

## **What is the Senior Project/Honors Thesis in Cognitive Science? Do I need it to graduate?**

Yes, a senior research project (which can be either Senior Project or Honors Thesis) is required in order to complete the major. This is a two-semester project that you'll carry out under the guidance of an adviser.

## **What is the difference between the Senior Project and the Honors Thesis?**

- Senior Project is 3\* credits per semester and Honors Thesis is 4\* credits per semester, with more hours of effort per week expected for Honors.

\*Banner offers 1-3 credits for Senior Project and 1-4 credits for Honors Thesis. This is so you can split the credits between sections of two co-advisers if desired. You MUST have a total of 3 credits per semester for Senior Project or 4 credits per semester for Honors Thesis. This is stated in the catalog.

- Senior Project can consist of working on an on-going, previously developed research project of the adviser. Honors Thesis entails more original intellectual contribution from the student.
- The final written paper for Senior Project can be fairly short (5-10 pages), although there is no upper page limit. The final written paper for Honors Thesis is longer, typically 15-20 pages.
- To enroll in Honors Project, a student must have a 3.30 GPA in the major and a 3.30 GPA overall. Theses submitted for honors will be evaluated by a committee of at least three cognitive science faculty.
- As implied by all of the preceding, Honors Thesis is for the more highly motivated student with a strong academic record. Although any qualified student can choose the Honors option, it may be especially beneficial for those planning to go on to graduate programs or jobs that will entail research.

## **What is the difference between the work done in the fall (COGS 301 for senior project or COGS 391 for Honors) and in the spring (COGS 302 for senior project and COGS 392 for Honors)?**

In the fall semester, the focus is on choosing a topic, developing a specific research idea, working out the methods to be used, and preparing a written proposal for the project to be done.

In the spring semester, the focus is on conducting the research, analyzing the results, and writing the final report.

## **Is this an independent project or will I have a lot of guidance and structure?**

Each student will work under the supervision of a faculty member. There is flexibility in the nature and frequency of the guidance. Often it will involve an individual weekly meeting with the faculty member and/or participation in a weekly lab meeting.

### **Do you have to take COGS 161 Supervised Research before enrolling in the senior project?**

At least two semesters of relevant research experience (minimum 4 credits) are required for B.S. students prior to enrolling in Honors. It is not formally required for B.A. students nor for B.S. students doing Senior Project, but at least one semester of prior experience is strongly recommended - especially for B.A. students wanting to do Honors.

### **How do I find a faculty adviser?**

You need to have an adviser in place early in the fall semester, so start the process the preceding spring.

If you have no other leads, you can review the lists of Cognitive Science Program Faculty and other affiliated faculty here:

<https://cogsci.cas.lehigh.edu/faculty-staff>

Click on their names to read about their research interests on their websites.

When you find one whose research interests you, you can email them to introduce yourself, explain why you're interested in that area of research, and ask if you might talk to them about the possibility of doing your senior research for Cog Sci in their lab.

But it's strongly advised to have already done some COGS 161 credits with one or more faculty whose work interests you, before you reach the point of needing to line up a project adviser. This gives you a foot in the door, both in terms of having relevant background and because they know you and your work.

### **How do I pick a topic area I am interested in?**

See the preceding question. By exploring the faculty websites, you'll see the range of possibilities and can pick some areas that resonate with you.

### **What will I gain by taking this course? What should I expect the learning outcomes to be?**

- Explore and get to know in depth a research area of special interest to you
- Bring together knowledge from different disciplines that you've studied in the major
- Gain hands-on research experience and skills that will be valuable in your future career or graduate program
- Contribute to the creation of new knowledge
- Develop close professional relationships with one or more faculty members (and possibly graduate or fellow undergraduate students participating in the project). The faculty and graduate students can be valuable resources for job and graduate school planning and for letters of reference.