Emory Department of Film and Media Studies
Honors Guidelines and Expectations

The faculty in the Department of Film and Media Studies invites hard-working film and media studies majors, passionate about the field, to participate in an honors project. Whatever the research area—film studies, media studies, film production, or photography—students must be committed to the thorough process of exploring the still and moving image in its many forms. Completing a thesis requires a significant commitment of time and energy. It is incumbent upon the student to independently complete the work of the honors project. Your advisor and the rest of the faculty are here to serve as resources and guides.

ELIGIBILITY

Every Spring, the director of undergraduate studies compiles a list of film and media studies majors in their third year who have BOTH a 3.5 (or higher) overall GPA AND a 3.5 (or higher) GPA in the major. This list of students is reviewed by the film and media studies faculty who recommends students for the honors program based on the following criteria:

- Demonstrates a commitment to the study of the still and moving image that exceeds their peers.
- Shows consistent development as a film and/or media studies major.
- Produces exemplary work in all film and media studies coursework.
- Shows strong potential in the track of their choice (photography, film production, media studies, or film studies).

By April 1st, the undergraduate program coordinator will e-mail students who have met the eligibility requirements, and have been recommended by the faculty, and invite them to submit a project proposal by April 15th.

If a student meets the minimum GPA requirements but did not receive an invitation to submit a proposal, they should contact the honors coordinator, Prof. Michele Schreiber to discuss their case.

Fall graduates are not eligible to pursue honors in the Department of Film and Media Studies.

PROJECT PROPOSAL GUIDELINES/APPROACHING AN ADVISOR

Once you have received an invitation to the department honors program, you are responsible for putting together a formal proposal and having at least one sit-down conversation with the advisor whom you would like to supervise your project.
Your honors project proposal must be e-mailed to Professor Schreiber mjschre@emory.edu, with your project advisor cc:ed, by 11:59 PM on April 15th the Spring of your junior year, and should consist of the following:

1. A multiple-paragraph overview of what you would like to explore in your thesis project, and (if applicable) a rough idea of your argument.
   a. Some questions your proposal should address:
      i. What led you to this project? What books, films, coursework inspired you?
      ii. What are you doing differently than what has been done before? What is your intervention and/or your original contribution?
      iii. What is your game plan for executing your project? (It is never too early to begin thinking about an outline and a schedule).
      iv. For film production and photography theses, what format will you be working in and why?

2. A statement about who you have chosen as your advisor and what you discussed during your sit-down meeting.

If you fail to submit this proposal in its entirety by the due date, or any of the required components are missing, then you will be ineligible for the program. There are no exceptions to this rule.

**ACCEPTED HONORS STUDENTS: EXPECTATIONS/PROCEDURES**

Once your proposal has been reviewed and accepted, you are expected to participate in the honors program throughout your senior year. This will require you to meet the deadlines set by the department and the Emory College Honors program.

In addition to fulfilling all of the requirements for the film or media studies major, you are required to maintain a 3.5 GPA throughout your senior year.

Specific deadlines for thesis submission will be given to you separately. Here is a rough idea of what your senior year will look like:

**Summer before senior year**
Over the summer, after project approval, the student should research and explore the topic broadly through readings, viewings, and/or production/photography work. The professor of record for the honors thesis class may ask you to prepare homework that will be due at the beginning of the Fall semester.

**Fall of senior year**
You are required to be enrolled in FILM 490: Honors Research Methods. This is where you will begin to work on the planning and execution of your thesis project.
Students should be having regular meetings with their advisor while working on their thesis in FILM 490.

Students are required to attend the mandatory Emory College honors meetings that are scheduled throughout the Fall, usually in October. The program will e-mail you directly.

**Spring of senior year**

You are required to enroll in the 495: Honors Thesis class in the Spring semester. This is not an official "class" with meetings but a way for you to receive credit for the work you are doing on your thesis. Depending on your registration status, you can choose to enroll in this class for anywhere from 1-4 credits. If you are writing a traditional honors thesis, then you may choose to enroll in this class as 495WR. If you are pursuing a film production or photography thesis, then this will be a 495. See Clare Sterling for more information.

In January, students must submit a roster of their honors committee to the Emory College Honors program. In addition to their thesis advisor, the student must also secure a second reader from among the Film and Media Studies faculty and a third "outside" reader from another program or department. Thesis committee members are required to be full-time faculty members at Emory College. Adjunct professors may provide input on your thesis but cannot be official members of your committee or determine your level of honors.

Usually, the honors student receives comments from the thesis advisor as they progress throughout the project and waits until prior to their defense to submit the whole project to other committee members.

*The Thesis Defense*

Once the submission deadlines draw closer, you should check in with your committee members about a date and time that will be convenient for them for your defense. Defenses are usually 60 minutes long.

When you have settled on a date and time, you should contact Maureen Downs or Clare Sterling to schedule a room on campus.

When the final draft of your thesis is ready for distribution, you should ask your committee members in what form they would like it – paper or electronic – and then deliver it to them in accordance with their specifications *at least a week in advance of your defense.*

Generally, the thesis defense abides by the following schedule but this format is ultimately up to you and your thesis advisor.
1. Once the group has gathered, the student is asked to leave the room briefly so that the committee members can discuss their general thoughts about the thesis and decide how they would like to go about asking the student questions about their work.
2. The student returns to the room and makes a brief (5-10 minute) presentation about their project. This can include a visual presentation but this is not required.
3. Each committee member takes turns asking the student questions about their project. This often leads to a general discussion amongst the committee members.
4. The student is asked to leave the room so that the committee members can discuss the student’s ability to discuss/defend their project. They will then decide the level of honors.
5. The student is asked back into the room and informed what level of honors they will receive. More often than not, committee members will ask students to make revisions to their thesis before they submit the final version to the repository. They should submit these changes first to their advisor who will then give the final approval to upload the work to the repository.
6. You should bring the committee approval form to the defense for your committee to sign. You will receive this form from the Emory College honors office.

Students who successfully complete the honors program will participate in the Emory College Honors ceremony, which is held the Sunday before commencement.

**FILM AND MEDIA STUDIES THESIS “TRACKS”**

A. **Written film studies or media studies thesis**
Students completing honors in this track create a substantial body of original work of at least 60 pages that investigates a singular concept or theme in film and media studies. The project is expected to engage extensively with existing research on their topic and make an original contribution to the scholarly discussion. The thesis should conform to the highest standards of correctness in grammar, spelling, punctuation, and usage and must include proper citations in either MLA or CMS format.

B. **Film production thesis** – culminating in a finished visual project, with support paper (see below for expectations).
Students who pursue a film production thesis project must have completed at least FILM 107: Introduction to Digital Video, and preferably have also taken at least two other film production courses. He or she must get approval from Prof. Barracano to pursue this track and he is the only faculty member who can serve as your advisor.
Requirements for the film production thesis:
- An original idea or concept that the student proposes to explore in visual form. If the work is to be adapted from previously written material, the student must have a strong vision as to how they will make it their own.
- A detailed production schedule submitted before the end of the Fall semester that breaks down how the film production will be executed.
- A finished visual project of at least 5 but no more than 20 minutes, with a public screening.

C. Photography thesis, culminating in a photography project with support paper (see below for expectations).
Students who choose to pursue a photography thesis project must have completed FILM 106 and FILM 206 and must get approval from Prof. Francisco to pursue this track. He is the only faculty member who can serve as your advisor. He will also outline the requirements for a project in this track.

Support Paper Requirements
The required support paper accompanying the film production and photography tracks provides the committee with an integrated synthesis of and reflection on the creative process. Readings, activity on set or in the darkroom, discussions, and reflection should reveal the artist thoughts, processes and the outcomes. Additionally, the paper should comprehensively apply and integrate information attained from course work in the program’s curriculum (history, theory, criticism, mediamaking.)

Support papers are required to be at least 20-30 pages in length and should conform to the highest standards of correctness in grammar, spelling, punctuation, and usage and must include proper citations in either MLA or CMS format.