

HONORS STANDARDS INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS PROGRAM

Requirements: Students must take 4800 prior to the semesters they want to orally defend.

An honors thesis done in International Affairs has certain qualities that make it unique among the social sciences that make up the degree. This document is meant to clarify the necessary elements of an IA thesis as well as outline the expectations specific to a Summa, Magna and Cum Laude award.

General Guidelines

Students writing an IA thesis are expected to come up with a question that has contemporary international implications. ~~While~~ The

more disciplines they can utilize in a legitimate way, the better. At the same time, we do not want students needlessly consulting sources that do not make sense for their study.

Once an appropriate question has been determined, the student is expected to examine a broad range of existing literature related their topic. They should thoroughly understand the basis for further study and plan to add to the existing academic conversation around their project.

Finally, once the student has figured out the kernel of the thesis and mastered the appropriate literature, we expect her to show how her project relates to IA theory and/or contemporary global issues. Obviously, this goal is a fairly abstract one and some theses lend themselves more easily to this type of analysis. Ideally, however, all students will be able to connect their particular topic to the realm of international affairs. In this way, the project will distinguish itself from a similar project rooted in a single discipline.

Specific Latin Designations

A degree awarded **summa cum laude** should represent outstanding work. To that end,

2. It must be extremely well-written, showing mastery of English grammar, vocabulary, and syntax. It should be well-organized, well-argued, and analytic.
3. The research needs to be exhaustive.
 - A. The student must have covered everything in the related fields of study. This also may mean that the student goes beyond normal library research in published material. The thesis may include work in unpublished documents gathered from a variety of sources, such as archives, organizations, or individuals. Other aspects of original research may include interviews with participants in events or various experts in the field.
 - B. Alternatively, students should demonstrate exemplary mastery of rigorous quantitative methods of inquiry applied to the statistical analysis of systematically collected data sets, or the construction of theoretical or computer simulation models.

A **magna cum laude** designation should be awarded for excellent work. A student must obtain a good GPA (preferably above 3.5), have an excellent defense, and write an excellent thesis. To be considered for a **magna cum laude** designation:

1. The thesis must demonstrate mastery of the literature in the field and say something that adds to the literature.
2. The thesis must be very well-written