Boston College
Department of Romance Languages & Literatures
Senior Honors Program
Guidelines & Procedures

The RLL Honors Program offers its majors a unique opportunity to conduct advanced, original research and write a thesis on a topic of their choice under the close guidance of a faculty member in the department. Students admitted into the program will work throughout the senior year with their Thesis Director.

Admission into the Program
Faculty members will nominate students for the RLL Honors Program at the end (April) of the spring term of their junior year. To be eligible, candidates must be declared majors in the Department of Romance Languages and Literatures with a grade point average of 3.4 or higher. No more than nine credits toward the major should be left for completion for one's senior year. Nominees must have also exhibited the maturity and discipline that independent work requires.

Nominated students will be invited to meet with the Program Coordinator during the semester preceding their enrollment in the program. If necessary, they will be asked to submit samples of their writing and a one-paragraph description of the general area they propose to investigate in their thesis. The final decision about acceptance into the program will normally be made during the first week of registration. The Program Coordinator will assist the student in finding the appropriate thesis director from among available RLL faculty members: students are encouraged to initiate dialogue with potential directors (especially current or former instructors) as soon as they arrive at some conception of their thesis topic, ideally before they leave campus at the end of the spring semester so that they can begin some preliminary work during the summer.

Thesis course registration
Students accepted into the program will enroll in the following two courses, RLRL 6698 (Honors Research Seminar) in the Fall semester and RLRL 6699 (Honors Thesis Seminar) in the Spring semester.

Guidelines for Honors Thesis Writer

Writing a Thesis
A thesis can be briefly described as an essay presenting the results of original research and substantiating a specific view of a subject matter. A good thesis develops a well defined and culturally significant issue, demonstrates a thorough and substantial understanding of primary and secondary material, and is well written and well argued.

Responsibilities of the RLL Honors Student
A senior thesis is by its nature an independent work. It is primarily the student’s responsibility, not the director’s, to undertake a thesis, focus on a particular topic, do the research, make use of the director’s expertise, write draft versions, revise them, and complete
the thesis by the required deadline. Students are expected to meet with their Director regularly, to participate actively in the Honors Seminars, and abide by all deadlines. The Honors Seminars will meet during the year according to a schedule established by the RLL Program Coordinator in consultation with the students enrolled.

A "Research Workshop" with a Reference Librarian from O'Neill Library will provide an introduction to library (printed and Web-based) resources. A meeting will be organized by the Coordinator to discuss thesis format and computer usage (available to all students at O'Neill Computing Facilities).

Language of the Thesis
The Thesis should be written in the language of the central thesis material, unless there is compelling reason to do otherwise. In the case of comparative studies, students will determine the language of their thesis in consultation with their Directors and the Coordinator.

Evaluations and Grades
At the end of the first semester students present a clear statement of their thesis, accompanied by an outline, a bibliography of works consulted, and one chapter. The grade for the semester will reflect the quality of the thesis in progress as well as the student’s performance in the course of the semester. Students must receive a grade of B+ or better in the Fall semester in order to proceed to the Spring's semester's work.

Under normal circumstances, the final copy of the thesis will be evaluated by two readers. The Thesis Director will be the first reader. If there is to be a second reader, he or she will be appointed by the Coordinator in consultation with the student and the Thesis Director. Both readers will submit an evaluation and a grade to the Coordinator. The final grade will be the combined grades of the two readings. In the case of two widely divergent grades, a third reader will be appointed by the Coordinator.

Thesis Format
The thesis shall be approximately fifty pages long. For information regarding quotations, notes and bibliographical format, please consult the MLA Style Manual available in the Department of Romance Languages and Literatures and in the O'Neill Library. You may also consult the past senior theses archived in the RLL department library (Lyons 208).

The title page should contain all the necessary information in the following format:

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THESIS TITLE
Your Name

Thesis Director:
Prof. XY

Senior Honors Thesis
Department of Romance Languages and Literatures
Boston College
Chestnut Hill, MA
Date
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The format, style, and physical condition of the final copy of the thesis manuscript are extremely important: the thesis should be error-free; all accent marks should be included; both the notes and the bibliography should be complete and correctly formatted. The writer should be sure that no pages are missing. High-quality thesis paper should be used in printing the final copies.

Final Submission of Thesis
One copy of the thesis should be submitted to each of the thesis readers (if there is more than one reader) by the end of March. In addition, a third copy of the thesis will be submitted to the Coordinator for the RLL departmental library by the end of April where it will remain for future public consultation.

This final archival copy of the thesis should be error-free, printed on acid-free, heavy bond paper (also called "thesis bond"), and bound with a velo (or comb) binding and clear acetate front cover and black plastic back cover. Any commercial copy center (such Eagle Print Services on campus) will do this sort of binding inexpensively.

Formal (Oral) Presentation of Thesis Research
At the end of the spring semester (last week of April), thesis writers will be asked to formally present their research results to their peers in the Honors Thesis Seminar, to which the public (faculty and students of the RLL Dept.) will also be invited.

The RLL Honors students will also be asked to give a brief, more informal presentation about the experience of researching and writing the thesis at the Annual RLL Awards Ceremony and Reception, to which again the public (including family and friends) will be invited. This ceremony is normally held at the beginning of the Spring Semester Study Period.

Summary of Requirements:
1) Before admission: Prerequisites:
   a) must be RLL majors with a G.P.A. of 3.4 or higher.
   b) no more than nine credits toward the major should be left for the senior year.
   c) must exhibit maturity and self-discipline for an independent research project.

2) While enrolled in the program:
Candidates are required to enroll in the RLRL 6698 Honors Research Seminar (Fall semester) and RLRL 6699 Honors Thesis Seminar (Spring semester), to meet on a regular basis with their thesis directors and the RLL Honors Program Coordinator, and to submit research work according to the scheduled stages of the program.

Areas of Concentration for Thesis Topics:
Literature, language, culture, or any interdisciplinary aspects thereof (in cooperation with a co-director from another appropriate department).