Program in Science, Technology, and Society
Stanford University

STS Honors Program
2015-2016

Introduction

The Stanford Program in Science, Technology, and Society (STS) invites STS majors to apply for admission to its Honors Program. Since the program was launched in 1978, STS honors students have carried out a wide array of innovative research projects. Honors projects present a unique opportunity to pursue one's intellectual interests in depth, work closely with a faculty advisor, and develop a new set of research and analytical skills that are broadly applicable. STS honors signals expertise in a given field, organizational skills, intellectual rigor, and students have used them as a springboard for graduate studies and for careers in fields such as information technology, entrepreneurship, finance, public policy, media, education, law, medicine, and the nonprofit sector. Often, the thesis project proves to be among the most rewarding and memorable experiences in a student's academic career at Stanford, as well as an important intellectual milestone.

An STS honors thesis tackles a significant problem or question related to a particular area of STS. Students draw research methods from one or more of the disciplines that shape STS, such as history, sociology, communication, anthropology, environmental science, computer programming/modeling, engineering, economics, political science, and art history. The issues addressed by past STS honors theses include:

- How are cell phones changing everyday life in South Africa?
- How do cultural assumptions shape the ways humans may someday interact with robots?
- When and why did international cooperation on nuclear power come to be seen as a national security risk?
- What criteria do venture capital decision makers use when choosing to invest in a new technology?
- What aspects of technology has the Slow Food movement rejected, what has it embraced, and will this shape its future strategies for success?
- How does media reporting on stem cell research shape political debates and public policy?
- How have African---Americans adapted music technologies and to what ends?
- When and why does “medical effectiveness” matter for treating criminal behavior?
- How has the automotive industry responded to growing concerns about global warming?
- How do users perceive and shape social networking technology such as Facebook?
- How should software liability be managed in an increasingly open source world?
- Does the development of advanced technology for restoration of well---known works of art change the ways that art is valued and interpreted?
- What are the sexual politics of birth control pills?
- To what extent and in what ways are Internet search engines socially shaped?
- How are genetically modified foods regulated in the political climates of the U.S. and the U.K.?
- In what ways has the off---shoring of call centers to India shaped Indian society?
Eligibility & Admission Criteria (junior year):

To be eligible to apply for the honors program, students must meet the following criteria at the beginning of senior year:

1. Find an honors faculty advisor and develop research questions, methodology and plan.
2. Attend at least one of the quarterly STS workshops offered for prospective honors students, take STS 191: Introduction to Research in STS, or speak with the STS Associate Director.
3. On or before September 20th, 2015: Submit a complete honors program application and research proposal. The application (final page of this document) requires the signature of your chosen honors faculty advisor who has read your research proposal and agrees to oversee your research and writing during the senior year. The application and research proposal should be submitted together.

Highly Encouraged: Apply for a research grant. Grants are available to conduct fieldwork abroad, to purchase software for data analysis, and to present findings at a conference.

- Major Grants: Can support full-time thesis research over the summer between junior and senior years. Applications are due during the winter quarter.
- Small Grants: A grant up to $1500 can also be used to support a portion of your thesis work. Application deadlines for these grants are throughout the year.
- See the UAR for more information on funding opportunities and deadlines.

Honors Requirements (senior year):

To graduate with honors, seniors in the honors program must meet the following criteria:

1. Attend required monthly workshops for current STS honors students (dates TBD*) that address various aspects of thesis work such as:
   - Honing your question, identifying research gaps, and analyzing primary research
   - Developing productive writing habits
   - Working with your faculty advisor
   - Giving and receiving regular peer reviews
2. Enroll in a minimum of 10 units total of STS 299, advanced individual work sections, with your honors faculty advisor to receive credit for your research and thesis writing throughout Autumn, Winter and Spring quarters. Deliverables and deadlines should be negotiated directly with your honors faculty advisor. You may enroll in up to 5 units per quarter of STS 299. Note that your honors project is equivalent to a capstone and a Socio-Cultural concentration course.
3. Work with STS Writing Specialist throughout the year, sharing drafts and receiving feedback.
4. On or before April 1st, 2016: Submit a first draft of thesis to honors advisor.
5. On or before May 1st, 2016: Submit the final thesis to honors advisor (the University deadline for Firestone Award). You must earn at least a grade of 'B' on your final thesis and have an overall Stanford GPA of 3.4 at the end of Winter quarter, or demonstrate academic competence.
6. Share the experience and tips with juniors in the honors program at the Spring Knowledge Transfer Lunch.
Three Steps to Success in the STS Honors Program

STEP 1: Find Honors Faculty Advisor

You will need to find an honors faculty advisor who is a member of the Stanford Academic Council (e.g., Assistant, Associate or Full Professor). Faculty affiliations/ranks can be found in the StanfordWho directory. Your advisor does not need to be directly affiliated with STS but they should have expertise related to your project.

You should begin to identify an honors advisor as early as possible in your junior year. This person is ideally someone you have taken a class with in the past or for whom you served as a research assistant. If you are reaching out to a faculty member whom you do not already know, it is important to read some of their research and acquaint yourself with their areas of expertise before approaching them to ask if they are willing to serve as your advisor. If you are struggling to identify an appropriate advisor, look in ExploreCourses for courses that relate to your area(s) of interest. Talk to your STS faculty advisor, who may know of other faculty who are well suited to advise your planned honors project. Take time to learn about both the research methods and mentoring style of your potential advisors.

The typical faculty member is exceptionally busy teaching, doing research, writing articles and grant applications and advising students. You should do research to find out when the faculty member(s) you are hoping to work with have office hours, whether they require an advance appointment and arrange a meeting accordingly. When you meet with a faculty member for the first time, initiate a conversation with specific questions and use the meeting not only to gain direction in your research but also to get a sense of an advisor’s mentoring style. How often is he or she willing to meet with you? Does she or he offer a good mix of constructive criticism and guidance? It is better to take these steps at the beginning of your project than to struggle with less-than-satisfactory advising arrangements for the duration of your thesis writing. In managing an advisor relationship, aim for a balance: take the initiative in your research and writing, but do not hesitate to ask for help, from both advisors and peers.

STEP 2: Write Research Proposal

Your research proposal should be 10-20 pages, double-spaced, and include your name, the date and the title of your proposal. The proposal should include the following sections and should show that you have conducted initial secondary research and have consulted with your planned honors advisor on the research plan and methods:

- **Research Objectives and Questions.** What are your primary research questions and objectives? Why are they important?
- **Literature Review.** How have others addressed your research question(s) or similar ones? Whose work are you building on, and why will your research be different? (Be sure to cite specific scholarly sources. These will be listed at the end of the proposal in the References.)
- **Methods.** How will you do research that addresses your question? Be as SPECIFIC as you possibly can. You will probably need to address a small slice of your major question, by doing a case study or comparing a few case studies. Try to identify a specific research site (i.e., a specific scientific finding or technology, a particular geographic or political context, a company, an Internet forum, a set of primary documents, etc). Explain what methods you will use; for example, surveys, interviews, discourse analysis, or something else entirely.
- **Conclusion.** Restate the research contribution you hope to make. What sorts of things will we know after you've written your thesis that we didn't know before?
- **References.** Full bibliographic information for all works cited in your proposal should be listed at the end of your proposal.
STEP 3: Write & Complete STS Honors Thesis by Deadlines
Write and complete an original 50-100 page, double-spaced thesis on the topic you proposed in your initial application and research proposal and in consultation with your advisor. Stay on track throughout the year with research and writing. The specific spring quarter deadlines are as follows:

April 1st, 2016 – Draft of your thesis due to your advisor

May 1st, 2016 – Your final thesis is due and must be submitted in three forms: one copy to your honors faculty advisor, one PDF copy emailed to the STS Undergraduate Advisor, and one bound copy turned in to the STS Office. This deadline allows your faculty advisor to nominate your honors thesis for a university award, such as the Firestone Award, if they so choose.

June 1st, 2016: Honors faculty advisor must submit final thesis evaluation and grade to the STS office. You must earn at least a grade of 'B' on final thesis and have an overall Stanford GPA of 3.4 at the end of Winter quarter, or demonstrate academic competence.

Additional Resources
Students are strongly advised to learn about the following opportunities and research requirements:

• **STS Writing Specialist.** Our writing specialist is available for consultation through weekly drop-in office hours and appointments. See https://sts.stanford.edu/people/staff/kevin-dipirro

• **HWC Honors Writing Program.** The Hume Writing Center (HWC) provides writing support during the entire thesis process, including brainstorming, researching, organizing, and drafting an honors thesis or other advanced writing project. See http://undergrad.stanford.edu/tutoring-support/hume-center/writing/undergraduate/honors for more information.

• **Working with faculty.** See http://undergrad.stanford.edu/academic-planning/planning-honors/choosing-faculty-honors-advisor for tips on choosing faculty advisors and establishing positive working agreements.

• **Grants for undergraduate research.** If you will need to travel or pay other research---related expenses, consider applying for a grant from the Undergraduate Research and Advising Program. For application deadlines see http://undergrad.stanford.edu/opportunities/research/get-funded.

• **Human subjects research.** If your research will involve people (interviews, questionnaires, experimental situations) you need to comply with University Policies on Research and may need to obtain approval of a research protocol. See http://humansubjects.stanford.edu for more information.
STS Honors Program Application Form

Please fill out the following information and submit this form with your research proposal to the STS Undergraduate Advisor by September 20th, 2015.

Name: ________________________________  Student ID Number: __________________
Stanford E-Mail: ____________________________  Current Overall Stanford GPA: ____________

I. Honors Research Proposal: Your research proposal should be 10-20 pages, double-spaced, and include your name, the date and the title of your proposal. The proposal should include the following sections and should show that you have conducted initial secondary research and have consulted with your planned honors advisor on the research plan and methods:

• Research Objectives and Questions. What are your primary research questions and objectives? Why are they important?
• Literature Review. How have others addressed your research question(s) or similar ones? Whose work are you building on, and why will your research be different? (Be sure to cite specific scholarly sources. These will be listed at the end of the proposal in the References.)
• Methods. How will you do research that addresses your question? Be as SPECIFIC as you possibly can. You will probably need to address a small slice of your major question, by doing a case study or comparing a few case studies. Try to identify a specific research site (i.e., a specific scientific finding or technology, a particular geographic or political context, a company, an Internet forum, a set of primary documents, etc). Explain what methods you will use; for example, surveys, interviews, discourse analysis, or something else entirely.
• Conclusion. Restate the research contribution you hope to make. What sorts of things will we know after you’ve written your thesis that we didn’t know before?
• References. Full bibliographic information for all works cited in your proposal should be listed at the end of your proposal.

II. Honors Faculty Advisor: Please note the thesis advisor must be a faculty member of the Stanford Academic Council (professoriate).

Please initial the following:

I have read and approved my advisee’s STS honors research proposal. ________
I am willing to mentor my advisee with their research project and thesis writing by overseeing STS 299 advanced independent work sections each ________
quarter of their senior year.

Faculty Advisor Signature: __________________________________________
Advisor Name (please print): __________________________________________
Title & Department Affiliation: ________________________________________
Date: ____________________________  Stanford ID Number: ________________

5