

Honors Program in Environmental Studies

[See the ORC for additional information](#)

The Honors Thesis

All qualified majors are invited to consider participating in the Honors Program. The goal of this program is to provide you with the opportunity to pursue research on a topic in which you are deeply interested. An Honors Thesis is not an extended term paper. It is the culmination of original research done in close collaboration with a faculty member in Environmental Studies.

Before applying to the Honors Program, you must discuss the proposed project with a faculty member who is willing to be your adviser and another faculty member who is willing to be your second reader on the project. Your adviser must approve your Prospectus before it is submitted (see below for more details).

Course Credit

A senior honors thesis is a year-long commitment, however students in the program may receive credit for up to two courses, Environmental Studies 91 and 92 (Thesis Research). ENVS 91/92 may be taken in fall/winter, fall/spring or winter/spring, both for credit, but only ENVS 91 will count in the major.

Eligibility

The minimum requirement for admission is a grade point average of 3.0 in the major and a 3.0 general College average at the beginning of the senior year or at any other time that an application for admission is made. Those students who satisfactorily complete the Honors Program with a 'B+' average or better will earn Honors recognition in their major or, in appropriate cases, High Honors. High Honors will be granted only by vote of the ENVS faculty on the basis of outstanding independent work. An interim evaluation of honors students will be made after one term and continuation recommended for those students whose work demonstrates the capacity for satisfactory (B+) work. Enrollment in Environmental Studies 91 does not imply admissions into the Honors Program nor does completion of a senior thesis require the awarding of Honors in the major.

Students who are ineligible for the Honors Program, or who cannot participate for other reasons, but do wish to pursue a research topic in depth, should consult an adviser about the possibilities of doing research in the form of an independent study, ENVS 90.

Preliminary Steps and Timetable

Choosing the topic may actually be the hardest part of the Honors Thesis. Early on, you should consult with one or more potential advisers about the feasibility of your proposal. In general, it is advisable to consult with as many faculty members as possible. In addition, the most successful theses tend to integrate concepts and cases encountered in coursework or independent study into the thesis proposal and eventual research project. ***We strongly urge you to begin thinking of a thesis topic during the winter and spring terms of your junior year and submit your approved Prospectus before the end of your junior year.***

The Prospectus, which is the written application to the program, is due by **the end of spring term before the senior year** unless another arrangement has been approved by the Chair. **Students whose projects involve work during the summer of their senior year (after completion of junior year) must have their prospectus approved by the end of the spring term.** In this 2- to 3-page prospectus you should (a) introduce the thesis project and its significance; (b) delineate your primary research question(s); (c) identify potential data collection methods and, as appropriate, study site(s); (d) provide a bibliography of some of the main references you plan to use in your thesis; (e) state the name of your primary adviser; and (f) indicate a rough schedule of the work to be carried out.

Submit the Prospectus to Kim Wind for review by the Honors Committee made up of the faculty acting as Major Advisors. The Honors Committee will review your prospectus in terms of the overall feasibility of the project as well as your own preparation (including both coursework and independent research) to conduct the research. The Committee may ask you to revise your research topic or methodology. The Honors Committee must approve the Prospectus in order for you to be admitted to the Honors Program.

Fall Senior Year

Students in the Honors Program normally enroll in ENVS 91 in the fall. The fall and winter terms are normally spent conducting the necessary research and analysis to enable you to write the thesis. **By the end of the fall term**, you are required to submit a progress report that, along with your advisers' evaluation of your progress, will serve as the basis for a decision by the Honor's Committee as to whether you will formally be admitted to the Honors Program.

Those students selected to the Honors Program may enroll in ENVS 92 in either the winter or spring terms and will receive a grade for ENVS 91 and 92 upon completion and defense of the thesis at the end of spring term. Those not admitted to the program will receive a grade for ENVS 90 in the fall term and may take ENVS 50 (offered in spring term) as their culminating experience.

Winter and Spring Senior Year

The bulk of the thesis is normally written during the winter or early spring term. At least one draft must be completed for review no later than April 30 in order to allow ample time for revision. Your draft thesis will be read by your advisor and a **second reader** (normally a Dartmouth faculty member) who has agreed to provide support and advice on your project. **Please note that the achievement of an honors-quality thesis typically requires significant revisions to satisfactorily address the comments provided by your advising team.**

Students are required to submit the final draft on the last day of classes in spring term. Faculty will meet to discuss honors/high honors over the following two days.

A formal presentation of the thesis will be scheduled before the end of the spring term. Students will upload final theses to the Dartmouth Digital Commons website at https://digitalcommons.dartmouth.edu/environmental_studies_senior_theses/.