

GUIDELINES FOR INDEPENDENT STUDY AND HONORS THESIS WORK IN ART HISTORY

I. Deadlines

Fall Independent Study: March 15 for rough draft of proposal; final draft by May 1

Spring Independent Study: November 1 for rough draft of proposal; final draft by December 1.

Honors Study: March 15 for rough draft of proposal; final draft by May 1

II. Independent Study

Independent study is an opportunity in upper-level study for qualified, self-motivated students with good track records to explore particular topics in greater depth. The department requires a basic foundation in lower-level courses including AHI 121 or AHI 122 and one upper-level course in the area of the proposed topic. An independent study is neither an interesting topic for further reading nor a paper which merely synthesizes material gathered from secondary sources. This kind of work is best pursued as a paper in an upper-level course. Rather, an independent study is a set of well-defined, art historical problems, set into some larger historical context, explored by doing research in secondary and primary source materials. Primary sources are texts and images from the period of your topic.

Qualified students may also propose an independent study of broad reading in an area not normally covered by the department in its upper level courses.

Before developing a detailed proposal, meet with the professor who would serve as your primary advisor and talk over your plans. Then prepare a draft of your formal proposal to be submitted to your IS advisor by November 1 (for spring projects) or March 15 (for fall projects). After having discussed this draft with your IS advisor, revise the proposal and submit copies of the final version of the formal proposal to your IS advisor and to the department chair. The final version of the formal proposal is due on December 1 (for spring projects) or May 1 (for fall projects).

Do not wait until the last minute. Proposals should include a thoughtful description of your project (usually 3-4 pages in length) and a preliminary bibliography. Keep the following suggestions in mind.

Please note: Application procedures for interdisciplinary centers do not replace or supersede departmental procedures. Thus, Art History majors pursuing Independent Study projects related to center certificates are expected to follow these guidelines.

Project Description

a) problems you plan to address: specific art historical issues and broader historical issues. Be specific. A clear sense of the issues at stake will allow you to navigate the mass of existing literature on every subject.

b) primary source texts you plan to consult and their location. If all the texts you need are in a language you can't read or are located in foreign libraries, this is not a workable proposal.

c) relevant background such as earlier courses in the general area of your topic (in and outside Art History), previous research, summer work or other personal experience, knowledge of foreign languages, etc.

d) plan of study and a semester schedule of biweekly meetings with your advisor with deadlines for progress reports, preliminary draft, and final paper

e) anticipated methodology. What kind of art history will you be writing? What scholarly models will you follow?

f) final product. Most Independent Study projects take the form of formal papers and all Independent Study projects must include a substantial written component. However, students are encouraged to discuss with their advisors other formats (exhibitions, websites, etc.) for communicating their findings.

Preliminary Bibliography

1. primary sources (without this, no original research is possible)
2. secondary sources in art history. Search the Bibliography of the History of Art database and the Art Index database.
3. secondary sources outside art history. For history, search the Historical Abstracts database. For literature, search the MLA Bibliography database.

III. Honors Study

Honors study (497, 498) is a more challenging, two-semester form of independent study available in the senior year only to qualified, highly-motivated students with excellent track records. To apply to be admitted to honors study, students will have maintained, during their sophomore year and the first semester of their junior year, a 3.5 average in their major courses at or above the 200 level. The department requires a basic foundation in lower-level courses, including AHI 121 or AHI 122, and at least one upper-level course in the area of the proposed topic. Most successful proposals will come out of earlier work such as a research paper or a course focused on issues related to the topic.

Before developing a detailed proposal, meet with the professor who would serve as your primary advisor. These conversations should begin in the fall of the junior year and certainly before spring break. Then prepare a draft of your formal proposal to be submitted to your IS advisor by March 15. After having discussed this draft with your advisor, revise the proposal and submit copies of the final version of the formal proposal to your advisor and to the department chair. The final version of the formal proposal is due on May 1.

Honors proposals are subject to considerably more rigorous scrutiny and higher expectations than independent study. They should offer a clear and specific description of the particular issues and problems to be explored, the primary sources to be used, and the language skills available for the task at hand.

Do not wait until the last minute. Proposals should include a thoughtful description of your project (usually 3-4 pages in length) and a preliminary bibliography. Keep the following suggestions in mind.

Project Description

a) problems you plan to address: specific art historical issues and broader historical problems. Be very specific and clear. A clear sense of the issues at stake is essential to guide you through the masses of existing literature on any given subject in a short time span.

b) primary source texts you plan to consult and their location. If all the texts you need are in a language you can't read or are located in foreign libraries, the proposal will not fly.

c) relevant background such as earlier courses in the general area of your topic (in and outside Art History), previous research, summer work or other personal experience, knowledge of foreign languages, etc.

d) plan of study and a semester schedule of biweekly meetings with your advisor with deadlines for progress reports, preliminary draft, and final paper

e) anticipated methodology. What kind of art history will you be writing? What scholarly models will you follow?

Preliminary Bibliography

1. primary sources (without this, no original research is possible)

2. secondary sources in art history. Search the Bibliography of the History of Art database and the Art Index database.

3. secondary sources outside art history. For history, search the Historical Abstracts database. For literature, search the MLA Bibliography database.

4. special resources you plan to use outside Connecticut College such as libraries, museums, and archives.

Schedule

Spring of the junior year:

March 15: rough draft of proposal due to faculty advisor

May 1: final draft of proposal due to faculty advisor and department chair

Fall of the senior year:

The student registers for AHI 497.

Within the first 2 weeks of the semester, the project advisor and the student select two additional readers, one of whom must be in the department.

Within the first 2 weeks of the semester, The student files the Honors Thesis Card (available on the AHI website)

As soon as possible, the student enrolls in the library workshop on honor thesis research strategies and resources.

It is strongly recommended that the student meet with the additional readers once or twice each semester, to make a progress report and to hear the readers' suggestions.

By the end of the semester, the student submits to the advisor and to the department chair an outline of the entire thesis and a rough draft of at least one substantial section of the thesis. If this work is satisfactory, the candidate will receive a grade of "In Progress" for the fall semester and proceed with the second semester of honors study. If the first semester's work is unsatisfactory, the department will convert the honors study into a single semester independent study and give it a final grade.

Spring of the senior year:

The student registers for AHI 498.

By March 1, the student and advisor consult with the department chair on date for the student's public presentation of the thesis. This presentation may take place after the thesis is submitted.

Five weeks prior to the end of classes, the student submits a complete draft of the thesis to the advisor and two readers. Readers who do not receive drafts by this time have the right to be excused from the committee.

One week prior to end of classes, the completed thesis is due. **Late submissions will not be considered for Honors.** In order to meet the official deadline, the student must submit by the due date complete and polished versions of the thesis (with a signed copy of the Honor Thesis Signature page) to the department chair, faculty advisor, additional readers, and the Office of Records and Registration. The copy submitted to the Office of Records and Registration must be bound and delivered by 5 PM. This copy will be transferred to the archives of the library for permanent retention. Students are encouraged to provide a digital copy to the library for inclusion in the College's Digital commons. (<http://www.conncoll.edu/is/info-resources/archives/honorspapers.html>).

Formatting Standards

The thesis should follow formatting standards established by the College and endorsed by the department:

1) For citation and bibliography, follow the MLA style:

(http://www.lib.usm.edu/help/style_guides/mla.html)

2) Guidelines for submitting an honors thesis to the library are available at:

<http://www.conncoll.edu/is/info-resources/archives/honorspapers.html>.

Grading

The thesis adviser shall assign the final grade after receiving written evaluations from each reader. A or A- work is the only work that may receive Honors. It goes well beyond the norm of 400-level courses and should meet the highest standards in terms of content and presentation. Work graded B+ and below will be changed from Honors Study to Individual Study 491-492.

Connecticut College awards the degree of Bachelors of Arts with Honors Study in the Major Field to students who complete their Honors Study with a grade of A or A-.

The College awards the degree of Bachelor of Arts with Honors Study and Distinction in the Major Field to students who complete their Honors Study with a grade of A or A-, and who have a minimum grade point average of 3.7 in their regular major courses, including those of the freshman year or its equivalent.