

Guidelines for Pursuing an Anthropology Senior Honors Project

9/14/05

A. *What does a student need to qualify for departmental honors in anthropology?*

Students desiring departmental honors in anthropology must:

- 1) achieve a GPA of 3.5 or higher for all work in the major and a GPA of 3.0 or higher on all work taken at Skidmore;
- 2) obtain senior project approval from an anthropology faculty member willing to serve as their project advisor; and
- 3) earn a grade of at least A- on a completed senior project, whether it be for **AN 369 Senior Research Paper** or **AN 373 Senior Thesis in Anthropology**.

B. *What exactly is a senior honors project in anthropology?*

A senior honors project (AN369 or AN373) in anthropology is

- 1) an individual project supervised by an appropriate faculty member;
- 2) an experience designed for highly motivated students who want the challenges of writing and revising a research paper or a thesis on an advanced topic and particular research question in anthropology;
- 3) presented by the student orally at professional gatherings such as the Northeast Anthropological Association meetings, Skidmore's Academic Festival, or another appropriate public event.

C. *What is the difference between AN 369 Senior Research paper and AN373 Senior Thesis in Anthropology?*

AN 369 Senior Research Paper is taken in conjunction with one of the project advisor's 300-level courses. The student typically enrolls in AN 369 jointly with a 300-level course; with the project advisor's approval, the student may take AN369 in conjunction (jointly or after) with another experience, such as an independent study carried out in the lab or while studying abroad. When submitting a written proposal to the project advisor, students will be asked for a rationale for requesting 1 or 2 credits, which are distinguished in the following way:

1 credit: students complete the paper by analyzing data collected from library research.

2 credits: students complete the paper by analyzing data collected from library research as well as data collected from primary sources, such as data from cultural anthropology or archaeological field projects. Students typically complete the primary data collection before enrolling in AN369. Previous projects have drawn data from study abroad field projects and archaeological field and laboratory research projects. The analysis of primary data entails greater student time to write about research methods, setting, and data analysis.

After the instructor and student agree on which option, the Department Associate Chair reviews the project proposal to ensure that it meets program criteria.

Furthermore, AN 369 Senior Research Paper is

- 1) above and beyond completing all regular requirements for the 300-level course;
- 2) an analytical paper of greater depth and length than is typically required in the course;
- 3) consistent with standards for outstanding independent work (e.g., is supported by substantial empirical and/or bibliographic research, has undergone meaningful revision process; develops and supports an argument that goes beyond a literature review).
- 4) based on a written proposal submitted to the projected project advisor during the first two weeks of class;
- 5) attempted only after successful completion of AN 270 History of Anthropological Thought and after receiving permission of the instructor who will act as the senior project advisor;
- 6) awarded 1 to 2 additional credits over the regular course credits;
- 7) a 15-20 page research paper;
- 8) evaluated by the thesis advisor and, when appropriate, a second reader.

On the other hand, AN 373 Senior Thesis in Anthropology is

- 1) independent preparation for a major critical paper with a formal thesis on a particular anthropological question;
- 2) begun with a thesis statement, an outline, and a literature search;

- 3) an analytical paper of greater depth and length than is typically required in a course;
- 4) based on a written proposal submitted to the projected project advisor during the first two weeks of the fall term;
- 5) attempted only after successful completion of AN 270 History of Anthropological Thought and after receiving permission of the instructor who will act as the senior project advisor;
- 6) awarded 1 credit for the fall preparation (**AN 370 Preparation for Senior Thesis in Anthropology**) and three credits for the spring write up (**AN 373 Senior Thesis in Anthropology**);
- 7) a 30-50 page research paper:
- 8) evaluated by the thesis advisor and a second reader

D. What are some other considerations for students who want to pursue a senior project in anthropology?

In consultation with the individual senior project advisor, a student needs to develop the following:

- 1) title page
- 2) abstract
- 3) text format
- 4) reference format (the preferred style is that of the American Anthropological Association)
- 5) acknowledgements
- 6) a timeline for completion of drafts and the final product

E. What should a senior project proposal include?

A senior project proposal must indicate which form the project will take (senior research paper or senior thesis); who the student believes is the most appropriate advisor and why; the objectives of the project; a plan for presenting the project; projected time line for completion; and in the case of a senior thesis, who will be the second reader.