School of Life Sciences
Tips for Getting Started on the Honors Thesis Project

Honors students are required to complete an honors thesis/creative project. XXX 493 (Honors Thesis) is required and can be taken for 1-3 credits. Typically, honors students enroll in 3 credits of XXX 492 (Honors Thesis Research) fall of their senior year (in some cases students enroll during their junior year) and in 3 credits of XXX 493 spring of their senior year (the semester they defend the thesis). XXX 493 is not repeatable for credit and can be taken for a maximum of 6 credits. Honors students are not required to complete the thesis project within their major, but can choose other areas of interest. Below are tips for students interested in completing the honors thesis project within the School of Life Sciences.

Steps to prepare for honors thesis research:

1. Early on (a full semester before you want to start your independent research), you should begin thinking about what type of research you would like to do. Determine what might be most compatible with your future goals (graduate school, medical school, etc.).
   * Remember, the faculty member that you complete your research with will be able to write a detailed letter of reference for you.

2. Look on the web (SoLS, Chemistry and Biochemistry, Biodesign, etc.) or speak with others to identify faculty members who do life science related research compatible with your interests. Try to come up with a list of at least half a dozen faculty members (the more the better; not everyone will be able to accommodate you). If needed, speak with one of the honors faculty advisors (found on the back of this document) to discuss who may be the best fit for you.

3. At least several (3-4) months before you start your research, email the selected faculty members individually with a detailed introduction of yourself, your professional interests, relevant courses you have taken, and a detailed reasoning of why you would like to work in his or her group. Make sure you make it clear in your message that you have looked into their research field, read some of their papers, etc. Remember that faculty members receive many inquiries from students who would like to work with them. You will need to make sure that your inquiry stands out. Simply saying that you are a Life Science major and that you need to do independent research is not particularly compelling. Displaying genuine interest in, and knowledge of, the research area of the lab makes you a more attractive candidate. Ask the faculty member whether (s)he has space for a motivated undergrad next semester, and whether you can come by and discuss potential research topics. Please provide yourself with sufficient time to secure a research position. Laboratories cannot accommodate a large influx of undergraduate students, and there are many students seeking a limited number of slots.

4. If you have not heard back from the faculty member within 10 days, give him/her a call or stop by during office hours. A lack of response may not necessarily mean a lack of interest.

5. When you have found a place to do your research, discuss with the faculty member the project you will be carrying out as well as the practical arrangements of doing research (work with a grad student or postdoc, work independently but meet regularly with the faculty member, etc.) and the expectations, working hours, and timeline.

6. If you would like to receive credit for the thesis research, you must request to enroll in XXX 492 before the semester begins to avoid any late registration paperwork. You can pick up the appropriate form in LSC 206 or print it from the SoLS website: http://sols.asu.edu/advising/forms.php. Please complete the form, making sure to include a description of your project. Once your SoLS faculty mentor signs the form, you will meet with an

1 Students have the option to enroll in honors research/thesis under the BIO, HPS, MBB, MIC, or PLB prefix.
advisor for approval to enroll in the course. At the end of the semester, the faculty member will assign a grade.

7. Honors students must enroll in XXX 493 the semester that they defend their thesis. Steps for enrolling in XXX 493 are the same as enrolling in XXX 492.

For more detailed information about the Honors Thesis Project, please refer to your honors advisor and the Thesis/Creative Guidelines found at: http://barretthonors.asu.edu/academics/thesis-and-creative-project/