

Procedures for Jewish Studies Honors Student and Thesis Director

The honors program in Jewish Studies promises to offer students many rewards but also requires considerable dedication on the part of a potential honors degree candidate. The principal advantage of the honors program and degree is the opportunity to carry out a substantial research project under the supervision of a Jewish Studies faculty member and to learn research skills. Undergraduate research is an advantage for any student seeking entrance into graduate school. The honors process affords students more direct contact with faculty and leads to much more detailed letters of recommendation. The thesis can serve as a writing sample for a graduate school application. Along with the satisfaction of completing your thesis is the distinction of having honors noted on your B.A. degree and transcript—a distinction noted by employers and graduate and professional schools in search of first-rate students.

1. Students majoring in Jewish Studies with a minimum overall 3.5 GPA and a 3.5 GPA in Jewish Studies are eligible for the honors program in Jewish Studies.
2. Honors candidates complete the same requirements as all other Jewish Studies majors. Honors students also enroll and complete both JSTU-H 399 Readings for Honors in Jewish Studies (3 cr.) typically in the penultimate semester before graduation or if planning to use the honors thesis as a writing sample for Ph.D. application, as early as junior year (fall or spring semester), and JSTU-H 499 Honors Thesis (3-6 cr.) the semester following JSTU-H 399, unless the student is studying overseas. During JSTU-H 499, the honors student completes a 25-50 page thesis representing a significant proportion of original research. Note: both JSTU-H 399 and JSTU-H 499 may count toward 300-400 level courses required for the Jewish Studies major.
3. The first step is to meet with honors advisor, Dr. Carolyn Lipson-Walker, to discuss your interest in the honors thesis, obtain the approval form, discuss the focus of your interest and a possible Jewish Studies thesis director.
4. BEFORE BEING AUTHORIZED TO REGISTER FOR JSTU-H 399 Readings for Honors in Jewish Studies, a student must fill out the approval form, have it signed by the thesis director, and return the contract to Dr. Carolyn Lipson-Walker. Filling out the Approval Form entails a decision concerning the general focus of your thesis, discussion with a Jewish Studies faculty member who agrees to serve as the thesis director and approves the perspective of the project, compilation of a bibliography of readings for H 399, the writing of a brief description of your thesis project, and the approval of the thesis director who signs the form. Students studying abroad may be able to coordinate communication and approval of the approval form via e-mail.
5. Students who plan to take JSTU-H 399 in the fall should ask their thesis director to recommend summer reading.
6. During JSTU-H 399, the honors student, in consultation with the thesis director

should conceive a method and structure for the thesis. By the middle of the semester of H399, the candidate must complete a brief (2-3 page) prospectus. It should consist of a detailed statement of the aims of the thesis, developed by reading and discussion, (procedure rather than content may be emphasized) and should be accompanied by a bibliography of completed and projected reading.

7. During JSTU-H 399, in consultation with the thesis director, the student selects two faculty members to serve as readers for the candidate's thesis committee.
8. By the end of JSTU-H 399, copies of the prospectus should be sent by the student to the thesis director, the two readers, and the honors advisor. And in the final month of the semester of JSTU-H 399, after the prospectus has been distributed, the student should arrange to meet with the three faculty members, preferably all at the same time, to discuss the prospectus and the aims of the thesis. The student should notify the honors advisor when this meeting is completed successfully.
9. Upon admission into the honors program, a student will be responsible for regular communication with the thesis director. The student and thesis director should meet as often as is necessary to develop a systematic program of research leading to timely progress toward the completion of the thesis. The relationship between candidate and thesis director is informal. It is recommended that the student and thesis director meet once every week or two through completion of the thesis.
10. Before registering for H 499, the student must obtain a form from the Jewish Studies honors advisor. This form should be filled out by the student and thesis director, signed by the thesis director, and returned to the honors advisor **BEFORE THE STUDENT REGISTERS FOR JSTU-H 499**. The form should include confirmation by the thesis director stating that progress has been satisfactory on the prospectus, that a grade of A- or better is projected in H 399, and confirms the number of credit hours (3 to 6 credits) for H 499. It is understood that students must receive a grade of A- or higher in JSTU-H 399 to continue with JSTU-H 499. If by the middle of JSTU-H 399 progress remains unsatisfactory, the student will be dropped from the honors program. In that case, credit for JSTU-H 399 will be given on completion of a certain amount of written work to be determined by the thesis director.
11. By the end of the JSTU-H 399 semester, it is recommended that the thesis director and student agree on a written timetable for drafts of the thesis and share this timetable with the Jewish Studies honors advisor. Because the sheer act of polishing the writing and form of the thesis takes more time than students usually envision, honors students should present a draft of the completed thesis to the director at least a month before the deadline of submission of copies of the final version. An advanced draft of the thesis should be submitted to the thesis director by November 1 (for students enrolled in H 499 in fall semester) or March 1 (for students enrolled in H 499 in the spring semester).

12. Three copies of the honors thesis, one for each member of the thesis committee, must be submitted no later than 4 weeks prior to the student's graduation. The student must notify the honors advisor when the copies have been distributed.
13. A student is responsible for working with the thesis director to establish a date (at least 2 weeks prior to graduation), time and place for the thesis defense. The student is also responsible for informing the members of the committee and the honors advisor of the date, time, and place of the defense.
14. To receive an honors degree, the student must present a thesis judged acceptable by the thesis committee. Based upon the committee's evaluation, the thesis director will determine whether the candidate should graduate with honors in Jewish Studies. The thesis director is responsible for assigning a grade for JSTU-H 499 (an A- or higher to receive honors.) Students receiving a grade below A- will receive credit for the thesis course but will not graduate with honors in Jewish Studies.
15. The student should submit one final, revised copy of the thesis to the honors advisor for the Jewish Studies Program's records.