

# Journalism Department

## Honors Thesis Requirements

A senior honors thesis for majors is an opportunity to engage in a substantial research or creative project. The thesis must make an original research or creative contribution or expand on the existing study or practice of **Journalism**. As stated in the departmental scholarship statement, “Scholarship in the Journalism Department resides at the intersection of the humanities, social sciences, fine arts, and professional practice. This scholarship may take many forms: books, monographs, journal articles, presentations, trade publications, documentaries, exhibitions, articles, and programming in media, works in new media, external grants, and granted intellectual property rights.” The details of the thesis project must be established in consultation with a mentor.

Eight hours of HNR 4998 academic credit will substitute for **either** a) eight hours of electives in the major or b) for four hours of electives in the major plus four hours of the senior seminar requirement for Communications majors (COM4970), provided that the Honors thesis has a **Journalism** focus.

To make sure that the topic selected for the Honors Thesis is appropriate, it should be approved in advance by the **Chair of the Journalism Department**. Typically, this approval will be sought in the Fall of the Junior Year.

PLEASE NOTE: For students with double majors (outside the School of Communications), the research can only replace the COM4970 senior seminar if the thesis is mentored by a SOC faculty member, and the thesis has a **Journalism** focus. It cannot also count as a senior seminar of the student’s other major. In other words: Hours of HNR 4998 cannot double count in another major.

### **Mentor**

The mentor for an honors student thesis for majors must be a full-time faculty member in the **Journalism Department** or in the School of Communications. The mentor must have research, creative, and/or methodological expertise and interests that are consistent with the proposed thesis project. According to the Honors website, the limitation on the numbers of Honors theses that faculty can supervise is three over two years, and no more than two in the same cohort. This is because of the time commitment necessary to provide high-quality mentoring.

To supervise a third Honors Thesis, the faculty member will need approval from the Department Chair, and the COM Core director will coordinate the submission of the waiver for COM4970 for the Honors student, if requested.

A list of **Journalism** faculty members and their areas of expertise can be found on the School of Communications website.

### **Thesis Committee**

Three full-time Elon University faculty will comprise the thesis committee: the mentor and two other Elon faculty members (one representative chosen by the student and mentor and one representative appointed by the Honors program). The members of the committee should be selected based on their ability to contribute to the project and evaluate the completed work.

### **Description**

The honors thesis must make a significant research or creative contribution to the study or practice of **journalism** and communications. As such, the thesis must extend beyond normal course, independent study, or COM 4999 research projects. Traditional qualitative and quantitative research projects must follow established conventions, be consistent with the development of such projects, conform to format guidelines established by the Honors Program, and include a bibliography and appendices, as needed. Creative projects must manifest appropriate theoretical concepts and follow content and production conventions for such works. Creative works also must be accompanied by written documentation explaining the significance of the project, reviewing pertinent literature, and providing historical, theoretical, methodological, contextual and/or other appropriate justification of the project, plus bibliography and appendices. All written works and documentation must conform to an appropriate academic style guide.

### **Academic Credit/Timeline**

The distribution of credit hours will be determined in consultation with the mentor. A student may not take more than four hours of thesis credit in a semester. Credit during the Summer and Winter Terms is only permitted in circumstances approved by the Honors Program. Ordinarily, a student will follow the timeline for completion as suggested by the Honors Program.