

Guidelines for Child Study/Human Development Honors Thesis and Applied Special Projects

Senior Honors Theses and Applied Special Projects (ASP)

A Senior Honors Thesis or an Applied Special Project gives qualified students an opportunity to extend their work in the field of Child Study/Human Development in a capstone project. The thesis or ASP can be an opportunity to get exposure to research, to take on a piece of an ongoing research project or to design a less empirically-based project. Both the honors thesis and the ASP give a student an opportunity to get to work closely with a faculty member, and are intended to integrate courses a student has taken throughout the course of the CD major and build upon and extend learning in new directions.

The Senior Honors Thesis (CD 198)

The Senior Honors thesis in Child Development is a project students take on during their senior year, though the planning for it should begin before the senior year begins. It covers two semesters and students receive two credits. To be eligible to do a Senior Honors Thesis a student must:

- a) have been on the Dean's List at least twice prior to senior year
- b) have at least a 3.4 GPA
- c) write a short proposal during junior year which outlines the thesis topic, methodology and gives a sense of what the literature review will include
- d) find two faculty members to serve on his/her thesis committee as first and second readers. The first reader must be secured by the end of junior year, the second reader can be added later. The first reader must be a member of the Child Study/Human Development faculty; the second reader may be, within or outside the department.
- e) Students are strongly encouraged to have taken the required research methods course prior to undertaking a Senior Project/Thesis
- f) take EXP 0190/CD xxx, the Senior Project/Thesis Colloquium, senior year in the fall semester
- g) make sure that if original research will be conducted that any necessary IRB approval is cleared; IRB approval is also required for students are doing analysis based on part of a larger project.

The Senior Honors Thesis Proposal

The proposal should contain the following information:

- a) topic of the honors thesis and the research question or questions
- b) some discussion of why the topic is significant (significance can be determined by: theoretical or methodological issues, topicality, social/political/economic relevance)
- c) an outline of sources for the literature review (a literature review is meant to contextualize and situate work within what others have done before)

- d) an outline of the proposed methodology and a proposed data analysis plan
- e) a list of the two or more faculty members who have agreed to serve on the student's thesis committee; the second or third reader can be from outside the department

Types of projects that can form the basis of a Senior Honors Thesis

There are many types of projects that can form the basis for a Senior Honors Thesis. Case studies, arts-based research, secondary analyses of data, content analyses of children's media/arts and empirical studies might all provide topics that could be pursued.

Timetable for a Senior Honors Thesis

Junior year

- discuss ideas with potential faculty committee members
- do preliminary research
- write thesis proposal (10-20 pages) and submit to committee members
- meet with committee members to discuss proposal and make any recommended changes
- take EXP 0190/CD xxx if planning to graduate in December of senior year
- Initiate IRB review if applicable

First semester senior year

- finalize methodology
- write literature review
- complete IRB review if applicable
- take EXP 0190/CD xxx
- begin data collection

Second semester senior year

- register for CD 198
- complete data collection
- data analysis
- writing and editing thesis
- arrange a one hour defense with all committee members by the third week of April
- submit a copy of the Senior Honors Thesis to Digital Collections and Archives in Tisch Library before Commencement, and a copy to Eliot-Pearson

At the recommendation of the student's thesis committee, the senior thesis may merit either honors, high honors, or highest honors. These are different from Latin honors (*cum laude*, *magna cum laude*, *summa cum laude*) that are determined by a student's overall GPA.

The Applied Special Project (ASP) Applied Special Project is a semester-long one credit project in Child Study/Human Development. The ASP is different from a Senior Honors Thesis in that it is not two semesters in duration, and it need not take the form of a written project, although it could. The ASP might take the form of a film, a play, artwork, performance pieces, music, photography or multimedia. The ASP could be also take a written form, with a minimum of 35 pages in length. The ASP might be an applied extension of a project a student has undertaken as part of CD fieldwork, a spinoff from a project undertaken in another course or may be a non-empirical outgrowth of an ongoing research project. Any ASP must contain a written component, but if it is paired with an audiovisual element, the written portion may be less than 35 pages.

To be eligible to do an ASP a student must:

- a) write a short proposal during junior year which outlines the ASP topic, methodology and gives a sense of what the literature review will include
- b) find two faculty members to serve on his/her ASP committee; one can be from outside the department
- c) take EXP 0190/CD xxx, the Senior Project/Thesis Colloquium, senior year in the fall semester or junior year if planning to graduate in December
- d) make sure that if original research or interviews involving human subjects will be conducted that any necessary IRB approval is cleared

Timetable for a Senior ASP

Junior year

- discuss ideas with potential faculty committee members
- do preliminary research
- write ASP proposal (5-10 pages) and submit to...
- take EXP 0190/CD if planning to graduate in December of senior year
- Initiate IRB review if applicable

First or second semester senior year

- Register for CD xxx
- finalize methodology
- write literature review
- complete IRB review if applicable
- take EXP 0190/CD xxx
- data collection
- execute project
- arrange a one hour defense with all committee members by the third week of April
- submit a copy of the ASP to Eliot-Pearson

Note: A Child Study/Human Development ASP does not make a student eligible to receive thesis honors, although qualifying students might be eligible for nomination to receive *summa cum laude*.

Tisch Library offers an 8 week, 1/2 credit class designed for students who are planning to write a senior thesis. This is not required but is a resource available for students.

The course is *Research 4 Success: Using the Library for Thesis and Capstone Projects* (EXP 19). Please visit <http://www.library.tufts.edu/tisch/ra/undergraduateTheses.html> for more information.

Forms

The following forms (see Dr. Julie Dobrow) must be completed and turned in as specified below:

ASP Progress Report and Checklist To be completed by student *after initial meeting with your committee*, signed by First Reader, and returned to your instructor.

Seniors Honors Thesis Progress Report To be completed by *the first week of December*, signed by First Reader and returned to your instructor.

Child Development Grade Sheet To be completed at the end of your SSP or HT semester.