



PHIL 4950: Honors Thesis

This form is required for enrollment in PHIL 4950. In typical cases, it should be completed **after** you have registered your honors thesis with the Honors Program. See the Honors Program website for instructions on how to do this. (If you have not yet registered your thesis with the Honors Program, you will need to provide a detailed description of your project; please see Philosophy's Honors Advisor for details.) PHIL 4950 is a fixed 3 credit hour class. It can be repeated once. **You do not need to sign up for PHIL 4950 in order to do an honors thesis**, but it is a way to get credits for your work on that score. If your work is completed, credit and a grade for PHIL 4950 will be given regardless of the honors decision. For additional information on Honors in Philosophy, see the brief description of the program on the back of this form and the more complete description on the department website.

Student Information

Name: _____

PHIL 4950 Hours Already Completed: ____

ID#: _____

Is your thesis already registered with the
Honors Program Office?

Email: _____

YES NO

Class:¹ _____

Major: _____

Course Information

Instructor/Supervisor: _____

Term:² _____

Signatures

Student Name

Student Signature

Date

Instructor/Supervisor Name

Instructor/Supervisor Signature

Date

PHIL Honors Advisor Name

PHIL Honors Advisor Signature

Date

¹ E.g., Senior.

² E.g., Fall 2018. If Summer, indicate session.

Honors in Philosophy

The Department of Philosophy, in conjunction with the Honors Program, recognizes outstanding accomplishment among philosophy majors by recommending their degrees be awarded with honors (*cum laude*, *magna cum laude*, or *summa cum laude*). The Honors Program's awards are based on four factors: a student's overall GPA; GPA in the student's major subject (PHIL); a senior honors thesis; and an oral examination. The thesis is written in close conjunction with an advisor from the student's major department and assessed by a committee that usually consists of three people: the student's advisor, the Departmental Honors Representative, and the Honors Representative from another department. (In exceptional circumstances, a fourth faculty member may be added to the committee.) The same committee conducts the oral examination.

Factors Considered in Awarding Honors:

1. **Overall academic record.** The general guidelines for awarding degrees with honors are as follows: *cum laude* 3.3 GPA or better, *magna cum laude* 3.5 GPA or better, *summa cum laude* 3.8 GPA or better. These are merely guidelines and there are exceptions. If you are interested in working for honors in philosophy and have some doubts about whether your academic record makes you eligible, you should contact the Departmental Honors Representative or speak to someone in the Honors Program Office.
2. **Academic record in philosophy.** As in 1.
3. **Senior honors thesis.** The senior honors thesis is completed during your last semester in residence and you may receive 3 hours of credit (PHIL 4950: Honors Thesis) for work on the thesis. Its magnitude is approximately that of a high-quality term paper at the 4000 level. In preparing and writing the paper, you must work under the close supervision of a faculty advisor of your choosing. The advisor will provide advice and criticism. You must consult with your advisor periodically; this is a requirement. You should not attempt to write a senior thesis without such consultation.
4. **Oral examination.** Your thesis committee, which consists of your thesis advisor (from the Philosophy Department), the Philosophy Honors Representative, and the Honors Representative from another department (and, occasionally, a fourth faculty member) also conducts your oral examination. The exam lasts for approximately one hour. Your honors thesis will provide the focus of your oral examination, but the committee may also examine you on issues they think will border on or are raised by your thesis. Your advisor and the Departmental Honors Representative will be happy to answer any questions you may have about the procedure.

When your examination is over you will be excused, and your committee will discuss its proposed recommendation to the Honors Program Council. This may be "no honors," *cum laude* (with honors), *magna cum laude* (with great honors), or *summa cum laude* (with highest honors). The Council will meet a few days later to review your academic record and consider the committee's recommendation. The Honors Program Council then makes the final determination. Awards are posted (usually the next day) at the Honors Program Office in Norlin M-400.

Please note that a degree with honors is an award, not an automatic title conferred on everyone who undertakes to complete the requirements for graduation with honors. Not to receive that award is no stigma. You should note, too, that your receiving credit for PHIL 4950 is not contingent on your being awarded honors. If you complete the paper, you will receive 3 hours of credit and a grade.

For a more complete description of the program, please see the Philosophy Department website.