

# HONORS



DEPARTMENT of  
MODERN LANGUAGES,  
LITERATURES, and CULTURES

[butler.edu/mlc](http://butler.edu/mlc)

## DEPARTMENTAL HONORS

NOTE: PARTICIPATION IN THE UNIVERSITY HONORS PROGRAM IS NOT REQUIRED.

### Departmental Honors (baseline)

3.6 GPA minimum in MLLC major *Awarded automatically. Requires no work on your part.*

### Departmental High Honors

3.7 GPA minimum in MLLC major AND

- Completion of Honors Thesis approved by both MLLC department chair and LAS Honors Board
- OR, examination process with written/oral components (Honors ePortfolio and STAMP Proficiency Assessment)

### Departmental Highest Honors

3.8 GPA minimum in MLLC major AND

- Completion of Honors Thesis approved by both MLLC department chair and LAS Honors Board
- AND, examination process with written/oral components (Honors ePortfolio and STAMP Proficiency Assessment)

For a GPA calculation tool, downloadable forms, ePortfolio instructions, and sample works:

- visit [butler.edu/mlc](http://butler.edu/mlc) and click “Departmental Honors” in the right-column navigation menu

## ESTABLISH A PLAN AND GET STARTED

- Calculate the GPA within your MLLC major (*tool available at [butler.edu/mlc](http://butler.edu/mlc)*)
- Decide if you'll pursue an Honors Thesis, the examination process (including an Honors ePortfolio and the STAMP Proficiency Assessment), or both
- Acquire an Honors Advisor (or Advisors)
  - Approach and secure a full-time MLLC faculty member to be your advisor
  - Students completing an Honors Thesis should try to acquire an advisor (and second thesis reader) no later than the end of their third year
  - Students completing the examination process should try to acquire an advisor during their penultimate semester
- Apply for Honors Thesis grant money: [butler.edu/chase/student-grants](http://butler.edu/chase/student-grants)
- Consider enrolling in Honors Thesis and Senior Keystone courses (*Info at right.*)
- Contact our student language center director to set up (if applicable):
  - your Honors ePortfolio
  - your STAMP Proficiency Assessment prep and exam time
- Decide roughly how and when you'll do your public presentation(s)

### MLLC 499, HONORS THESIS

If writing an Honors Thesis, you may find these elective courses helpful. They're best taken your penultimate semester. The objective is to equip you with research techniques, terminology, methodology, and other language-specific knowledge.

### FL 499, SENIOR KEYSTONE

Alongside planning for life after graduation, this elective course—open to all senior MLLC majors and minors—will have you polish your Honors ePortfolio, practice for your public presentation(s), and study for and take the internationally-recognized STAMP Proficiency Assessment language exam (info on following pages).

## Honors Thesis Requirements

Pursuing this route involves the following:

- Propose, Research, Write, and Submit Honors Thesis
- Present Honors Thesis Orally in Public Forum

**Your Honors Thesis can be written in English.** However, a significant portion of the primary sources and data collection/quotes should be in the target language of your studies.

### CHOOSING A THESIS ADVISOR

Having a thesis advisor with whom you can work well is key to a successful thesis. You'll want someone conversant with the subject matter, who you understand easily, and who understands you.

If you aren't taking an MLLC 499 Honors Thesis course, find an advisor willing to meet regularly. (Your contacts should not be limited to chance meetings in the hall.)

Remember: You are expected to put your best work into the thesis. This is a time-consuming process.

## Honors Thesis Requirements *continued*

### CHOOSING A TOPIC

Talk with your thesis advisor about possible ideas.

- What themes or topics in your courses have most engaged you?
- What are you most curious about?
- What do you love?

It's important to select a topic that you truly care about, so that your thesis will continue to interest you during the year-and-a-half or more that you'll be working on it.

### HONORS THESIS PROPOSAL

Your thesis proposal will be read by the LAS Honors Board. Please write your proposal so that any educated person can easily read and understand it. This means avoiding jargon and special terminology where possible and completely defining all special terms that must be used. Please submit your thesis proposal electronically as a PDF and title the file as "lastnamefirstnameproposal." The proposal should be five-to-seven pages long (not including the bibliography). It must present the following information:

- Completed thesis proposal cover sheet and advisor form (*template available: [butler.edu/honors/honors-thesis-proposal](http://butler.edu/honors/honors-thesis-proposal)*)
- Title
  - This should accurately describe the focus of your thesis. You do not need a title page.
- Background
  - Briefly explain how you arrived at your thesis idea. If your thesis grew out of your previous academic work, please describe how. What have other scholars/artists had to say about this question or problem? How does your thesis fit into the work these scholars/artists have already done? What is the significance or importance of your thesis? How will this project contribute to your learning?
- Thesis description
  - Describe in a sentence or two the precise question or problem which you are going to address. Then, identify possible explanations based on the literature in your field. If appropriate, identify a position you will defend. It is insufficient to state simply that you are going to "research," "investigate," or "look into" a question or problem.
- Method and documentation
  - In this section, explain HOW you plan to get your project done. What will you do? Why? How will you support or refute your thesis statement? What are you looking for, specifically? Why have you chosen these texts/survey questions? Support with reasonable arguments (not "because I feel like it" or "my advisor told me to"). What will your scholarship consist of? It's not enough to simply state what you're going to read. Explain the questions you will pose and the methods (e.g., type of formal analysis, literary criticism, etc.) you intend to use to investigate, test, or interpret your thesis. Explain why these methods are feasible and adequate to demonstrate the validity of your work. What resources are necessary to

undertake this type of research? Are they readily available? How do you plan to secure them?

#### Schedule

- List the dates by which you'll complete all aspects of the work on your thesis (e.g., gathering resources, initial research, analysis of data, interview times for subjects, completion of literature review, first draft, etc.). The Honors Program asks for a schedule in order to assess how well you and your advisor have thought through this project. How long will it actually take you? Breaking it up into smaller sections helps you to envision the process from beginning to end.

#### Bibliography

- Append a bibliography of books, journal articles, and other sources that will convince the reviewers that adequate resources exist to do the thesis and that you have done initial background research in this area. Please divide your bibliography into two parts: works you have already consulted and works you plan to consult.

#### Submission

- The proposal should be submitted to the Honors Program. It will be reviewed by the LAS Honors Board. In no more than three weeks (provided you have met the submission deadline), your proposal will be accepted or returned with suggestions for revision. Failure to include any of the aforementioned information will be cause for return. (Any revisions of your proposal should be submitted to the honors office.) The Honors Program will notify you of the Honors Board's decision.

**A thesis approved for the University-wide Honors Program will only qualify for MLLC departmental honors if it has been approved by the MLLC department chair for that purpose.**

### THE THESIS

Advisors and students should decide on deadlines for drafts of chapters and sections of the thesis and observe them. Failure to meet such deadlines is grounds for abandoning the thesis.

Written drafts should be prepared as early as possible. Sometimes introductions can be written before research is completed.

The penultimate "final" draft is the completed thesis bearing your advisor's approval. It should be sent to the second reader via email (CC'ing the Honors Program director). Remember, your second reader may need a few weeks to read and return comments.

- If the second reader approves the thesis, they may still ask for revisions, including mechanical errors (typos, punctuation, grammar, etc.) and minor substantive problems (organization, refinement of terminology, etc.). They'll sign their approval, returning the thesis to you, requesting that you make the revisions (CC'ing your advisor).
- The reader may postpone approval until they see substantive revisions. In that case, the Honors Director should be notified, and the thesis will be returned to the student and advisor to discuss the needed changes.
- If there is a dispute, another reader may be assigned. The thesis must be acceptable to all readers before it is approved.

# HONORS

You'll then prepare the final version according to technical specifications, including the signed cover sheet (signed by your advisor, second reader, and the Honors Program director).

## THE ORAL PRESENTATION

You are required to give an oral presentation of the thesis publicly. Please inform both the MLLC department chair and Honors Office of the date and location of your presentation. The presentation may be made in any of several different settings:

- Butler's Undergraduate Research Conference
- a setting open and advertised to the MLLC department, arranged by you and your advisor (e.g., a lecture in our language center)
- a regional or national conference in our discipline

## TECHNICAL SPECIFICATIONS

- The thesis must begin with both the Honors Program's certification page (including your advisor's signature) and title page, both found here: [butler.edu/honors/thesis-guidelines](http://butler.edu/honors/thesis-guidelines)
- Footnotes, bibliography, table of contents, and other aspects of form and style must be consistent with standards of the discipline and uniformly applied throughout the thesis. It is up to your advisor to mandate the style to be followed.
- The body of the thesis must be double-spaced and single-sided (if printed). Extended quotations, footnotes, and bibliography should be spaced according to the style being used. Pages must be numbered consecutively.
- Margins must be uniformly 1.5 inches on the left and one inch on the other three sides. The top margin may be increased to reflect chapter and section divisions. (The larger left margin accommodates any binding process.)
- All figures, diagrams, and illustrative material must be clearly presented, numbered, labeled, and referenced in the text.

## Examination Process Requirements

Pursuing this route involves all of the following:

- Complete STAMP Proficiency Assessment
  - at least one "Advanced Low" score or higher (*info below*)
  - nothing below "Intermediate High"
- Construct Honors ePortfolio in the target language
- Present Honors ePortfolio in the target language
  - a faculty panel convened by your advisor
  - a roughly 30-minute presentation, including Q&A

## STAMP PROFICIENCY ASSESSMENT

The Standards-Based Measurement of Proficiency (STAMP) assessment is an internationally-recognized exam that determines your language proficiency in four domains (Reading, Writing, Listening, and Speaking). STAMP is web-based and computer-adaptive, with real-world questions on topics selected to be level-appropriate based on research into topics taught at each level. The

questions will engage you. Because it's adaptive, you'll demonstrate your proficiency levels without pre-set upper limits.

For each of the exam's four sections, you'll receive a STAMP Benchmark Level score. The scores are grouped by major levels (Novice, Intermediate, and Advanced). Within each of those are three sub-levels, aligned to the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages' (ACTFL) low, mid, and high designations.

You must score:

- at least one "Advanced Low" or higher
- AND, nothing below "Intermediate High"

For organization websites and scoring information:

- visit [butler.edu/mlc](http://butler.edu/mlc)
- click "Departmental Honors" in the right-column navigation menu

## HONORS ePORTFOLIO MATERIALS

This is expected to be a collection of material and experiential oral and written narrative descriptions of important moments and stages in development throughout your years of language study at Butler.

These "artifacts" and syntheses (**in the target language**) will serve to demonstrate a clear line of growth and improvement in key components of language study, as well as a careful reflection on your educational development in general.

Length of the project is flexible but the content should guarantee a comprehensive overview of your undergraduate experience.

**The Honors ePortfolio must contain the following six sections of written narratives and "artifact" collections, based upon the listed criteria and examples:**

### SPEAKING

You should, through your presentation and examples provided, offer evidence of the ability to conduct a sophisticated oral argument on abstract and concrete topics **in the target language**.

- How have you improved your skills in this area over time?
- Mention specific situational examples (presentations, trips, meetings with native speakers) which demonstrate this improvement.
- Is there a recent oral presentation of which you are particularly proud?
- How did in-class and study abroad experiences help in this area?

### EXAMPLES:

- Narrative examples of positive growth or improvement: "After first-year French, I could not order wine in a restaurant, but after the 300 level, I was joking with the waiter about different kinds of caviar." Or, "After 300-level French, I had this amazing discussion about communism in Paris with a guy named Jacques."
- Audio/video recording of a 300- or 400-level class presentation.
- Note cards, visuals, and summaries of discussion from presentations.
- Accounts of participation/discussions/contributions in upper-level seminar classes.

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## Examination Process Requirements

*continued*

### READING

You should show evidence of your ability to read extensive and authentic texts with a high degree of understanding.

- What have you read? Which texts have had deeper meaning for you?
- How has your progression in ability been reflected in the types of texts you read in the 200 level to the present level?
- How did in-class and study abroad experiences help in this area?

#### EXAMPLES:

- Offer texts you have read, novels, poetry, newspaper clippings, advertisements, letters, etc.
- Offer summaries of texts you have dealt with and how they have influenced you. For example, after reading Goethe's *Werther*, what was your reaction? Emotional? Rational? Intellectual?
- Comment especially on the intellectual influence these texts have had on you.

### WRITING

You should be able to structure coherent and sophisticated arguments in the target language. Your writing should display sound acquisition of grammatical structures and vocabulary with competent linguistic accuracy.

- How have you improved your skills in this area over time?
- What examples of papers, compositions, essays, and homework assignments could you provide?
- What authentic writing experiences have you been able to accumulate (pen pal, applications, email, web chat)?

#### EXAMPLES:

- Compare a composition from SP 204 and a film review of the latest Almodóvar film for your 400-level Hispanic Films class. How has your writing changed? Show evidence of improvement and expansion.
- Synthesize your writing experience in a brief narrative. Are you satisfied today with the level attained? How might you continue to improve?

### LISTENING

You should demonstrate your ability to comprehend spoken utterances of native speakers with little difficulty.

- What contact have you had with real native speakers? Describe the experiences and how your comfort level has changed over time.
- Can you now watch a French movie without subtitles? Do you find yourself irritated by those subtitles or hate the dubbed voices of American productions?
- Describe your comprehension level of sophisticated auditory samples (i.e., news, DJ talk, songs, university lectures, etc.).

#### EXAMPLES:

- A narrative of your comprehension of Spanish news reports about recent elections in Mexico.

- Evaluate your development in understanding from beginning Spanish courses to later upper-division work. ("In Spanish 102, I could fill in the missing verb, and today I can complete ideas for my teachers before they finish the sentences.")

### CULTURAL UNDERSTANDING

You should demonstrate knowledge of formal and informal aspects of international cultures, as well as the ability to think effectively about social, political, ethical, and moral issues.

- What impressions do you have of cultural differences and similarities?
- What particular literary, artistic, historic, cinematic movement/genre have you investigated in greater depth over the course of your career?
- What political, social, economic, religious issues have you encountered, studied, dealt with, discussed at parties or been moved to argue over at any length?

#### EXAMPLES:

- Give a concrete description of a moment in which you felt culturally sophisticated in your field, or in which you felt truly "at home" in the target language.
- What did you not know as a freshman that is in your back pocket today?
- Bring in the 1789 Declaration of the Rights of Man and compare it to your understanding of your own identity or idea of citizenship.
- Tell which German stereotypes are, after your closer inspection, completely untrue or unjustified.

### SUMMARY AND SYNTHESIS, INTELLECTUAL GROWTH

You are asked here to synthesize your experiences and comment on your intellectual growth during your studies.

#### EXAMPLES:

- How has your study of language, literature, and culture enhanced your life and your global appreciation?
- In the film *Dances with Wolves*, the Kevin Costner character experiences a gradual transformation from understanding virtually nothing of the language and the culture of Native Americans, to slowly understanding some things, and finally becoming culturally and linguistically fluent. Would you describe your experience with your language of study in these terms, or would you propose a different analogy which better fits your "transformation"?
- Have you had experiences throughout this language-learning process which you would describe as emblematic (Symbolic? Metaphoric?) for your development? Why?
- What were some of your motivations in learning this foreign language? Did these change over time? Which things helped you most along the way, and which impeded your progress? Were there things you would have done differently, if you were to go through the program again? Why?