CRONKITE BARRETT HONORS PROGRAM GUIDELINES

Welcome to the Cronkite Barrett Honors Program! We’re excited to work with you to make your honors experience as rewarding as possible.

HONORS COURSES AT CRONKITE

Each semester the Cronkite School offers several honors sections of required courses. These frequently include JMC 201 Beginning News Writing and Reporting, JMC 301 Intermediate Reporting and Writing, JMC 305 Multimedia Journalism and JMC 366 Ethics and Diversity.

Occasionally, an elective course, such as a seminar, also will be offered exclusively for honors students. We strongly encourage you to enroll in these sections; they are designed to both challenge and inspire you. If an honors section is offered, you cannot complete a contract in another section.

When an honors section of a course is not available, you may be able to complete an honors enrichment contract to earn honors credit. To arrange for a contract:

1. Speak with the instructor within the first week of the course to let her or him know of your interest. Faculty are not required to accept honors enrichment contracts, but most are happy to work with you. Both fulltime and part-time faculty can administer these contracts.

2. It is up to you, not the instructor, to develop an idea for your project. The idea should be closely related to the subject matter of the course but should enrich learning beyond what the course offers. For example, you might do a multimedia project, such as a video or slideshow, to accompany or supplement an assignment that would otherwise be submitted as text only. You could conduct an in-depth interview with an expert or write a research paper, produce a podcast, prepare and deliver a presentation to the class or develop a module that explores a topic in depth. There is no set amount of time an honors project must take, but it should represent a significant investment of time while not overwhelming your regular coursework. A good rule of thumb is to count on at least 10 to 15 hours of time investment.

3. After verbally agreeing on a project with your instructor, you will generate a contract on your MyASU page. Your instructor will review it and, if satisfied, approve the contract and set expectations regarding length, deadlines and other particulars.

4. It is up to you to carry out your project to completion. You should plan to meet with your instructor several times over the semester – and send him or her drafts to ensure that you’re moving in the right direction. But don’t expect your instructor to bird dog the project. He or she is there to help when you need it and to provide guidance and direction.

5. Your instructor will review your project upon completion and decide whether to award honors credit. If you do not meet expectations – or if you fail to deliver the project or deliver it on time – there is no penalty other than you will not get the honors credit for that course. Your honors credit work is separate from your work for the course and does not impact your grade for the course.

Review these guidelines for more information on honors enrichment contracts and how the process works: https://barrethonors.asu.edu/academics/honors-courses-and-contracts/honors-enrichment-contracts
HONORS THESIS/CREATIVE PROJECT AT CRONKITE

Cronkite Honors Faculty Advisors

Your first step is to make an appointment with your Cronkite Faculty Honors Advisor (FHA) no later than the second semester of your sophomore year. Your Advisor will help you identify a thesis or creative project topic and suggest faculty members who could serve as your Thesis Director and member(s) of your committee.

You are assigned to one of five Faculty Honors Advisors alphabetically according to the first letter of your last name.

Names beginning with:

A-C:  Brett Kurland, bkurland@asu.edu

D-H:  Professor Marianne Barrett, marianne@asu.edu

I-M:  Professor John Craft, john.craft@asu.edu

N-R:  Lecturer Elizabeth Mays, elizabeth.mays@asu.edu

S-Z:  Professor of Practice Steven Beschloss, steven.beschloss@asu.edu

If your Faculty Honors Advisor is not available or you’re having difficulties of any kind, you also can reach out to Cronkite-Barrett Program Coordinator Kristin Gilger at kristin.gilger@asu.edu.

As you’re developing your proposal, it might be useful to look at some of the many Cronkite student projects and papers that have already been defended and approved. There are excellent examples here: https://keep.lib.asu.edu/search?search_api_fulltext=Cronkite

After meeting with your Faculty Honors Advisor, you should start developing your thesis idea into a prospectus, a document that spells out what you propose to do and sets out a timeline for doing it. Barrett provides guidance on what a prospectus should look like here: https://barretthonors.asu.edu/thesis/prospectus. This is also where you’ll submit your prospectus online.

Once your Faculty Honors Advisor thinks you’re far enough along in developing a prospectus, he or she will indicate it’s time to find a Thesis Director and committee.

Thesis Director

Your Thesis Director can be a fulltime member of the Cronkite faculty, a qualified member of the adjunct faculty, or a faculty member from another department or school at ASU.

The Cronkite School has more than four dozen full-time faculty members with expertise in a variety of areas, from documentary and digital media to sports journalism, ethics and diversity. Start by visiting the faculty web page https://cronkite.asu.edu/about/faculty-and-leadership/faculty to familiarize yourself with these faculty members (click on their names to get full bios). If there is no full-time faculty member who matches your area of interest, you may suggest one of the school’s part-time
faculty associates, or adjunct faculty, who are listed here: https://cronkite.asu.edu/people/associate-affiliated-faculty/. Your Faculty Honors Advisor will let you know if the adjunct faculty member is qualified to be a Thesis Director.

Not all faculty members will be able to chair an honors thesis. Associate or part-time faculty typically have full-time jobs outside of the classes they teach, and some full-time faculty may already be committed to other students. But don’t worry; your Honors Faculty Advisor will be able to offer advice and suggest options.

The Thesis Director is the person you will work with most closely over the course of your project and who will assign your grades. He or she will start by reviewing your prospectus-in-progress and help you refine it. Please don’t submit your prospectus until your Thesis Director has approved a final version and be sure both your Director and Your Faculty Honors Advisor has a copy.

Your director will meet with you regularly as you work on your thesis, review your work as it progresses and serve as chair of your thesis committee when it’s time to defend your paper or project. But the other member or members of your committee are important, too.

If your Thesis Director is from another school or department at ASU, you will need to follow that department’s or school’s thesis guidelines. Please notify your Faculty Honors Advisor if you would like to follow this route.

Your Committee

You need at least one other person in addition to your Thesis Director to sit on your committee. Committee members serve as an additional resource for you, providing help and advice when you need it, reviewing your work and providing feedback. They also will evaluate your final paper or project and decide, along with your Thesis Director, if your thesis is acceptable.

You may choose another Cronkite faculty member, a faculty member who teaches elsewhere at ASU, or a professional with expertise in the area you will be exploring to serve on your committee. Cronkite students often choose a media professional or a part-time faculty member who is working in the profession.

You may choose to expand your committee by adding a third person from any of the above categories. We recommend that you think about doing this – both because you’ll have access to more expertise and because committee members sometimes have to drop out due to changed circumstances. If you start with three committee members and drop to two, you’re still in good shape.

Keep in mind that your committee should include at least one full-time Cronkite faculty member. That means that if a part-time faculty member chairs your committee, you should seek a full-time faculty member to serve on your committee.

Thesis Course Requirements

Once you have a director and a committee and your prospectus has been submitted, you’re ready to sign up for required Cronkite-Barrett honors thesis courses. The first of these is the three-credit MCO 492 (Honors Directed Study), during which you’ll research and begin creating your project. The second
is the three-credit MCO 493 (Honors Thesis), during which you complete and defend your thesis. Both are listed on the Cronkite course schedule under Barrett-Cronkite program coordinator Kristin Gilger.

You’ll need to complete an override form signed by your Faculty Honors Advisor and your Thesis Director in order to register for the courses. You can get the form from your Cronkite advisor in the advising office, from your Faculty Honors Advisor or Professor Gilger.

The two courses are typically taken back-to-back and can be taken over the summer. Students typically take them in their junior and senior years. However, we advise that you don’t wait until your senior year to begin. That way, you won’t be backed into a corner if completing the thesis takes you longer than you expect.

Your Thesis Director is responsible for evaluating your work and assigning grades for these courses. Your director has the option of assigning a “Z” grade, which indicates the project is in progress. The “Z” is replaced by a permanent grade after your work is completed and approved by your committee.

**Thesis Defense**

At the end of the second thesis course, you’ll defend your thesis or project before your committee, guests and interested members of the ASU community. You should consult with your Thesis Director and committee members to establish a date for the defense, book a room where the defense will take place, and fill out a Defense Reporting Form with Barrett, The Honors College (https://barretthonors.asu.edu/thesis/defense).

This should be done several months prior to the date of the defense. All committee members must be present during the defense, although in some instances they can be present virtually.

Most Cronkite students hold their defenses in the Cronkite building. To reserve a room, contact csevents@asu.edu. Indicate whether you’ll need a room with audiovisual capability.

You should provide all committee members a copy of your paper or project at least two weeks prior to the defense meeting so they can give you their final edits and ask specific questions. Plan to bring to the defense copies of the final version of a paper if your work is a written thesis. For a creative project that you will show to your committee during the defense, it’s helpful to provide printed copies of slides you plan to show.

If your thesis takes the form of a creative project, such as a video or website, you will need to provide a written document that explains the creative endeavor and that involves a measure of scholarly research or critical analysis. The purpose is to provide 1) context: the importance of the topic and a review of other relevant work that informed your project; 2) your methodology, or how you went about your work, including any data collected; and 3) reflection: what you learned and what you would, in retrospect, have done differently.

For example, a project that consisted of creating and leading a journalism club at a local high school included an overview of how clubs are replacing journalism courses at many schools and how that affects academic engagement and success. Another creative project that consisted of reporting and writing a long-form article in the style of Solutions Journalism, included an in-depth exposition of the Solutions Journalism movement and how it is being practiced at news organizations across the
country. Depending on the project, the paper may be relatively short – five or six pages – or dozens of pages long. Talk to your Faculty Honors Advisor or your Thesis Director about what is appropriate for your project.

At the defense, you will provide an overview of your paper or creative project and explain key components. You’ll explain why you embarked on your project, the challenges you faced and how you addressed those problem, and what you learned by doing the project.

Your defense is your chance to shine, so prepare for it just as you would for a presentation to a professional gathering. Practice what you will say, arrive early to make sure technology is working, dress professionally, and be prepared.

At the conclusion of the defense, your committee will approve, disapprove or give provisional approval, outlining required revisions. Finally, you will digitally submit your project to Barrett.


Available Funds

Barrett, The Honors College provides funds that can be used to purchase software, books and other items or travel to conduct research or fieldwork. Funds also can be used to bring in an external committee member for your defense. For more information, visit https://barretthonors.asu.edu/academics/thesis-and-creative-project/funding.

CHECKLIST

Semesters Before Thesis Begins

 ✓ Meet with your Faculty Honors Advisor to discuss and refine your ideas and identify a possible Thesis Director.
 ✓ Review the Barrett Student Guidebook.
 ✓ Meet with possible thesis directors and secure one.
 ✓ Draft your prospectus and have it reviewed by your Faculty Honors Advisor and your Thesis Director.
 ✓ Choose other members of your committee and share the draft prospectus with them.
 ✓ Complete the Barrett prospectus form online and give copies to your Faculty Honors Advisor and your Thesis Director.
 ✓ Obtain and complete a course override form.
 ✓ Register for MCO 492.
 ✓ Begin your research and/or fieldwork.

First Semester of Thesis

 ✓ Meet regularly with your Thesis Director to review progress.
 ✓ Consult with other committee members as needed.
 ✓ Complete research and/or fieldwork.
 ✓ Register for MCO 493 for the next semester.
Final Semester of Thesis

✓ Complete draft of thesis or project; submit to Thesis Director for review.
✓ Revise draft based on your Thesis Director’s recommendations and submit new draft to Director and other committee members.
✓ Schedule a date and room for your defense.
✓ Make final revisions and distribute copies to Thesis Director and committee members two weeks before defense.
✓ Defend your thesis.
✓ Work with director to make any changes requested by committee.
✓ Submit thesis or project to Barrett.
✓ Consider participating in the Barrett Celebrating Honors Symposium to showcase your project.