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# **Honors Program Handbook**

*Department of English*

*Stony Brook University*

*2025-2026*

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# Section 1: Program Objectives and Requirements

## Objectives

The English Department's Honors Program is a special track within the English major for students with strong academic records. The Program offers small class sizes (generally no more than 15-18 students in Honors seminars), significant individual interaction with faculty, and advanced-level academic instruction. The Department's objectives for the Honors Program are to identify and mentor motivated, high-achieving students within the major and to help them develop their abilities in a targeted fashion. Honors students will receive a special mention on their diplomas at graduation; graduation with Honors in English signifies that the student maintained a GPA of 3.5 or above in the major, an overall GPA of 3.0 or above, followed a careful program of English Honors courses, and satisfactorily completed a capstone thesis project.

## Curricular Requirements

1. The Honors Program adheres to and modifies the curricular requirements for the English major. Honors students take the same number of credits as regular English majors, with the addition of the Honors practicum (3 additional credits), and complete all requirements for the major. All Honors students must:

- (a) Take TWO Honors seminars: EGL 491 and EGL 492. See the descriptions of these courses in Section 2.
- (b) Take EGL 301 either prior to enrolling in EGL 491 and 492, or concurrently with the first of those two courses that the student takes.
- (c) Complete the Honors practicum (EGL 494). See the description in Section 3.
- (d) Write an Honors thesis (EGL 496) under the direction of a faculty advisor and present your research at the Honors Symposium. See description in Section 3.

For a complete breakdown of the Honors Program curricular requirements, please see Form A at the end of this handbook.

In order to remain in good standing in the Program, all Honors students must:

- 1. Receive a grade of B+ or higher in two of EGL 491, EGL 492, and EGL 494; the third grade for those courses must be no lower than a B.
- 2. Receive a grade of B+ or higher in EGL 496.
- 3. Maintain a GPA of 3.5 or above in the major and an overall GPA of 3.0 or above.

At the discretion of the Honors Director, a student who does not meet any of the above curricular requirements for good standing may be placed on probation for the following semester or may be asked to leave the Honors Program. If a student who is on probation does not meet the curricular requirements for good standing at the end of the probationary period, they will be asked to leave the Honors Program.

All Honors students will be evaluated at the end of each semester to ensure that they are in good standing.

## **Non-Curricular Requirements**

1. All Honors students must attend one mandatory Honors Program meeting and one additional Honors event each semester.
2. At the end of each spring semester, each Honors student will submit to the Honors Director a 1-2 page reflection about their work and participation in the Honors Program during that academic year and, if relevant, about how being in the Program is influencing any post-graduation and/or career plans.
3. After a student has submitted the Honors thesis, in lieu of the 1-2 page reflection they will submit to the Honors Director a 2-3 page reflection looking back at their time in the Honors Program and discussing what they have learned from the experience and, if relevant, about how being in the Program has influenced any post-graduation and/or career plans.

To remain in good standing, Honors students must meet all non-curricular requirements in addition to all curricular ones. If a student does not do so, that student will be placed on probation for the following semester. If the student does not meet the non-curricular requirements for good standing at the end of the probationary period, they will be asked to leave the Honors Program.

## **Section 2: The Honors Seminars**

All Honors students take two Honors seminars: EGL 491 and EGL 492. Each course will be offered once per academic year, one each semester. They may be taken in any order.

### **(a) EGL 491: Honors Seminar: Critical Literary or Media History**

Honors seminar on a topic from critical, literary, or media history, with an emphasis on developing the skills necessary to research a topic, develop an original interpretation in conversation with published scholarship, and write a substantial analytic essay incorporating multiple secondary sources. This course is designed for Honors English majors only. Prereq: EGL 204; Pre/coreq: EGL 301

**(b) EGL 492 Honors Seminar: Theories and Methods**

Honors seminar on one or more theoretical or methodological approaches to a topic in literary, cultural, or media studies, with an emphasis on developing the skills necessary to research a topic, develop an original interpretation in conversation with published scholarship, and write a substantial analytic essay incorporating multiple secondary sources. This course is designed for Honors English majors only. Prereq: EGL 204; Pre/coreq: EGL 301

## **Section 3: The Honors Practicum**

The Honors practicum (EGL 494) provides an opportunity for students to explore possible topics for their Honors thesis, and reinforces for them the research and research writing methods for undertaking it that they have developed in EGL 491/492. The course is generally offered once per academic year in the Fall semester. Students should enroll in the practicum in the semester immediately prior to the one in which they will write their thesis (and thus will take EGL 496). If a student plans on graduating in a Fall semester, they should speak to the Honors Director about the best time to take EGL 494. If EGL 494 is not offered during the semester before a student plans to complete their thesis, EGL 381 may be substituted.

## **Section 4: The Honors Thesis**

The Honors thesis (EGL 496) is the capstone of the Honors Program. In this one-semester independent study course, students will write a 30-40 page paper under the guidance of a faculty advisor on a subject of the student's choice. If the thesis is an analytic, argument-driven, research paper, it should have a minimum of 20 scholarly sources; if it is a research-grounded creative project, it should have a minimum of 15 scholarly sources. The scope of the topic should be commensurate with the intended length of the thesis—that is, students should select a topic on which they can successfully research and write a thesis in a single semester.

### **Choosing a Faculty Advisor**

Students are encouraged to select their faculty advisor in consultation with the Honors Director, and must submit the Honors Thesis Proposal Form (Form B), signed by their faculty advisor, to the Honors Director by the end of the semester before they will write their thesis. A good advisor is typically someone with whom the student has already worked and has a good working relationship, or someone who is expert in the area of the

student's topic, or someone willing to work with the student to develop a topic in their area of expertise. A good mentoring relationship is crucial to the success of a thesis.

## Choosing a Second Reader

The second reader is a faculty member whose primary responsibility is to provide an additional opinion on the finished thesis. As such, the student and second reader should consult in advance of the thesis process to ensure that it moves toward a positive end. Students are encouraged to select their second reader in consultation with the Honors Director and their faculty advisor, and must include their name and signature on the Honors Thesis Proposal Form (Form B) that is to be submitted to the Honors Director by the end of the semester before they will write their thesis. Second readers should be available for at least two consultations with the student during the thesis writing semester. Ideally, these would occur approximately halfway through the writing process and after a full draft of the thesis has been completed. The second reader also should expect to receive and respond to occasional inquiries from the student. A good second reader is typically someone with whom the student has already worked and has a good working relationship and/or someone who is expert in the area of the student's topic.

## Forms and Deadlines

Students must submit a completed Honors Thesis Proposal Form (Form B) by the end of the semester before they will write their thesis to gain permission to enroll in EGL 496. The completed thesis will be due on the last day of classes.

## Evaluation

Honors theses will be evaluated for a letter grade by the faculty advisor and the second reader. The student's thesis **MUST** be awarded a minimum of a B+ by both readers in order for the student to graduate with Honors. In the event that there is a disagreement between the faculty advisor and second reader about the thesis grade, the Honors Director will act as a third reader and will determine the outcome.

## Section 5: Other Information

## Advising

Honors students are required to meet with the Honors Director and the Undergraduate Advisor each semester to keep track of their progress through the Program.

## Joint Programs

Students may simultaneously enroll in the Honors Program and the Teacher Education Program. If you are interested in this option, please discuss this with the Honors Director.

Students enrolled in the Honors College may also enroll in the English Honors Program; in this case, the thesis required for the Honors Program will count as the thesis required for the Honors College. Rather than enrolling in HON 495 and 496 when writing their thesis, Honors College students in the English Honors Program instead enroll in EGL 494 and 496, respectively, and should submit an Honors College departmental thesis form to the Honors College indicating that they are doing so. All the rules for the English Honors Program must be followed in addition to Honors College regulations.

## Student Advisory Board

The English Honors Program does not have a student advisory board, but the Honors Director meets regularly with the Honors students serving on the Chair's Student Advisory Council, who help to develop Program activities, make recommendations to the Honors Director about Program policies, and represent student interests and needs to the Honors Director.

## Section 6: Forms

**Form A:** English Honors Major Advising Checklist

**Form B:** Honors Thesis Proposal Form (permission to enroll in EGL 496)

# ENGLISH HONORS MAJOR ADVISING CHECKLIST

NAME: \_\_\_\_\_

UNIVERSITY ID: \_\_\_\_\_

## ENGLISH COURSES

**EGL 204:** Literary Analysis & Argumentation \_\_\_\_\_,  
(Prerequisite to most EGL 300-level courses)

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### 3 Required Survey Courses

**A. One early Literature survey course** \_\_\_\_\_,

- i. EGL 205 British Literature I
- ii. EGL 217 American Literature 1

**B. Two survey courses chosen from the following (if not used above)**\_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_.

EGL 205: Brit Lit I, EGL 206: Brit Lit II, EGL 217: Amer. Lit I, EGL 218: Amer. Lit II, EGL 224: 20<sup>th</sup> C-Lit in English ,  
EGL 226: 20<sup>th</sup> C- Amer. Lit, EGL 243: Shakespeare: Major Works, EGL 260: World Mythology, EGL 274: AfAm Lit

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**One 100 to 300-level EGL elective:** \_\_\_\_\_,

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### 8 EGL Upper Division (300- & 400-level) Requirements

*With permission of the department, students may use one course to satisfy up to two topic areas:  
Single Author, Literary/Critical History, Genre or Media, Interdisc. Study of Literature*

**EGL 301: Intensive Writing Course** \_\_\_\_\_

**Single-Author** \_\_\_\_\_

**Literary/Critical History** \_\_[491/492]\_\_

**Genre or Media** \_\_\_\_\_

**Interdisc. Study of Literature** \_\_\_\_\_

**EGL 491: Critical Literary or Media Hist** \_\_\_\_\_

**EGL 492: Theories and Methods** \_\_\_\_\_

*(EGL 301 is a pre- or corequisite for EGL 491/492, whichever is taken first; 491 or 492 are prerequisite for 494)*

**EGL 494: Honors Practicum** \_\_\_\_\_

*EGL 381 may substitute when 494 not offered*

**EGL 496: Honors Thesis** \_\_\_\_\_

*494 is prerequisite for 496*

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### Related Courses

#### **Interdisciplinary Concentration**

6 credits (two courses) in another department at the 200- or 300-level

\_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_

**EGL CREDITS: 39**

**NON-EGL CREDITS: 6**

**TOTAL CREDITS FOR HONORS ENGLISH MAJOR: 45**



# English 496 Honors Thesis Proposal Form

Department of English

Stony Brook University

Stony Brook, NY 11794-5350

(631) 632-7400

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ SBU ID: \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Semester/Year: \_\_\_\_\_

Title of Project: \_\_\_\_\_

Advisor: \_\_\_\_\_

Second Reader: \_\_\_\_\_

**Project:** A 30- to 40-page thesis, with a minimum of 20 scholarly sources (15 for a researched-based creative project), in which the student works closely with a faculty member, meeting approximately once a week. A student may decide, along with her or his faculty advisor, to meet for longer sessions every two weeks instead. The project must be approved by the Honors Program Director.

**(Please attach to this page a substantially revised research proposal written for EGL 494 (or, in certain cases, EGL 381), including the Works Cited page.**

\_\_\_\_\_  
Student's Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Advisor's Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Second Reader's Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Honors Program Director's Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date