# Major Honors

# Students with outstanding academic records may complete a Major Honors Project. Normally this project will include the scholarship of discovery through activities such as survey research, ethnographic study, case study, historical projects, library projects, theoretical projects, or literature synthesis. It will lead to a near publishable paper. Following Ernest Boyer’s typology, projects may also focus on the scholarship of teaching, application (service-learning) or integration. In this case, the project will include reflection and analysis as well as teaching, application and/or integration. The project will include a report or paper reporting this reflection and analysis appropriate to the project. To be eligible for this Department, students must have a strong academic record for a minimum of five previous semesters of University study. Students are eligible for a departmental honors project if they have a GPA of 3.3 in all courses and a GPA of 3.50 in major courses or other evidence of academic excellence. All applicants and projects must be approved by the department faculty.

## ACADEMIC EXPERIENCES, EXPECTATIONS, SUPERVISION

The project will be supervised by a committee chosen by the student and approved by the department. A student thinking about doing an honors project should work with a faculty member to develop a plan and proposal for the honors project. This faculty member normally will serve as chair of the committee and will assist the student to identify two additional committee members and will recommend the project to the department. If possible, one of the committee members should be from a major other than the one in which the credit is awarded. The chair will assist the student in securing Institutional Review Board (IRB) approval if needed.

Normally the honors project will span the last three semesters of a student’s University experience with the first semester being used to develop a proposal and secure approval and the second and third semesters used to implement the project. Social Work students who do a block field placement the last semester of their senior year will use the three semesters prior to the last one. The following pattern will normally be followed except for Social Work Majors who will advance the process one semester.

1. During the second semester of the junior year (typically the spring term), the student will, in consultation with their advisor and/or a potential faculty member who could serve as chair of the supervising committee decide to apply for major honors. They will identify a specific problem or question to be investigated and will prepare a research proposal which will include names of committee members. The proposal and suggestions for the committee will be submitted to the Department of Social Work for approval one month before the beginning of exam week.
2. During the first semester senior year (typically the fall term), the student will register for SOCI/SOWK 497 (3 credits). The student will prepare a detailed, 7 - 10 page, prospectus for the honors project to be submitted to the committee by Oct. 1. When the prospectus has been accepted by the honors committee, the student will begin work on the project following a work outline approved by the committee. The expectation is that the work load would be equivalent to that expected for 3 semester credit hours.
3. During the second semester of the senior year (typically the spring term), if the honors committee concurs that the first semester’s work has been of sufficient quality to allow the student to continue in the major honors Department, the student will register for SOCI/ SOWK 498 (3 credits). During the second semester, the student will complete the project under the guidance of the committee. The chair has primary responsibility for guiding the student in the entire honors project. Other committee members will assist as mutually arranged. Each committee member will approve the final draft. At the conclusion of the project, the student will give a formal presentation open to the campus community.

## PROCEDURE FOR PROJECT APPROVAL

During the semester prior to formally registering for Major Honors, the student will work with their advisor to secure a chairperson for the student’s honors committee. The chair may be the student’s advisor or some other faculty member in the student’s major. The student will work with the chair to identify two other committee members. The student working with the chair will prepare a proposal that includes: a clear title for the research topic, a description, a methodology, an outline of the study including questions to be explored, and a preliminary bibliography of sources in the topic to be studied. This will be completed by April 15 of the junior year and will be 1-3 pages long. The committee is responsible to set expectations and requirements.

The committee chair will present a recommendation to the department for approval. Upon approval, the student may register for SOCI/SOWK 497. A form will be provided to record actions taken.

## SCHEDULE AND CHECKLIST

This list provides a step by step schedule and checklist that moves the project from idea to finished product. Semesters are labeled as the first, second and third semesters of the project. Normally the first semester is the spring of the junior year except for social work students who will likely begin one semester earlier. The second semester is the fall of the senior year and the third semester the spring of the senior year.

*First semester of the project*

1. The student will consult with their advisor regarding their interest in doing a major honors project.
2. In consultation with their advisor, the student will secure a faculty member to serve as chair of the committee to direct the honors project.
3. In consultation with the chair of their major honors committee, the student will secure two additional committee members at least one of whom is from a different major.
4. The student will prepare a 1-3 page proposal for the project to be approved by the committee and submitted to the department chair by April 15 to take to the department for approval.
5. If the project is approved the student will register for SOWK 497, 3 credits for the following semester.
6. The proposal will include a clear title for the research topic, the names of the committee members, a specific problem or question to be investigated, a description, a methodology, an outline of the study including questions to be explored, and a preliminary bibliography of sources in the topic to be studied. It should be 1-3 pages in length. However, the committee is responsible to set the expectations and requirements for the proposal.

*Second semester of the project*

1. The student will develop a detailed prospectus for the honors project. (This should be 7 to 10 pages and is due Oct. 1)
2. The student will begin work on the project in consultation with the committee.
3. For the student to continue into the third semester of work, they must successfully complete first semester’s work at an “A” level. (If the student has done less than “A” quality work, they may receive credit for 3 hours of independent study with an appropriate grade assigned for the quality of work that has been completed.)
4. The student will register for SOWK 498 for the next semester.

*Third semester of the project*

1. During the third semester, the student will complete the project. The student should be in constant contact with the chair and committee for advice and counsel, for comments on issues that arise, and for review of drafts of written work.
2. The student will provide a draft of the final project paper or report to each committee for review and possible revisions by April 1.
3. A final review and public presentation of the project will be scheduled during April/ May of the third year.
4. Upon completion of the project and approval of the committee, a final grade will be assigned and forwarded to the academic office with notice of successful completion of major honors will be filed. *A student will graduate with Major Honors only if the honors work is of such high quality as to merit the grade of A.* Otherwise, the student will receive an appropriate grade for independent study.

## ALTERNATE SCHEDULE AND CHECKLIST

This schedule is designed for social work students who will begin one semester earlier than the normal schedule, in the fall of the junior year. The second semester is the spring of the junior year and the third semester the fall of the senior year. This schedule is helpful for those to wish to complete their honors project before beginning the Senior Field Placement in the spring semester of the senior year.

*First semester of the project:*

1. In consultation with their advisor, the student will secure a faculty member to serve as chair of the committee to direct the honors project.
2. In consultation with the chair of their major honors committee, the students will secure two additional committee members, at least one of whom is from a different major.
3. The student will prepare a 1-3 page proposal for the project to be approved by the committee and submitted to the department chair by November 15 to take to the department for approval.
4. If the project is approved, the student will register for SOWK 497, 3 credits for the following semester.
5. The proposal will include a clear title for the research topic, the names of the committee members, a specific problem or question to be investigated, a description, a methodology, an outline of the study including questions to be explored, and a preliminary bibliography of sources in the topic to be studied. It should be 1-3 pages in length. However, the committee is responsible to set the expectations and requirements for the proposal.

*Second semester of the project:*

1. The student will develop a detailed prospectus for the honors project. This should be 7 to 10 pages and is due March. 1.
2. The student will begin work on the project in consultation with the committee.
3. For the student to continue into the third semester of work, they must successfully complete first semester’s work at an “A” level. (If the student has done less than “A” quality work, they may receive credit for 3 hours of independent study with an appropriate grade assigned for the quality of work that has been completed).
4. The student will register for SOWK 498 for the next semester.

*Third semester of the project:*

1. During the third semester, the student will complete the project. The student should be in constant contact with the chair and committee for advice and counsel, for comments on issues that arise, and for review of drafts of written work.
2. The student will provide a draft of the final project paper or report to each committee for review and possible revisions by November 1.
3. A final review and public presentation of the project will be scheduled during fall semester either November/December.
4. Upon completion of the project and approval of the committee, a final grade will be assigned and forwarded to the academic office with notice of successful completion of major honors will be filed. *A student will graduate with Major Honors only if the honors work is of such high quality as to merit the grade of A.* Otherwise they will receive an appropriate grade for independent study.

## TYPES OF PAPERS

For the Major Honors project, students in the Department of Social Work may complete one of the following types of study. Following Ernest Boyer’s typology, projects may be the scholarship of discovery, teaching, application, or integration.

* Research Projects
* Quantitative Studies
* Qualitative Studies
* Theoretical Projects
* Integrative Studies
* Historical and Library Based Studies
* The Scholarship of Teaching and Learning (SOTL)
* Department Evaluation and Assessment
* Department Design and Implementation
* Community Based Research

As a general guideline, research projects should be 25 pages in length (including tables, bibliography, etc.) while theoretical projects should be 50 pages in length (including bibliography, diagrams, charts, etc.). Written reports for other projects should be appropriate for the project as determined by the committee.

## MANUSCRIPT FORM

The manuscript format for the major honors project will conform to the style manual of the American Psychological Association (APA). Committee members will work with the student to insure that the final draft of the manuscript is in the appropriate format.

## ARCHIVAL STORAGE OF MAJOR HONORS PROJECTS

Each completed major honors project will be placed in the University library so that the results of the research will be available to members and friends of the Messiah University community. Papers will be entered into the library’s on-line catalog and placed on permanent reserve. Example cataloging:

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