

East Asian Studies Senior Thesis Guidelines

A senior thesis offers concentrators in East Asian Studies the opportunity to pursue intensive original research on a topic of interest to them. Under the guidance of a faculty member, the student undertakes a year-long sequence of directed reading that culminates in the preparation of a polished thesis. The finished product is a substantial piece of writing (theses typically run anywhere from 50 to 100 pages), which the student defends before a committee composed of the student's principal advisor and two additional faculty readers. Upon completion, the thesis is submitted to the University Library, where it becomes part of the University Archives.

Writing a thesis is not for everyone. It involves a substantial commitment of time and energy, yet can also be one of the most rewarding experiences of one's undergraduate career. The senior thesis allows students to explore a question or topic to a level of depth that would likely be impossible to achieve in conventional coursework. For students considering graduate study, the senior thesis can be an excellent opportunity to undertake highly-disciplined academic work. Preparing, composing, and refining the thesis will also help to further develop a student's skills in research, writing, and argumentation: abilities that will be useful in a number of future careers.

Students wishing to complete an honors thesis in East Asian Studies must enroll in EAS99 for two semesters. A grade of satisfactory must be awarded for the first semester before the student registers for the second semester.

Timeline:

Spring semester of junior year – early fall semester of senior year

Find a faculty member who will act as the principal reader and oversee the thesis.

September-October of senior year

In consultation with primary reader, refine topic/question and develop reading list.

Identify two additional faculty members to act as secondary readers

December

Submit an outline and a draft chapter.

January-March

Prepare to write additional chapters.

Mid-March

- Submission of rough draft to all committee members.

Mid-April

- Submission of final draft to committee members.

Late April/Early May

- Defense of thesis
- Submission of final version to University Archives.

Note: *the above timetable applies to students planning to graduate in June. For midyear students and others planning to graduate in December, the timetable should simply be adjusted by six months.*

Other requirements:

Only students with a minimum G.P.A. of 3.25 may enroll.

Formatting: Double-spaced, one-inch margins, 12-point type, bound, captioned illustrations (if relevant)

Students are strongly urged but not required to use Asian language resources.

A glossary of key Asian-language terms should be provided. Alternatively, characters in the original language for these terms should appear next to their Romanized equivalents within the body of the text.

Footnotes or Endnotes must conform to professional standards. See, for example, the *Chicago Manual of Styles*

Standard formatting for the thesis should include the following cover page material:

- Title
- Author (you)
- Thesis Advisor
- Senior Honors Thesis
- East Asian Studies
- Brandeis University
- Year

Defense, Evaluation, and Submission:

Only upon the recommendation of the thesis advisor may a student defend a thesis. The thesis committee, chaired by the advisor, meets with the student for about an hour to discuss the content, methodology, bibliography, and the contribution(s) of the thesis. Afterwards, the student leaves the room while the three readers confer on the outcome (“Highest Honors,” “High Honors,” “Honors,” or “No Honors”). The student returns to the room to learn whether he or she receives Honors, but the level of Honors is not disclosed until graduation. The committee will present the outcome of the

thesis to the EAS faculty for approval and final deliberation on the level of Honors. A student who receives a passing grade but is not eligible for Honors still receives course credit.

The university Library collects copies of senior theses. At some point after the defense and before leaving the campus, the student should provide one clean copy of the thesis (unbound, on acid free paper, not hole-punched,) to the Archivist of the Robert D. Farber University Archives in Goldfarb Library, and one bound copy to the Program Chair. A signed "thesis release form" must accompany the submission to the Program Chair. The student shall revise the thesis as deemed necessary by the committee before depositing it in the library.