honors proposal with the following sections:

1. Project Description

In 500-1000 words, the student should explain the plans for the project, including the goals of the project, methods, and plans for the final paper.

2. Background Course Preparation and GPA in the Major

List related coursework (course titles/instructor/final grade) and any relevant intellectual or fieldwork.

3. A Current Transcript (unofficial is acceptable)

Thesis Proposal

Eligible students who wish to propose a thesis ordinarily do so in the spring semester of the junior year. For students who are not on campus the spring semester of their junior year, they can submit their thesis proposal by September 1st of their senior year.

Submit a draft proposal, outlined below, to the Thesis Advisor by the first Monday of April (and petition if your grades fall between 3.0 and 3.5). The final Proposal should be submitted electronically (with the transcript attached) to the Thesis Advisor by the fourth Monday in April. For special Fall thesis proposal consideration (for example, if the student is not in residence in the spring semester), send a proposal to the advisor over the summer that will be considered by the Department faculty during the first week of the student's senior year. (NOTE: A student's thesis advisor need not be their major advisor.)

The Department makes decisions about thesis proposals in its May Department meeting if students are in residence. Written notification of the decision will be sent to the student.

The Thesis Proposal should include the following sections:

1. Thesis Description

In 500-1000 words, the student should explain the plans for the project, including the intellectual goals of the thesis, major questions to investigate, and methods of research.

2. Two to Three Page Bibliography

List both primary and secondary sources.

3. Background Course Preparation and GPA in the Major

List related coursework (course titles/instructor/final grade) and any relevant intellectual or fieldwork.

4. A Current Transcript (unofficial is acceptable)

Mid-Year Meeting

Accepted thesis students will receive a Department timeline outlining important dates and reasonable progress expectations for the year. For example, WGST thesis students must meet with their advisor and one additional faculty member from the Department in December or January. At this point the student will present the work done so far, discuss her plans for completing the project, and be prepared to answer any concerns on the part of the faculty. Only after this meeting and Department approval will the student be registered for WGST 370 (submitted to the Registrar by Department Chair).