

## O'Neill Honors Thesis

- High quality 25-35 page paper dealing with a topic of mutual interest to the student and to his/her thesis advisor.

### Timeline

- Select an advisor BEFORE the semester starts and before you register for the course (ideally, at mid-point of previous semester). Note that advisors have limited time available to work on independent student projects, so the sooner you ask them, the better the chance you have of working with the advisor you want.
- Meet with advisor FIRST WEEK of semester.
  - Work out a regular meeting schedule, e.g., every other week for 45-60 minutes.
  - Draft a syllabus for the course mapping out the broad contours of the question you are pursuing and a timeline for getting work done, e.g., due dates for a problem statement; outline; bibliography; introduction; full draft; final draft.
- Second meeting: first (but not last) draft of an abstract for your thesis that specifies a research question and some key bibliographic resources that you expect to use in your research.
  - Critical to identify a research question that is original, manageable, and analytically-rich (not just a summary or sketch or overview of a problem).
- First third of the semester: complete vast majority of your research for the project. In most cases, this will be library-based research, and perhaps, some “field” research, i.e., if your project has a local context involved.
  - Note on travel and data collection: This is a four-month project. Think about feasibility of data collection plan. We have had some students do overseas research, but it’s not easy to pull-off in just one semester.
- Before Spring Break/Thanksgiving: complete a full rough draft of thesis. Be sure to leave adviser with enough time to turnaround comments on your draft.
- Last week of term: final draft due.
- Oral presentation: An important intellectual and educational function of the honors program is your presentation of your thesis to fellow honors students and to any faculty and staff who are interested in your work. This “community” presentation takes place sometime in April (November/December). We realize that not all students will have final drafts of their theses ready by then. Nevertheless, students usually have enough work done to give good presentations of their work.