

# Departmental Honors Program Communication & Digital Media

## Overview

The Communication & Digital Media Departmental Honors Program exists to provide outstanding Communication & Digital Media majors the opportunity to conduct independent, in-depth research in a manner not possible through normal course offerings. Participants engage in independent research over the course of 2 semesters and may receive up to a total of 8 semester credit hours for this work. This work is in addition to the normal requirements of the Communication & Digital Media major, and therefore does not count toward completion of the major. Students who successfully complete this program will receive recognition on their academic records and in the commencement program.

## Admission

Communication & Digital Media majors who wish to be considered for departmental honors must demonstrate clearly superior academic performance and capability within and beyond their Communication & Digital Media coursework. The criteria for admission are:

- A grade point average of at least 3.5 in Communication & Digital Media courses
- An overall grade point average of at least 3.5
- Completion of at least one of the Advanced Study courses (300-level) required for the Communication & Digital Media major

Students successfully meeting these criteria may submit an application to the department chair for admission to the Departmental Honors Program. Ideally, application should be made in the spring semester of the student's junior year. See the attached *Application Form*. Students completing an application should meet with a faculty member with expertise in the area of interest to discuss possible topics and methodological approaches; while a firm, specific focus is not yet required at this time, these possible topic ideas should be mentioned in the Statement of Intent that is required as part of the Application Form. The department chair will notify the student whether s/he has been accepted into the Departmental Honors Program within one week of receiving the application.

Students are strongly encouraged to engage in directed reading prior to the start of the Honors Thesis project, in order to gain additional familiarity with her or his intended area of research and/or get a head start on the review of literature during the spring semester or summer term prior to the start of their senior year.

## **Selection of Study Supervisor, Thesis Topic, and Committee**

Upon acceptance to the program, the student should consult with Communication & Digital Media faculty to determine the study supervisor, under whose direction the research will be conducted. With that person, the student will determine the thesis topic and scope and then select two additional faculty members to serve on the thesis committee—one from Communication & Digital Media and one from another department.

Once the thesis topic and committee have been determined, the student files a *Thesis Committee Request Form* (attached) for approval from the department. Having received that approval, the student then registers for academic credit (CMDM 499) by 1) completing the Registrar's Honors Thesis Course Proposal Form (499), and 2) meeting with the director of the University Honors Program to obtain that person's signature on the Honors Thesis Course Proposal Form (499). Note: This last step must be done even if the student is *not* enrolled in the University Honors Program.

## **Probationary Period**

The first semester is considered a probationary period during which the student — in conjunction with the study supervisor — will conduct a literature review, identify resources and data, and prepare a prospectus for the thesis. This prospectus should be a complete research proposal with a thorough review of the relevant literature, a clear description of the focus of the study itself (including purpose rationale, research questions/hypotheses, etc.), and a complete explanation of the methodology to be employed. The prospectus should demonstrate that the student is now ready to begin work on the study itself.

By the end of the first semester, the student will schedule an oral defense of the prospectus with all three committee members; at least one week prior to this defense, the student will present the completed prospectus to the thesis committee in written form. The prospectus defense should consist of a brief presentation by the student about the work done thus far, followed by questions and comments from committee members intended to determine whether the student is ready to begin work on the study itself.

If the committee approves, the student will be accepted as a Communication & Digital Media Honors Candidate, and the student will receive a grade of "S" (satisfactory) in CMDM 499 for that first semester. Alternatively, the committee may ask the student to revise and resubmit the prospectus. If the student fails to do so by the deadline specified by the committee, the thesis supervisor will assign a grade of "NC" (no credit) and the student will be removed from the Department Honors Program.

## **Completion of Research**

For the second semester, the student will complete the research specified in the prospectus under the direction of the thesis supervisor.

It is important to note that the simple completion of the thesis does not guarantee departmental honors. In order to achieve departmental honors, the student must do the following prior to the deadline for filing Departmental Honors (typically the 14<sup>th</sup> week of Spring semester):

- Submit a written thesis (formatted according to the most current APA guidelines) to each member of the committee member one week prior to the scheduled oral defense.
- Successfully defend the thesis orally in front of the thesis committee. This defense will consist of a brief formal presentation of the work done, followed by questions and comments from the committee members. After the defense, the student shall leave the room and the committee will determine whether the student has earned a grade of at least A- on the thesis.
- Present the thesis publicly to an audience of peers. (This presentation may be scheduled after the deadline for filing Departmental Honors at the chair's and supervisor's discretion.)

## **Submission of Information to the Chair of the Department of Communication & Digital Media**

If all committee members agree that the student has successfully completed the requirements for Departmental Honors in Communication & Digital Media, they will sign the *Thesis Completion Form* (attached), which must be submitted to the department chair. The chair then instructs the Registrar to denote on the student's permanent transcript "Departmental Honors in Communication & Digital Media," and to record the appropriate grade. The Registrar will also list departmental honors with the student's name in the commencement program.

The final version of the thesis, with all committee members and their titles listed on the title page of the document, must be sent electronically to the department chair so that it may be catalogued in the library.

## Department of Communication & Digital Media Honors Program

### Application Form

Please complete all sections of this form and return to the department chair by the 7<sup>th</sup> week of the semester prior to the beginning of the proposed study (typically Spring of the junior year).

#### Personal Information

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Major supervisor \_\_\_\_\_

Anticipated graduation year \_\_\_\_\_

Campus address \_\_\_\_\_

Local phone \_\_\_\_\_ Email \_\_\_\_\_

#### Academic Information

Please attach a printout of your Watch Report by Department.

GPA in Communication & Digital Media \_\_\_\_\_ Overall GPA \_\_\_\_\_

#### Statement of Intent

In a brief essay (max. 1000 words), please address the following:

- Why you want to participate in the Communication & Digital Media Departmental Honors Program and what you expect to gain from it.
- Possible topic area and methodological approach you are considering, including how your previous coursework has prepared you for such a project.

Please attach your essay to this form.

## Department of Communication & Digital Media Honors Program

### Thesis Committee Request Form

Before seeking signatures from your proposed committee members, you should consult with your intended thesis supervisor and formulate a statement of your proposed research (max 300 word), including your intended purpose and a rationale for pursuing this research, as well as possible research questions/hypotheses and your methodological approach. This statement should be shared with your prospective committee members as part of your request that they serve on your thesis committee.

Once you have secured their agreement to serve on your committee, complete and submit this form, as well as your statement of your proposed research, to the department chair.

I am requesting that the following faculty be approved as members of my honors thesis committee:

1. Supervisor \_\_\_\_\_

Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

2. Second Reader \_\_\_\_\_

Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

3. Non-Departmental Reader \_\_\_\_\_

Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Thesis topic: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Approved \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

(Signature of Department Chairperson)

## Department of Communication & Digital Media Honors Program

### Thesis Completion Form

A hard copy of this form must be submitted by the Honors Thesis Supervisor to the department chair upon completion of the project (prior to the deadline for reporting Departmental Honors).

Honors Candidate: \_\_\_\_\_

Title of Honors Thesis: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

The oral defense of the completed thesis took place on: \_\_\_\_\_

The student passed the oral defense successfully (circle one):    YES    NO

Honors Thesis Committee members (printed names and signatures)

Supervisor: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Other CMDM Dept. member: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Outside committee member: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

The final (revised) thesis was completed and submitted on: \_\_\_\_\_

NOTE: An electronic copy of the final draft of the thesis must be submitted to the Department Chair. The committee members' names and titles should be included on the title page of this document.

The final grade awarded for the thesis: \_\_\_\_\_

NOTE: The student must earn a grade of at least A- to receive Departmental Honors

The public presentation took place/will take place on: \_\_\_\_\_