

HONORS PROJECT
Department of French and Italian
French Division

What is an Honors Project and who can apply?

The Department of French and Italian invites all majors in French who have excelled in their coursework at the University of Pittsburgh to pursue a departmental Honors Project. To qualify for departmental honors, students must complete and present an original piece of scholarship or creative work. An Honors Project can be a research-driven thesis on a range of topics (literary, cultural, linguistic, environmental, historical, and / or theoretical). Students can also do other kinds of critical or creative work, which can take a number of forms. Possible projects include, but are not limited to, creative writing, filmmaking, or digital media production, such as video essays and film subtitling; podcasts; or professional quality translations. Students typically begin the process to apply to the honors program in the second term of their junior year. Students work on the honors project over the course of three terms with the support of a departmental faculty advisor. The advisor is chosen in consultation with the Director of Undergraduate Studies.

Why do an Honors Project?

The Honors Project gives students the chance to complete the major with an original work of creative or critical thought that demonstrates a range of skills and makes a contribution to the field of French studies. The Honors Project can be an invaluable experience that culminates in an intellectual and creative achievement, one that provides clear evidence to graduate schools and potential employers of hard work, commitment, and invaluable skills in research, writing, and creativity.

Why do an Honors Project in our Department?

We have created four research networks: Film and Media, Gender and Sexuality, Nation/Transnation, and Environment. Students have the option of working in one or more of these networks and will find a number of opportunities (including workshops and events) to develop and share work in progress. Descriptions of the networks can be found here <https://www.frenchanditalian.pitt.edu/research>. Pursuing an Honors Project also gives students the chance to work closely with our experienced and collegial group of faculty.

What have our students done after completing an Honors Project?

[As our recent students attest](#), the Honors Project opened up a number of post-graduate opportunities. Some carried out research fellowships and applied to graduate programs in the humanities or social sciences; others were admitted to law school and medical school. While still others served in the Peace Corps or taught in the Teaching Assistant Program in France (TAPIF).

Grants and Fellowships

Each year interested students may compete for grants or fellowships from several sources at the University of Pittsburgh. Common sources include:

THE HONORS COLLEGE

<https://www.honorscollege.pitt.edu/honors-research-grants>

<https://www.honorscollege.pitt.edu/research-scholarships>

<https://www.honorscollege.pitt.edu/Brackenridge>

COLLEGE OF GENERAL STUDIES

<https://www.cgs.pitt.edu/events/brackenridge-summer-research-fellowships-application-deadline-march-4th>

PROGRAM IN GSWS (For Projects Focusing on Gender)

<https://www.gsws.pitt.edu/academics/research/student-research-funds>

What are the key details about the process?

I. Requirements for admission to departmental honors thesis program

While there is no minimum GPA, interested students should obtain the recommendation of a professor with whom they are working or would like to work. As explained in the timetable below, students are required to have two faculty members approve the project proposal.

II. Timetable

1. During the summer before the senior year, students choose an appropriate topic with their faculty advisor and begin independent preparatory work leading to the crafting of preliminary plans and first drafts or versions of the project. The honors project can be the expansion of projects you worked on in your French classes or can be a wholly original and novel undertaking. By the start of the fall semester, students should have identified a project advisor and have a well-defined and feasible topic of investigation whatever the form the final project may take. A written proposal of some 150 words-must be approved by both the

project advisor and one other French faculty member. This must be completed by the end of the add-drop period in September.

2. In the fall term of the senior year, students continue researching and begin work on the project. They must meet regularly with their advisor because all work must be done in consultation with the designated project advisor. By the end of the fall semester, students should have produced a working abstract or summary of 1-2 pages (in French) that explains the project goals. A preliminary bibliography should accompany the abstract. The abstract or summary and bibliography will be evaluated, and a provisional grade assigned. Registration for FR 1903 (spring course in honors) cannot take place without completion and approval of the abstract and preliminary working bibliography.
3. The faculty advisor will also assist the student in identifying the members who will constitute the project committee. Three committee members must be identified and grant their approval to serve by the end of the fall term and before student registration for FR 1903.
4. Students must register for French 1903, for the Spring Term.
5. Before the add-drop period in January, students must have a defense date set. At the end of the add-drop period, a progress grade will be assigned. Students thus have the option to drop FR 1903 should they feel that completion of the honor's project is unlikely. Over the course of the spring semester, more progress grades will be assigned and recorded on the FR 1903 CANVAS site to which the student and advisor have access, the first of which must occur before the monitored withdrawal deadline in spring (usually beginning of March) so allow students to withdraw without grade penalty should completion of the honor's project prove impossible for whatever reason.
6. Honors students should submit a preview of their project to the committee members at least three weeks prior to the defense or public performance date. This preview can take the form of a copy (if copies are possible) or a plan of performance or other forms depending on the type of project being undertaken. Defenses usually take place in late March and early April.
7. Projects will vary in length and form. All text that is part of the project should be written in French.

CALENDAR SUMMARY

summer before senior year	Student speaks with potential faculty advisors and considers type of project to be undertaken (thesis, film project, creative work, etc.)
end of August	Advisor is identified and project details are established.

end of add-drop period in September	Written proposal and Honor's Project Form is submitted to faculty advisor and one other faculty member for review
end of fall semester	Written abstract or summary and working bibliography are submitted for a grade. Upon submission, students may register for FR 1903.
end of add-drop period in January	First progress grade assigned and defense or public performance date set. Committee members are chosen.
before monitored withdrawal deadline (W deadline)	Second progress grade assigned.
end of March, early April	Thesis defense or public performance takes place.
end of April	Final submission of Honor's Project to departmental archives.