

HONORS THESIS PROGRAM HANDBOOK

The Honors Program in the Department of Film, Television, and Media is designed to provide highly motivated, academically talented majors the opportunity to enrich their education by writing an academic thesis or original screenplay, or by creating an original media production or integrated academic/creative project. In all cases, FTVM Honors provides students the opportunity to tackle larger and more ambitious projects than are possible in classes. Students of promise and ability are encouraged to consider honors. Becoming a member of the Film, Television, and Media Honors Program means becoming part of a small, intensely committed group of teachers and students all working toward achieving excellence in the discipline.

Achieving honors in Film, Television, and Media signals a sustained, outstanding achievement in the undergraduate concentration. For students with strong academic records, the Honors Program can serve as a capstone to their undergraduate studies, and as important preparation for graduate studies.

Initial Proposal for Faculty Advisor Approval:
Second Monday in February

Final Proposal to Faculty Advisor and uploaded to Department website:
First Tuesday in March

Questions: 734-764-0147

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OVERVIEW AND ADMINISTRATION OF THE FILM, TELEVISION, AND MEDIA HONORS PROGRAM

The Film, Television, and Media Honors Program is a rigorous year-long experience devoted to the research and writing of an academic thesis, the production of an advanced video, film, digital, or television project, or the writing of an original feature-length screenplay or teleplay equivalent. It is open to Film, Television, and Media majors who meet the application requirements and can include students who have not been in the College of Literature, Science and the Arts (LSA) Honors Program during their freshman and sophomore years.

Honors is highly competitive and admission is based on a minimum GPA of 3.5 in the major and a 3.4 cumulative GPA. Students wishing to apply for the FTVM Honors Program should be prepared for a highly rigorous and competitive review process, which takes into consideration the following:

- Performance in past courses
- Sample work from previous FTVM courses
- Completion of specific coursework
- An impeccably written honors proposal
- Faculty recommendation(s)

Application to the FTVM Honors Program is made in winter term of the junior year at a deadline typically set in early March. Students accepted into the FTVM Honors Program will gain the opportunity to carry out the independent work required to complete an honors thesis project, which can take the form of an academic written thesis, a film, video, television, or digital media production, an “integrated” thesis comprised of both academic and creative work, or a feature-length screenplay or teleplay equivalent.

Students accepted into the FTVM Honors Program also become members of the LSA Honors Program. As members of the LSA Honors Program, they gain access to a variety of special services such as possible financial support for their honors work. In addition, students may also apply for competitive scholarships administered by the Department of Film, Television, and Media to help defray costs associated with honors projects.

Upon successful completion of the FTVM Honors Program, students may graduate with Honors, High Honors or Highest Honors in Film, Television, and Media, depending on the evaluation of their thesis work. These Honors designations appear on their diploma and transcript, along with any LSA College Honors designations they earn from their overall grade point average.

APPLICATION AND ELIGIBILITY

GENERAL CONSIDERATIONS FOR APPLYING TO FTVM HONORS

To be considered for the FTVM Honors Program, students must have a minimum grade point average (GPA) of 3.5 in the Film, Television, and Media major. Students are expected to maintain this GPA in the FTVM major throughout their senior year in honors. According to rules established by the LSA Executive Committee, a student must have an overall GPA of at least 3.4 by the end of their academic career to graduate with Honors.

In addition to the minimum GPA noted, in order to prepare for advanced work in a particular subject area, students should have successfully completed certain courses by the end of their junior year to be eligible to apply.

- In order to undertake an **academic honors thesis in the television area**, the student should have successfully completed *FTVM 355* by the end of their junior year.
- To undertake an **academic honors thesis in film**, the student should have successfully completed the *core film history requirement (FTVM 352 or FTVM 353)* by the end of their junior year and the *film theory* requirement no later than fall of their senior year.
- In order to undertake an **academic honors thesis in digital media**, a student should have successfully completed *New Media Theory* by the end of their junior year.
- In order to undertake a **production honors thesis in the area of film, video, television or digital media**, the student must have successfully completed a *400 level production elective* by the end of their junior year.
- In order to undertake an **honors screenplay**, students must have successfully completed *FTVM 427 Screenwriting III* AND have a letter of support for honors work from the Director of Screenwriting. The student need not be a sub-major in screenwriting to apply for Honors.

Note: No exceptions are made for students electing to study abroad or who are engaged in other off-site programs. These students should also arrange their schedules to allow them to complete the necessary requirements by the end of their junior year, and must apply according to honors deadlines as described in this document.

CHOOSING A FTVM HONORS THESIS RECOMMENDER AND ADVISOR

Students interested in honors should consult with the Director of the Honors Program to make sure they understand the program expectations and to address any questions they may have about the application process. Initial meetings with the Director of Honors should take place in advance of the preliminary application deadline.

To initiate the application process, students should first identify and consult with a faculty recommender with whom they have worked and whose area of expertise makes the faculty member an appropriate sponsor for the proposed project or thesis. For honors in screenwriting, the faculty sponsor **MUST** be the Director of Screenwriting. When the student is accepted into the FTVM Honors Program, this faculty recommender becomes the student's primary honors advisor.

The student should also identify a secondary recommender at this time. *If the thesis is a production or*

screenwriting project, the secondary recommender must be a studies faculty member; academic projects can draw on any faculty member for this role. This secondary recommender should be a member of the Screen Arts faculty who has a background in the student's area of interest. This secondary recommender becomes the student's secondary honors advisor upon acceptance into the FTVM Honors Program. The secondary advisor provides additional feedback that supplements the instructions of the primary advisor. The honors student should keep in regular contact with their secondary advisor.

The first draft of the honors proposal must be turned in to the faculty recommender by the initial February deadline. Students must seek feedback and advice from the faculty recommender(s) in preparing their application for honors, well in advance of this deadline. The faculty recommender will then review the application and return it to the student with comments and suggestions for revision. The revised final proposal must be uploaded to the Honors M+Box by the final March deadline. It is recommended that the student have the faculty recommender(s) review the final proposal before uploading it.

The proposal and supporting application materials will be reviewed by the Director of Honors and turned over to the FTVM Executive Committee for adjudication. Please note that faculty recommenders usually work as advisors on only one honors project per year. The Executive Committee ultimately decides which proposals will be approved for honors—not the faculty recommender. If more than one project is recommended by a single faculty member, the Executive Committee will determine which proposal the faculty member will advise; if the other proposal(s) is viable, the Committee may request that the applicant seek an alternate primary advisor. Students will be notified of the Selection Committee's decision once it has been made, usually within three weeks of the application deadline.

DEADLINES

Students wishing to apply to the FTVM Honors Program do so in the winter semester of their junior year. For example, a student graduating at the end of Winter Term 2019 would need to apply by the application deadline in Winter Term of 2018. The student must submit an initial application to a potential faculty honors advisor by February of their junior year. A revision integrating the faculty advisor's input must be submitted by the March deadline (typically, the first Tuesday in March) and uploaded to the FTVM Department M+Box site as described elsewhere in this handbook. All applications must be submitted by the announced deadline. No late applications will be considered. Pursuing Screenwriting Honors depends on completion of FTVM 427, and therefore announcement of acceptance for screenwriting honors may be delayed until after the applicant's successful completion of this course.

HONORS SELECTION CRITERIA AND PROCESS

The Film, Television, and Media Executive Committee will review applications to the Honors Program. In evaluating the applications the Committee will consider:

- the quality and intellectual risk of the proposed project
- its feasibility
- the student's talent and ability as evidenced by past work
- the Department of Film, Television, and Media's ability to provide support for the successful completion of the project, including faculty mentoring and necessary equipment

Proposals that are poorly written or conceptualized do not meet the rigorous expectations of honors and will be automatically disqualified.

Honors is highly competitive. The commitment to honors on the part of the faculty sponsor is time intensive and it is recommended that Film, Television, and Media faculty members oversee only one honors project per year. Due to equipment limitations, faculty sabbaticals, and other Departmental resource considerations, not all projects, regardless of quality, can be supported.

Students will receive conditional approval following the Executive Committee's decision, usually within three weeks of their meeting. Students will receive official approval after grades have been posted for winter semester and it is determined that the students meet the requirements for the Honors Program. The Committee's decision is final. There is no process of appeal.

DECLARING FTVM HONORS AND REGISTERING FOR THE HONORS SEMINAR

After acceptance into Film, Television, and Media Honors, students must meet with the Director of Honors to officially declare FTVM honors, and they must also register for FTVM 495 – FTVM Honors Thesis Seminar.

DECLARING HONORS

Once accepted into the FTVM Honors Program the student must meet with the Director of Honors who will work with the Student Services Coordinator to add FTVM Honors to the student's major. The Director of Honors will also provide accepted students with an overview of the timeline for the following year.

The student should also meet with their primary advisor before the end of the winter semester to set up their research and/or creative schedule for the summer months.

HONORS THESIS SEMINAR – FTVM 495

In order to get credit for FTVM honors, students must elect FTVM 495, the Honors Thesis Seminar in the fall and winter semesters of their honors studies. FTVM honors students will work closely with their primary honors advisor, however they are also required to register for and attend this seminar in order to receive credit and complete their honors thesis. This year-long seminar is taught by the Director of Honors. *Registration must be for both fall and winter semesters*, from 1-4 credits per semester. Credits for both semesters combined cannot exceed 6 credits total. For example, a student might elect FTVM 495 for 3 credits for fall semester and for 3 credits in winter, or 1 credit in fall and 1 credit in winter depending on their credit load. Variable credit is designed to allow students some flexibility with their particular situation at registration (such as credits needed, tuition concerns, etc.). Electing FTVM 495 for only 1 credit should NOT be interpreted to mean the student intends to invest less effort in the seminar or on the honors thesis project.

Important note: Screenwriting honors candidates should be aware that in order to be eligible for the Hopwood Awards in writing, students MUST be enrolled for at least 6 credits (total credits, not only in honors) per semester.

REGISTERING FOR THE HONORS THESIS SEMINAR

To complete the process of declaring a FTVM honor thesis, all honors students must register for FTVM 495, the Honors Thesis Seminar. The Director of Honors will request an override from the FTVM Student Services Coordinator so that students may enroll in the course.

THE HONORS THESIS SEMINAR DESCRIPTION

FTVM 495 meets regularly throughout the year, and is taught by the Director of Honors. No other courses or meetings can be scheduled in conflict with the FTVM 495 meeting time. The seminar professor is free to schedule meetings during this time slot.

This class will leverage the talents of all the students to peer-critique each stage of the writing or production process, and to also collaboratively work through problems that confront the various projects. Depending on the year, there may also be visitors to the class. The honors seminar professor holds regular office hours throughout the year, and it is expected that minor issues and administrative questions be brought here first before moving to the primary and secondary advisors.

HONORS THESIS SEMINAR GRADING

A grade of “Y” will be reported by the seminar professor at the end of fall semester for FTVM 495. “Y” means no grade recorded, and does not affect the GPA, but holds the credits in suspension for grading at the end of the winter term when both fall and winter term grades for FTVM 495 will be reported. Final grades given for FTVM 495 are dependent upon the honors defense panel’s recommendation following the student’s honors defense and will also take into account the student’s participation in the seminar as reported by the Director of Honors.

AVAILABLE RESOURCES

Film, Television, and Media honors students are eligible to receive a one-time \$100 Honors Fellowship to use towards their projects, at the student's discretion. Honors students are also encouraged to apply for grants to support their honors projects through both the Film, Television, and Media Department and through the Honors Program Office in LS&A. The LS&A Honors Program website includes helpful information about available grants. Students are encouraged to pursue funding through the LS&A Honors office.

As students of the Department of Film, Television, and Media, honors students may apply to the regular endowments, such as the Alice Webber-Glover Awards. In addition, honors students are also eligible to apply for the Garnett Garrison Scholarships for Honors, which are offered both fall and winter terms. Established in 1978 upon Professor Garrison's retirement, the scholarship was the result of endowment gifts from his former students and colleagues at the University of Michigan. At the recommendation of Professor Garrison these awards are for FTVM honors candidates to help defray the cost of preparing the honors thesis—either research costs or the costs of a creative production or screenplay.

Applicants to the Garnett Garrison Scholarships are required to submit an application form, transcripts, and other materials appropriate to their particular project (such as treatments, proposals, budgets, etc.). Please consult the FTVM Department website for deadlines and specifics about applying for the Garnett Garrison and other awards.

As part of the application process, all honors candidates should arrange to meet with appropriate FTVM staff to discuss other resources relevant to research and production. For projects that require film or digital media equipment or North Quad studio resources, candidates must meet with FTVM studio staff to discuss technical needs and appropriate protocol for booking. For any projects that require resources in the Donald Hall Collection, candidates should meet with the librarian Phil Hallman to review screening lists, research plans, and to discuss loan policies.

GENERAL EXPECTATIONS

Honors students are expected to be independent, resourceful, and self-directed, and are expected to take primary responsibility for their educational experience in honors. It is intended to be an intensive experience where students should devote a level of focus and engagement beyond the norm for undergraduate level work. Students should understand this and should not attempt to undertake honors concurrently with other intensive classes, particularly other upper-level production or writing courses in the same term(s). It is the Department's experience that taking production classes concurrently with honors is a recipe for failure, and thus it is strongly discouraged. Students wanting to do this must discuss this plan with their primary honors advisor and acquire their approval.

During the academic year in which the student is completing the honors thesis, they are expected to meet with their primary honors advisor often; many projects involve weekly meetings. It is expected that the seminar professor will attend to administrative details, freeing the primary honors advisor to deal with intellectual, conceptual, and artistic issues. In addition the student should consult with their secondary advisor for additional feedback. The student is expected to meet the internal deadlines of their proposed time-line.

Toward the end of fall semester, the Director of Honors will solicit progress reports from all primary honors advisors to verify that students are on track with their thesis work. These reports will be forwarded to the FTVM Executive Committee for review. If internal deadlines of the first semester are not met, or if there are serious concerns about a student's progress on their thesis, the Executive Committee may recommend that the student be withdrawn from the honors sequence.

THE PROCESS AND RATIONALE PAPER AND THE HONORS DEFENSE

At the end of the FTVM honors year, students will prepare a defense of their individual thesis before a faculty panel. As part of this defense students will write a short reflection or prepare a brief introductory talk about their thesis process.

PROCESS AND RATIONALE FOR THE HONORS THESIS

Every creative work results from a sustained analytical process that comes from working through specific ideas of what a film, television show, new media work—whether fiction, non-fiction, experimental, etc.—ought to be. Self-awareness about both the creative process and its underlying aesthetic and intellectual assumption and goals—what Latin rhetoricians used to refer to as *ars poetica*—is a key and extremely productive component of art making.

All students who have been accepted into the Film, Television, and Media Departmental Honors Program are required to reflect on their thesis process, outlining their aesthetic and intellectual methods. This is an essential part of the evaluation process. It is also a valuable tool to organize the student's final thesis defense.

- Students undertaking production, integrated, and screenwriting honors theses are required to write a 10-page paper detailing the process and rationale for the thesis.
- Students undertaking academic honors theses are required to present a 5-minute talk detailing the process and rationale for their thesis. This 5-minute talk will serve as the introduction at the student's final thesis defense.

Both the process and rationale paper and the 5-minute talk should summarize the thesis and should address the following:

a) Analytical

- An account of the process that led from the original conception of the work to its final realization. Which were its expected obstacles, and which the unexpected ones? Did obstacles mainly have to do with logistical challenges or do they reveal your recasting of original aesthetic ambitions?

b) Critical

- An articulated reflection on your *ars poetica*, that is a discussion of the aesthetic and intellectual dimension of the thesis, its precedents or comparable works - whether in mainstream, independent, or experimental media. A productive aesthetic self-assessment of one's work includes also an understanding of whether and how the creative process affected the genre and media as well as the student's identity and aspirations as creative author.

THE HONORS PANEL

Final work in honors will be assessed by a panel of five faculty members, including the primary honors advisor, the secondary advisor, the Director of Honors, the Screen Arts Department Chair, and a fifth faculty member chosen by the candidate in consultation with their primary advisor. The fifth panel member should be selected based on their relevant professional expertise and will serve as an external evaluator who is at “arm’s length” from the thesis project. The Department Chair is a full participant in the final evaluation of the students, but does not vote except in the event of a tie.

All honors candidates are responsible for understanding and initiating the defense process. In all cases, the final defense is rigorous, demanding, and intense. You should be prepared to discuss all aspects of your work including your working process, the choices in your work, historical influences, other relevant work, etc. You should be prepared to discuss the intellectual underpinnings of your work and to respond to faculty feedback, questions, and comments with clear and thoughtful responses. Your primary advisor can give you a sense of the kinds of issues that might be raised. This is the time for you to show your committee that you are indeed an honors-worthy filmmaker or writer and an articulate cultural producer, capable of intelligently explaining your creation. Your responses are taken into account in the panel’s evaluation and ranking. Please see the appropriate section of this booklet for more specifics about this process.

HONORS ASSESSMENT AND EVALUATION

Based on material presented in the thesis defense and on the student’s overall record, the honors panel may recommend the following:

Honors: Excellent thesis, screenplay or project
High Honors: Superior thesis, screenplay or project
Highest Honors: Extraordinary thesis, screenplay or project

Honors in Film, Television, and Media is an impressive achievement. Only the most motivated students are allowed to attempt it. Only the most superb projects merit honors. It is, in a word, an honor. Highest Honors is reserved for singularly exceptional projects and is rarely proffered. As such, it requires a unanimous decision of the faculty panel.

The student will be notified verbally of their honors ranking following their final thesis defense, and a notation of earned honors distinction will be made on the student’s diploma and transcript.

Honors may be denied in the case of an unacceptable thesis, screenplay, or project. Honors may also be denied if the student fails to maintain an appropriate GPA (3.5 in the FTVM major and 3.4 overall). A student denied honors may still receive credit for the honors class if a passing grade is awarded.

SENIOR AUDITS FOR HONORS STUDENTS

During the first term of your final year (or the term before the term you intend to graduate) you must meet with a FTVM advisor to complete your FTVM major audit and complete the required on-line application for graduation.

HONORS CEREMONIES

Each year Film, Television, and Media invites honors recipients to speak at the Departmental graduation ceremony in the winter term. All graduating students and their families are encouraged to attend the event. Details will be announced toward the end of each academic year.

The LSA Honors Office also sponsors a special honors reception on the Friday morning of graduation weekend. At this reception, each honors student will be acknowledged and announcements will be made of the recipients of honors prizes and awards, including the Goldstein Prizes such as the Arthur Miller Creative Arts Award. Please contact the LS&A Honors Office for more information:
<http://www.lsa.umich.edu/honors/>

ACADEMIC HONORS THESES

THE APPLICATION PROCESS FOR ACADEMIC HONORS THESES

Applications should include:

1. The application form which includes:
 - a. The names of the primary faculty advisor and secondary advisor
 - b. A 100-word *abstract* that succinctly describes the thesis
2. A three to four page, double-spaced *proposal*
3. A preliminary bibliography of appropriate length, in Chicago Style
4. A timeline for its execution and completion
5. A sample of the applicant's academic writing

In judging one's ability to carry out an honors thesis, the FTVM Honors Selection Committee pays close attention to the quality of writing in the application proposal. It should be a strong document, crafted with precision and utmost care. The writing should be clear, concise, and employ correct style, spelling and grammar. Proposals that fail to meet these expectations will not be considered. Beyond this, the Committee considers feasibility and whether the proposal presents a cohesive and compelling idea.

In consultation with the primary advisor, the student will select a secondary advisor from the Screen Arts faculty, who has expertise in the student's area of interest. It is important that students seek feedback throughout the process of their honors thesis, but particularly in the formative stages of the project. This secondary advisor should provide additional feedback that supplements the instructions of the primary advisor.

Students should submit an initial draft of their proposal to their primary advisor no later than the second Monday in February. After faculty comments and input, students will then submit a revised application to the faculty advisor prior to the March application deadline. To officially apply to honors, applicants will complete the online application and create a folder in the FTVM Honors M+Box to upload application materials. All application documents should be compiled into a single PDF file named: STUDENTLASTNAME_HonorsApplication.pdf. Application materials must be submitted by the March deadline. It is a good idea for the faculty advisor to review the application before the student submits the final version.

The Director of Honors and the FTVM Executive Committee will then access the applicant's material in the M-Box honors folder. Please contact the FTVM office if you need help with uploading your application to the FTVM Honors M+Box folder.

DECLARING FTVM HONORS

Once accepted into the FTVM Honors Program the student must meet with the Director of Honors who will work with the Student Services Coordinator to add FTVM Honors to the student's major. The Director of Honors will also provide the student with an overview and timeline for the following year. The student will then register for FTVM 495 – FTVM Honors Thesis Seminar. See [Declaring FTVM Honors and Registering for the Honors Thesis Seminar](#).

EXPECTATIONS FOR ACADEMIC HONORS THESES

An honors thesis consists of original work in a student's field of concentration. A thesis is an independent endeavor. You are expected to cultivate the necessary discipline and organizational skills on your own. FTVM 495 is a workshop; while the honors seminar professor is your first stop for advice, honors students are expected to work independently. The primary and secondary advisors will meet with the student periodically throughout the semester as arranged by the student; the timing and pacing of these meetings will generally be set by the primary advisor.

Along with the Director of Honors, your primary and secondary advisors can and will give you practical advice on research techniques and direction; but they are not expected to serve as one's primary editor, proofreader, or cheerleader. It is the student's responsibility to keep a reasonable schedule for the project for research and writing, and to arrange any meetings with the advisor and other relevant faculty members. The honors advisor supports the student and their thesis project in many ways through a close and consistent mentoring relationship with the student but the student is ultimately responsible for the content, form, and quality of the project.

Following acceptance into the Honors Program in the Department of Film, Television, and Media, the student should meet with their primary advisor during the *final weeks of the winter term* of the student's junior year. At this time, the advisor and student will develop a research plan and reading list that the student can begin during the summer months and work on independently in preparation for the thesis project.

During the summer after acceptance into honors and the first term of the thesis project, students should read widely in the areas relevant to the thesis and develop a deep understanding of the origins and permutations of the research plan formed in concert with the faculty advisor. This substantial research should include both primary and secondary sources that provide interpretive histories and critical analyses, while also including relevant film and media texts.

The thesis should have an academic tone and use appropriate language, avoiding excessive jargon, and personal or journalistic overtones. When writing the thesis itself, a student should situate the project historically, institutionally, or aesthetically in ways that shed light on the central problems of the subject. Students should expect to produce several drafts of the thesis for feedback during the writing process consistent with the timeline agreed upon at the beginning of the year. It is the responsibility of the faculty advisors to provide appropriate and timely feedback to the student.

Toward the end of fall semester, the Director of Honors will solicit progress reports from the primary honors advisor to verify that students are on track with their thesis work. These reports will be forwarded to the FTVM Executive Committee for review and consideration. If internal deadlines of the first semester are not met, or if there are serious concerns about a student's progress on their thesis, the Executive Committee may recommend that the student be withdrawn from the honors sequence.

The length of the final thesis should be between 50-60 pages. Each thesis should include a brief abstract, table of contents and an acknowledgements page that includes recognition of any funding or awards. Theses should be formatted with appropriate citations and bibliographic information according to the current edition of the Modern Languages Association (MLA) Style Manual.

Students completing a written honors thesis will give a public talk about their thesis topic, presented in tandem with the FTVM Visiting Scholars series. This talk will take place during the final exam period and must be completed before the final honors defense. Honors candidates should consult with their advisors on how to best present their work to a public audience. Students should plan on 20-30 minutes for their talk, which will be presented as part of a program consisting of honors students, graduate students, and/or visiting scholars.

REVIEW AND EVALUATION OF ACADEMIC HONORS THESES

Honors theses are reviewed by a five-member faculty panel consisting of the student's primary and secondary advisors, the Director of Honors, the Department Chair, and one additional faculty member (who will be chosen in consultation with the advisors). Each student will submit their written thesis to the panel *approximately one week prior to the end of classes* during the winter term. This will allow the panelists adequate time to carefully read and evaluate the thesis. No late theses will be accepted and no extensions to this deadline will be granted. Once the student has submitted the thesis, they should meet with the primary advisor in preparation for the rigor of the panel review.

As part of the honors process, students undertaking written honors theses must also prepare the previously described 5-minute talk on their [Process and Rationale for the Honors Thesis](#). This talk will serve as the introduction to their thesis defense, which will take place at the end of the winter term, usually during finals week. After introducing their thesis, the honors student will participate in a one-hour discussion with the faculty defense panel, at which time the panelists may pose questions about the project's argument, methods, research, and relevant issues or concerns within the field.

At the end of the discussion the student will be asked to step out of the room. The panelists will then decide if the project merits honors and, if so, what level of honors. There are three levels of honors that a student may attain: Honors, High Honors or Highest Honors. To merit Honors, the thesis must be exceptional undergraduate research and writing. High Honors designates truly superb work, both in ambition and accomplishment; as such it is relatively rare. Highest Honors is reserved for extraordinary accomplishment, requires a unanimous decision by the panel members, and as such is rarely given. The panel's evaluation will primarily be based upon the written thesis itself but may also be informed by the panel discussion with the student. The student will return to the room and be informed of the committee's decision about Honors and level of Honors. In the event that a student's thesis does not merit honors they will still receive credit and a letter grade for each term of the FTVM 495 seminar.

Following the defense, the student will provide the Department of Film, Television, and Media with a final copy of the written thesis for the Department's archives. The student may wish to incorporate the panel's feedback into this archive copy before submitting it in its final version, no later than May 15th.

PRODUCTION HONORS THESES

THE APPLICATION PROCESS FOR PRODUCTION HONORS THESES

Applications should include all of the following:

1. The application form which includes:
 - a. The names of the primary faculty advisor and secondary advisor
 - b. A 100-word *abstract* that succinctly describes the production thesis
2. A description of up to three pages that outlines the proposed project, which includes:
 - a. Genre, runtime of the finished project, format of origination, and format of presentation
 - b. A detailed description of the topic, issue, or story
 - c. An outline of the project's form or structure
 - d. The stylistic approach, influences, and antecedents
 - e. The intended audience
 - f. A statement of feasibility
 - g. A statement of the project's importance and uniqueness that places it within a historical context of other film, video, television, or digital work, including the student's past work. Depending on genre and theme, it may be wise to situate the project vis-à-vis work in other media (e.g. literature) and/or historical or theoretical issues in Film, Television, and Media.
 - h. If applicable and if it strengthens your proposal, attach any additional materials such as a script, treatment or research material to the application. Consult your faculty recommender for advice on these attachments.
3. A list of major equipment and facilities needed for the project along with a rough budget
4. A proposed timeline for pre-production, production, and post-production
5. A reel of up to three examples of the applicant's best production work. Include a description page that lists information about each piece (length, format and applicant's role on the project). The sample description should also explain for the committee the strengths and weaknesses of the examples as they relate to your proposed project. These should be .mp4 files and must be uploaded to the FTVM Honors M+Box website.

Keep in mind that in judging one's ability to carry out an honors thesis the Selection Committee pays close attention to the quality of writing in the application proposal. It should be a strong document, crafted with precision and utmost care. The writing should be clear, concise, and employ correct style, spelling, and grammar. Proposals that fail to meet these expectations will not be considered. Beyond this, the Committee considers feasibility and whether the proposal presents a cohesive and compelling idea.

In consultation with the primary advisor, the student will select a secondary advisor from the Screen Arts faculty, who has expertise in the student's area of interest. It is important that students seek feedback throughout the process of their honors thesis, but particularly in the formative stages of the project. This secondary advisor should provide additional feedback that supplements the instructions of the primary advisor.

Students should submit an initial draft of their proposal to their primary advisor no later than the second Monday in February. After faculty comments and input, students will then submit a revised application to the faculty advisor prior to the March application deadline. To officially apply to honors, applicants will complete the online application and create a folder in the FTVM Honors M+Box to upload application materials. All application documents should be compiled into a single PDF file named: STUDENTLASTNAME_HonorsApplication.pdf. Application materials must be submitted by the March deadline. It is a good idea for the faculty advisor to review the application before the student submits the final version.

The Director of Honors and the FTVM Executive Committee will then access the applicant's material in the M+Box honors folder. Please contact the FTVM office if you need help with uploading your application to the FTVM Honors M+Box folder.

DECLARING FTVM HONORS

Once accepted into the FTVM Honors Program the student must meet with the Director of Honors who will work with the Student Services Coordinator to add FTVM Honors to the student's major. The Director of Honors will also provide the student with an overview and timeline for the following year. The student will then register for FTVM 495 – FTVM Honors Thesis Seminar. See [Declaring FTVM Honors and Registering for the FTVM Honors Seminar](#).

EXPECTATIONS FOR PRODUCTION HONORS THESES

Production honors projects are of no set length, style, or content. However, the project should be regarded as the culmination of the student's education and training in Film, Television, and Media. Generally speaking, production theses will run no longer than 30 minutes in their final form. Students undertaking a production honors thesis should be able to discuss their work within the historical context of other works and explain how their project reflects aspects of style appropriate to the project's content. The project should demonstrate a strong command of organizational, technical, and creative skills such as scriptwriting, cinematography, lighting, direction, audio design, and editing.

Students undertaking a production honors thesis are expected to function with a high degree of self-sufficiency through the stages of pre-production, production, and post-production. Where applicable, students are expected to assemble their own crew and cast for their project, book facilities and equipment

with staff, and take responsibility for financing through grants or other means.

Following acceptance into the Honors Program in the Department of Film, Television, and Media, the student should meet with their primary advisor during the *final weeks of the winter term* of the student's junior year. At this time, the advisor and student will develop a plan, a reading list, and screening list that the student can begin during the summer months and work on independently in preparation for the thesis project. *During the summer* after acceptance into honors students are expected to do preparatory work for the project: reading, viewing relevant media works, and writing script drafts.

SCHEDULING MEETINGS WITH HONORS ADVISORS

Production honors students should expect to meet with the Director of Honors and their faculty advisors often for the duration of their honors work, and to undertake many revisions of their script or proposal prior to embarking upon production. It is important that the student meet the deadlines proposed in their time-line for the project, or that they communicate with their faculty sponsor if it is not possible for these proposed deadlines to be met. At the beginning of the fall term students will meet with the faculty advisors and create a calendar of meetings for the term. *It is the student's responsibility to contact the faculty advisor to schedule meetings rather than relying on the faculty sponsor to schedule meetings.*

PRE-PRODUCTION

Typically students write a full draft of their treatment, outline, script and/or storyboard during the summer following their acceptance to the Film, Television, and Media Honors Program and present it to their faculty advisors by the second week of the fall semester. Revisions are expected during September and October in consultation with their advisor. In November and December, the student should finalize pre-production and begin production, at the latest, by the first week of January.

Toward the end of fall semester, the Director of Honors will solicit progress reports from the primary honors advisor to verify that students are on track with their thesis work. These reports will be forwarded to the FTVM Executive Committee for review and consideration. If internal deadlines of the first semester are not met, or if there are serious concerns about a student's progress on their thesis, the Executive Committee may recommend that the student be withdrawn from the honors sequence.

PRODUCTION PROCESS

Production typically begins in late fall and continues into January. By February, the student typically enters the post-production stages of their honors project and is able to present a completed rough cut to the faculty sponsor by early March. The remainder of March is spent revising editing, fine-cutting, and workshopping scenes or whole cuts in FTVM 495.

THE PRODUCTION BOOK

All creative honors thesis students must keep a production book in which all copies and revisions of paper work are maintained. The production book should come in two forms: a 3-ring binder, and an electronic (.pdf) version. Each version should reflect all of the planning and production work done. The electronic version of the production book will be uploaded with the student's final thesis materials, and the 3-ring binder will be shared with the panel during the honors defense.

THE PROCESS AND RATIONALE FOR THE HONORS THESIS

Throughout the creative honors project, candidates are expected to keep a written journal of their decision making processes as this will provide a foundation for the Process and Rationale Paper for the Honors Thesis, the 10-page essay that must accompany production honors projects. See [Process and Rationale Paper for the Honors Thesis](#). The student should also provide an annotated screening/reading list of works that have informed the project. The paper, screening list and final production should all be made available

to the defense committee prior to the final thesis defense. These will be submitted via M+Box approximately one week prior to the last day of classes.

PUBLIC SCREENING

For production projects, the honors candidate will participate in a public screening of their thesis, usually held at the Michigan Theatre screening room. The student must be in attendance at this screening and should be prepared to participate in a Q & A following the screening of their work. The public screening will take place during the last week of classes or during the study days of winter term.

REVIEW AND EVALUATION OF PRODUCTION HONORS THESES

Honors theses are reviewed by a five-member faculty panel consisting of the student's primary and secondary advisors, the Director of Honors, the Department Chair, and one additional faculty member (who will be chosen in consultation with the advisors). Each student will submit their thesis production, Process and Rationale Paper (including annotated screening/reading list), and Production Binder to the panel *approximately one week prior to the end of classes* during the winter term. This will allow the panelists adequate time to carefully read and evaluate the thesis. No late theses will be accepted and no extensions to this deadline will be granted. Once the student has submitted the thesis, they should meet with the primary advisor in preparation for the rigor of the defense.

At the defense, the honors candidate will be asked to briefly introduce their work, then to screen it for those in attendance. After the screening, the student can expect reactions and questions from the panel members. Students must be prepared to discuss the choices made in the work, as well as its stylistic influences and antecedents. As described earlier in this handbook, this discussion is a rigorous process.

At the end of the discussion the student will be asked to step out of the room. The panelists will then decide if the project merits honors and, if so, what level of honors. There are three levels of honors that a student may attain: Honors, High Honors or Highest Honors. To merit Honors, the thesis must be exceptional undergraduate production work. High Honors designates truly superb work, both in ambition and accomplishment; as such it is relatively rare. Highest Honors is reserved for extraordinary accomplishment, requires a unanimous decision by the panel members, and as such is rarely given. The panel's evaluation will primarily be based upon the production itself but may also be informed by the panel discussion with the student as well as the depth and gravity of the student's retrospective Process and Rationale Paper for the Honors Thesis. The student will return to the screening room and be informed of the committee's decision about Honors and level of Honors. In the event that a student's production project does not merit honors, they will still receive credit and a letter grade for each term of FTVM 495.

Following the defense, students will have the opportunity to incorporate the panel's feedback into a final cut for the permanent archive in the Film, Television, and Media Donald Hall Library. The final version of the thesis production, Rationale Paper and Production Binder must be submitted no later than May 15th.

INTEGRATED HONORS THESES

There is an ongoing conversation in academia regarding the future of the thesis in the age of digital media. This debate was particularly stimulated by UM's Sidonie Smith, who used her position as president of the MLA to argue for an openness to new forms of writing. In an open letter to the organization, she wrote,

Digital media and computational technologies are radically transforming how knowledge is produced, communicated, and evaluated. The digitalization of scholarly work in the humanities brings new modes of research; new formats of presentation; new networks for communication; and new platforms for organizing knowledge, orchestrating argument, and visualizing intellectual exchange. Doctoral students in the modern languages will increasingly create and use digital archives and invent multimodal forms of scholarly presentation and communication into the next decade. Why should the dissertation remain inflexibly wedded to traditional book-culture formats?¹

While she is talking about graduate education, we believe it applies equally to undergraduate writing and research. Students in Film, Television, and Media are uniquely positioned to take up Smith's call for exploration. Not only do they study production, theory and history in an integrated manner, but their production experience has afforded them the technical skills to imagine and to accomplish new forms of writing with the deep resources of the Department. Honors students for the Department of Film, Television, and Media are invited to propose an integrated thesis along these lines.

The writing could range from theoretical/historical academic writing to creative writing such as screenplays, and take the form of anything from a website to an Ebook. The production component could be a short film, TV production, or multimedia elements. Examples might include a hypertextual website that launches a theoretical argument, or a documentary that weaves written text and moving images on the platform of the Internet. It could be an Ebook with photo galleries or film clips built in—images taken from the texts under analysis or those produced by the student. In an integrated thesis, students are encouraged to develop ideas that illuminate the connections between media studies and creative practice, doing the laboratory work for new forms of academic writing that are still difficult to accomplish in conventional coursework.

THE APPLICATION PROCESS FOR INTEGRATED THESES

In judging one's ability to carry out an honors thesis, the FTVM Honors Selection Committee pays close attention to the quality of writing in the application proposal. It should be a strong document, crafted with precision and utmost care. The writing should be clear, concise, and employ correct style, spelling and grammar. Proposals that fail to meet these expectations will not be considered. Beyond this, the Committee considers feasibility and whether the proposal presents a cohesive and compelling idea.

Students undertaking an integrated project should plan to scale both the thesis and production work

¹ Sidonie Smith, "From the President: Beyond the Dissertation Monograph," *MLA*, last updated March 30, 2011, accessed October 27, 2012, <http://www.mla.org/blog&topic=133>.

appropriately. If the writing is extensive and challenging, any production work should be of moderate length and complexity of execution—and vice versa. To undertake an integrated honors project the student should have completed the appropriate kinds and levels of coursework. The Selection Committee will be looking especially carefully at the issue of feasibility.

The application for integrated honors should include the relevant required materials as described earlier in this handbook in *both* the written thesis and production or screenwriting sections. The student will determine which materials are appropriate in discussions with their primary advisor.

Applications should include:

1. The application form which includes:
 - a. The names of the primary faculty advisor and secondary advisor
 - b. A 100-word *abstract* that succinctly describes the thesis
2. A three to four page, double-spaced *proposal*
3. A preliminary bibliography of appropriate length, in Chicago Style
4. A timeline for its execution and completion
5. Relevant samples of creative and academic work that demonstrate the student's ability in the area(s) of their proposed project, as listed in the corresponding section(s) of this handbook

In consultation with the primary advisor, the student will select a secondary advisor from the Screen Arts faculty, who has expertise in the student's area of interest. It is important that students seek feedback throughout the process of their honors thesis, but particularly in the formative stages of the project. This secondary advisor should provide additional feedback that supplements the instructions of the primary advisor.

Students should submit an initial draft of their proposal to their primary advisor no later than the second Monday in February. After faculty comments and input, students will then submit a revised application to the faculty advisor prior to the March application deadline. To officially apply to honors, applicants will complete the online application and create a folder in the FTVM Honors M+Box to upload application materials. All application documents should be compiled into a single PDF file named: STUDENTLASTNAME_HonorsApplication.pdf. Application materials must be submitted by the March deadline. It is a good idea for the faculty advisor to review the application before the student submits the final version.

The Director of Honors and the FTVM Executive Committee will then access the applicant's material in the M+Box honors folder. Please contact the FTVM office if you need help with uploading your application to the FTVM honors M+Box folder.

DECLARING FTVM HONORS

Once accepted into the FTVM Honors Program the student must meet with the Director of Honors who will work with the Student Services Coordinator to add FTVM Honors to the student's major. The Director of Honors will also provide the student with an overview and timeline for the following year. The student

will then register for FTVM 495 – FTVM Honors Thesis Seminar. See [Declaring FTVM Honors and Registering for the FTVM Honors Seminar](#).

EXPECTATIONS FOR INTEGRATED THESES

Students should carefully read the sections in this handbook detailing expectations for both academic and production or screenwriting projects.

Following acceptance into the Honors Program in the Department of Film, Television, and Media, the student should meet with their primary advisor during the *final weeks of the winter term* of the student's junior year. At this time, the advisor and student will develop a plan and timeline for the project, a reading list, and screening list that the student can begin during the summer months and work on independently in preparation for the thesis project. *During the summer* after acceptance into honors students are expected to do preparatory work for the project: reading, viewing relevant media works, writing script drafts, etc.

Where projects require image production, students should plan to have this work underway by the December break so that the winter term may be used to focus on writing and revision of the thesis and on post-production or programming of the project. Throughout the process, students should pay attention to the evolution and development of their work, particularly as relates to the integrated approach and should be prepared to comment on this aspect of their work.

Toward the end of fall semester, the Director of Honors will solicit progress reports from the primary honors advisor to verify that students are on track with their thesis work. These reports will be forwarded to the FTVM Executive Committee for review and consideration. If internal deadlines of the first semester are not met, or if there are serious concerns about a student's progress on their thesis, the Executive Committee may recommend that the student be withdrawn from the honors sequence.

The student will be required to arrange a public presentation of their work, which shall take place at the end of winter term. The type of presentation will vary depending upon the form of the integrated thesis. Please see the relevant requirements listed for both academic and creative theses to gain a sense of which type of presentation may best showcases your work. The public presentations will take place prior to the final thesis defense, usually during the last week of classes or the study period of winter term.

REVIEW AND EVALUATION OF INTEGRATED THESES

Honors theses are reviewed by a five-member faculty panel consisting of the student's primary and secondary advisors, the Director of Honors, the Department Chair, and one additional faculty member (who will be chosen in consultation with the advisors). Each student will submit their thesis project and their Process and Rationale Paper to the panel *approximately one week prior to the end of classes* during the winter term. This will allow the panelists adequate time to carefully read and evaluate the thesis. No late theses will be accepted and no extensions to this deadline will be granted. Once the student has submitted the thesis, they should meet with the primary advisor in preparation for the rigor of the defense.

All panel members will review the thesis and attend the final defense. Depending on the format of the thesis work, the student may be required to introduce or present their work at the beginning of the defense. If the thesis involves production work designed for viewing on a screen, the defense will include a screening. Some forms of writing—for example, something in hypertext—may require a presentation at the defense where the student walks the panel through the project. Students should read the sections in

this handbook on the Review and Evaluation of both academic and production theses for the protocols of the final defense.

After presenting their project, the student can expect reactions and questions from the panel. The student should be prepared to discuss the choices made in their thesis work, as well as its stylistic influences and antecedents. Students should also be prepared to discuss, at some length, the written portion of the thesis and how the written and visual/creative components inform one another. This discussion should be expected to be a rigorous process

At the end of the discussion the student will be asked to step out of the room. The panelists will then decide if the project merits honors and, if so, what level of honors. There are three levels of honors that a student may attain: Honors, High Honors or Highest Honors. To merit Honors, the thesis must be exceptional undergraduate work in research and creative practice. High Honors designates truly superb work, both in ambition and accomplishment; as such it is relatively rare. Highest Honors is reserved for extraordinary accomplishment, requires a unanimous decision by the panel members, and as such is rarely given.

Integrated projects are assessed with equal emphasis on both the creative and written components. Honors and the level of honors is only awarded if the committee determines that both aspects of the project are successful. The panel's evaluation will primarily be based upon the thesis project but may also be informed by the panel discussion with the student as well as the depth and gravity of the student's retrospective Process and Rationale Paper for the Honors Thesis. The student will return to the room and be informed of the committee's decision about honors and level of honors. In the event that a student's work does not merit honors, they will still receive credit and a letter grade for each term of FTVM 495, the honors seminar.

Following the defense, students may wish to incorporate the panel's feedback before submitting a final copy of the thesis (in a suitable format) to the permanent archive in the Film, Television, and Media Donald Hall Library. This final copy of the project must be submitted no later than May 15th.

SCREENWRITING HONORS THESES

A prerequisite to entering screenwriting honors is the successful completion of FTVM 427 - Screenwriting III by the junior year. For this practical reason, screenwriting honors projects are relatively rare. Before embarking on an application proposal, the student must consult with the Director of Screenwriting.

THE APPLICATION PROCESS FOR SCREENWRITING HONORS

Applications should include:

1. The application form which includes:
 - a. The names of the primary faculty advisor and secondary advisor
 - b. A 100-word *abstract* that succinctly describes the thesis
2. A three to four page, double-spaced *proposal*
3. A timeline for its execution and completion
4. If applicable and if it strengthens your proposal, attach any supplemental materials such as a treatment, outline, or research material with your application. Consult your faculty recommender for advice on these attachments.

In judging one's ability to carry out an honors thesis, the Honors Selection Committee pays close attention to the quality of writing in the application proposal. It should be a strong document, crafted with precision and utmost care. The writing should be clear, concise, and employ correct style, spelling and grammar. Proposals that fail to meet these expectations will not be considered. Beyond this, the Committee considers the project's feasibility and whether the proposal presents a cohesive and compelling idea.

In consultation with the primary advisor, the student will select a secondary advisor from the Screen Arts faculty, who has expertise in the student's area of interest. It is important that students seek feedback throughout the process of their honors thesis, but particularly in the formative stages of the project. This secondary advisor should provide additional feedback that supplements the instructions of the primary advisor.

Students should submit an initial draft of their proposal to their primary advisor no later than the second Monday in February. After faculty comments and input, students will then submit a revised application to the faculty advisor prior to the March application deadline. To officially apply to honors, applicants will complete the online application and create a folder in the FTVM Honors M+Box to upload application materials. All application documents should be compiled into a single PDF file named: STUDENTLASTNAME_HonorsApplication.pdf. Application materials must be submitted by the March deadline. It is a good idea for the faculty advisor to review the application before the student submits the final version. Because Honors in Screenwriting depends on successful completion of FTVM 427, screenwriting honors acceptance may not be confirmed until the last day of winter term.

The Director of Honors and the FTVM Executive Committee will then access the applicant's material in the M+Box honors folder. Please contact the FTVM office if you need help with uploading your application to the FTVM Honors M+Box folder.

DECLARING FTVM HONORS

Once accepted into the FTVM Honors Program the student must meet with the Director of Honors who will work with the Student Services Coordinator to add FTVM Honors to the student's major. The Director of Honors will also provide the student with an overview and timeline for the following year. The student will then register for FTVM 495 – FTVM Honors Thesis Seminar. See [Declaring FTVM Honors and Registering for the FTVM Honors Seminar](#).

EXPECTATIONS FOR SCREENWRITING HONORS THESES

Following acceptance into the Honors Program in the Department of Film, Television, and Media, the student should meet with their primary advisor during the *final weeks of the winter term* of the student's junior year. At this time, the advisor and student will develop a plan, a reading list, and screening list that the student can begin during the summer months and work on independently in preparation for the thesis project. *During the summer* after acceptance into honors students are expected to do preparatory work for the project: reading, viewing relevant media works, and doing necessary research.

Students undertaking honors in screenwriting are expected to write and rewrite a full-length (90-110 pages) original feature film screenplay. During fall term they are expected to complete the first draft of their screenplay.

Toward the end of fall semester, the Director of Honors will solicit progress reports from the primary honors advisor to verify that students are on track with their thesis work. These reports will be forwarded to the FTVM Executive Committee for review and consideration. If internal deadlines of the first semester are not met, or if there are serious concerns about a student's progress on their thesis, the Executive Committee may recommend that the student be withdrawn from the honors sequence.

Screenwriting honors students will have access to the Gindin Visiting Artists and are expected to participate fully in scheduled meetings with the Gindin visitors. Winter term will be spent writing a complete second draft revision of the full-length script.

For screenwriting projects, a staged reading of the final script is required, which will be open to a public audience. *It is the student's responsibility, in consultation with the faculty advisor, to cast the readers and to make the arrangements for scheduling this reading with the FTVM office.* The public reading will take place in the last week of classes or during the study days of winter term. The student is required to have at least one rehearsal with their selected cast in advance of the public event.

REVIEW AND EVALUATION OF SCREENWRITING HONORS THESES

Honors theses are reviewed by a five-member faculty panel consisting of the student's primary and secondary advisors, the Director of Honors, the Department Chair, and the Director of Screenwriting. In the event that the Director of Screenwriting is already serving as an advisor, a fifth faculty member should

be chosen in consultation with the advisors. Each student will submit their screenplay and their 10-page [Process and Rationale Paper](#) to the panel *approximately one week prior to the end of classes* during the winter term. This will allow the panelists adequate time to carefully read and evaluate the thesis. No late theses will be accepted and no extensions to this deadline will be granted. Once the student has submitted the thesis, he or she should meet with the primary advisor in preparation for the rigor of the defense.

At the end of the winter term, usually during the final exam period, the honors student will participate in a one-hour defense with their faculty panel. During the defense discussion, the student can expect reactions and questions about the choices made in the work, as well as its stylistic influences and antecedents. As described earlier in this handbook, this discussion is a rigorous process.

At the end of the discussion, the student will be asked to step out of the room. The panelists will then decide if the project merits honors and, if so, what level of honors. There are three levels of honors that a student may attain: Honors, High Honors or Highest Honors. To merit Honors, the thesis must be exceptional undergraduate work in screenwriting. High Honors designates truly superb work, both in ambition and accomplishment; as such it is relatively rare. Highest Honors is reserved for extraordinary accomplishment, requires a unanimous decision by the panel members, and as such is rarely given. The panel's evaluation will primarily be based upon the quality of the script itself but may also be informed by the panel's discussion with the student. The student will return to the room and be informed of the committee's decision about honors and level of honors. In the event that a student's thesis does not merit honors they will still receive credit and a letter grade for both semesters of FTVM 495.

Following the defense, students may wish to incorporate the panel's feedback before submitting a final copy of their screenplay to the permanent archive in the Film, Television, and Media Donald Hall Library. This final version must be submitted no later than May 15th.

LINKS TO LS&A HONORS AND OTHER USEFUL RESOURCES

The LS&A Honors website (<http://www.lsa.umich.edu/honors>) contains a wealth of information for honors students, including information about scholarships and awards for which honors students are eligible. Students should visit the Pearlman Honors Commons in Mason Hall (the intellectual hub of the Honors Program) and become familiar with the programs and resources available through the College Honors Program.

Other resources of note:

[Sweetland Writing Center](#)

Phil Hallman at the [Donald Hall Collection](#)

[Askwith Media Library](#)

[Instructional Support Services](#)