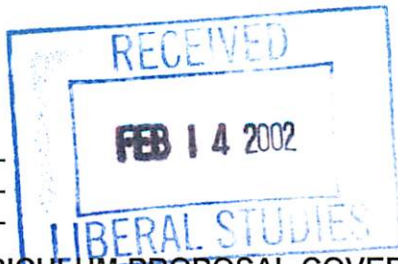


LSC Use Only
Number: _____
Submission Date: _____
Action-Date: _____



02-15
01-54
UWUCC USE Only
Number: _____
Submission Date: _____
Action-Date: App UWUCC - 2/19/02
Senate App - 11/5/02

CURRICULUM PROPOSAL COVER SHEET
University-Wide Undergraduate Curriculum Committee

I. CONTACT

Contact Person Charles Cashdollar/Gail S. Sechrist Phone _____

Department Standard UWUCC Number _____

II. PROPOSAL TYPE (Check All Appropriate Lines)

COURSE Honors Thesis _____
Suggested 20 character title

New Course * XXXX 483 Honors Thesis _____
Course Number and Full Title

Course Revision _____
Course Number and Full Title

Liberal Studies Approval + _____
for new or existing course Course Number and Full Title

Course Deletion _____
Course Number and Full Title

Number and/or Title Change _____
Old Number and/or Full Old Title

_____ New Number and/or Full New Title

Course or Catalog Description Change _____
Course Number and Full Title

PROGRAM: Major Minor Track

New Program * _____
Program Name

Program Revision * _____
Program Name

Program Deletion * _____
Program Name

Title Change _____
Old Program Name

_____ New Program Name

III. Approvals (signatures and date)

Department Curriculum Committee

Department Chair

College Curriculum Committee

College Dean

+ Director of Liberal Studies (where applicable)

*Provost (where applicable)

01-54
02-15

TO: UWUCC

FROM: Charles Cashdollar

SUBJECT: A Standard Number (XXXX 483) for Undergraduate Honors Theses

Background and Rationale: IUP is encouraging the development of departmental honors programs that will serve talented students across the campus, and the provost has asked me to do what I can to coordinate and facilitate these efforts. Planning is now underway in every college and most departments, and the UWUCC should expect a significant number of these honors "tracks" to come before it over the next year. One of the ways I think I can be helpful to all concerned is to make sure these proposals come to the UWUCC in the form that you want them. I have already talked with Gail Sechrist about this, and I will continue to talk with her as we move along.

As I have listened to departments talking about their plans, it is evident that many intend to include an honors thesis in their proposal. With this in mind, it seems to make good sense for the UWUCC to establish a common thesis number with an "H" designation and a few commonly applicable standards for undergraduate theses. The proposed number is XXXX 483 Honors Thesis, with an "H" designation.

There is, of course, an aesthetic appeal to having a single, clean thesis number rather than a confusing jumble of different ones. But there are practical advantages, too. Since undergraduate theses are compensated as independent studies, a common number will make it much easier to recognize the independent study forms when they appear and insure that they are handled properly. (By the way, there is equal advantage in separating thesis independent studies from the regular 482 variety. Transcripts will more accurately reflect what the student did if they read "Honors Thesis" rather than merely "Independent Study." A separate number can also carry an automatic "H" designation, thereby giving the students proper, visible credit for the work accomplished.)

There is ample precedent for the UWUCC to establish such a common number and make it available to departments and colleges without asking for department-by-department, or college-by-college course proposals. The numbers 281, 481, and 482 were all made available in this manner. This has, of course, one quite obvious advantage of reducing needless duplication of paperwork. It is not a very efficient use of busy people's time for departments to write and for the UWUCC to review 25 or 30 proposals that are virtually identical except for the departmental/college prefix. But efficiency (and saving trees) aside, there are good academic reasons for following this path, too. Setting a standard number gives the UWUCC an opportunity to establish general guidelines and boundaries for the use of a common category of courses. For a thesis, these guidelines will have to be quite loose since disciplinary conventions for research vary so greatly, but the attached proposal does set out some common understandings.

The recommendation here is that the thesis number *not* be automatically placed in each department's (or college's) listing of courses (as 281, 481, and 482 were). A thesis number might not be desired or appropriate for every department or college prefix. Instead, it is recommended that the UWUCC authorize departments and colleges to activate the "483" thesis course without submitting a separate course proposal *if the department or college requests such activation* from the UWUCC. Normally, such a request would come as part of a proposal for a departmental or college-wide honors track, but the UWUCC could receive and act on other requests according to their merits.

Finally, it is worth recalling that both the Honors College Committee and the UWUCC endorsed a hope for precisely this sort of proposal when they approved HNRC 483. They said, "We hope that eventually all departments will have their own thesis numbers opening thesis work to all IUP students deemed capable by their departments, and that such students' transcripts will show an "H" designation—whether they are enrolled in the Honors College or not."

Common Standards for Undergraduate Theses: Within the framework of a standard thesis number, it seems prudent to give departments as much freedom as possible in working with their students. Disciplines differ significantly not only in their standard methodologies, but also in what they consider appropriate length and format. They even have different conventions for interacting with students and different criteria for evaluating their work. We will need to leave the guidelines loose enough to accommodate all sorts of disciplinary variety—from creative work in the arts to traditional research-based theses in the sciences. IUP has managed this quite well at the graduate level, and there is no reason it cannot do so at the undergraduate level, too.

With this need for flexibility in mind, the following proposal duplicates as much as possible the proposal for HNRC 483, which was recently approved by the UWUCC. Since that proposal was meant to be flexible enough to accommodate a variety of disciplines, it seems a good starting place. Here, with slight changes in wording, are the boundaries that the UWUCC considered appropriate for the earlier course, and that seem equally applicable here.

Undergraduate Theses—XXXX 483

Recognizing that the university's academic departments represent widely varied disciplinary norms for scholarly research and artistic creativity, and expecting that departments will accept this generic thesis proposal as a flexible starting place rather than as a document prescribing a particular methodology or format, the University asks only that:

1. **The product of the research or creative work is evaluated and found successful by a committee of three faculty members. Normally this would be a thesis director and two additional readers (at least one of which would be in the student's major department); exceptions to this may be made at the department's or college's discretion if the nature of the thesis topic or the availability of faculty so dictates. (Departments may, if appropriate, adopt alternate methods of having a student's work reviewed by more than one faculty member; such methods might include, but not be limited to, the presentation of research results or creative work before departmental faculty in a departmental seminar or artistic exhibition or performance.) See "III. Evaluation Methods."**
2. **The supervising faculty and student attempt to fulfill the course objectives (see "II. Course Objectives") as the norms of research or creative work in the discipline allow.**
3. **Proper Independent Study approval forms ("Request for Independent Study") are completed and records kept as needed by the department and college.**
4. **A permanent copy of the thesis or documentation of creative work is maintained in an appropriate location, as determined by the department or college. (Binding of one copy of undergraduate theses for the department/college is facilitated and budgeted through the Honors College. If the student is also enrolled in the Honors College, three copies should be submitted so that two can be retained in the Honors College in addition to the one returned to the department or college.) Additional copies may be bound at the expense of the requester.**

I. Catalog Description

XXXX 483 Honors Thesis

0—lecture hours

0—lab hours

1-6 credits

var—1-6sh

Prerequisites: Admission to Departmental Honors Program.¹ Approval is based on academic appropriateness and availability of resources.

An intensive, focused study involving independent research culminating in a written thesis [²and/or creative work or performance] approved by a thesis director and two faculty readers/committee members. May be taken more than once to a maximum of 6sh. Prior approval through advisor, faculty member, department chairperson, dean, and Provost's Office.

II. Course Objectives:

By the end of the course students will:

1. work with faculty in their major field of study to define a research problem and the objectives to be achieved. In the arts, students' work may take the shape of a substantial creative project that reflects the same level of commitment and effort found in research-based theses.
2. review literature pertinent to the problem.
3. describe the methods used in detail sufficient to allow other investigators to replicate or evaluate the work and its outcomes.
4. describe their findings and the relationship of their work to that of other investigators.
5. describe conclusions to be drawn from the research results obtained or project completed.
6. provide an objective and critical evaluation of the entire investigation or project.
7. demonstrate a solid understanding of concepts and ideas relevant to the problem under study.
8. write a thesis that is succinct, logical in construction, free of mechanical errors, documented according to the format normal in the discipline, and meticulous in attention to detail. Students engaged in creative projects in the arts will leave behind a permanent record of the artistic work plus appropriate written explanation or rationale.

¹ Departmental criteria may vary; grade averages will be the most common criterion, but in some disciplines, other criteria such as level of artistic ability may be appropriate. The UWUCC will be able to review these as part of the proposals for an honors track.

² This phrase may be added to catalog descriptions of departments, such as those in the College of Fine Arts, for which it is deemed appropriate.

III. Detailed Course Outline:

Because this is an independent study thesis course, there is no outline of course content. The student will meet with and be closely supervised by the student's thesis director, with the frequency of such meetings, the research methodology employed, and the nature of the supervision expected to vary according to the normal patterns of the student's discipline. A proposal explaining (1) rationale, (2) purpose, (3) objectives, (4) activities, (5) bibliography, (6) evaluation, (7) use or special purpose, and (8) number of credits is a required attachment to the university's standard "Request for Independent Study" form.

III. Evaluation Methods:

The thesis director will work with the student to determine guidelines for evaluation of the thesis in line with requirements of the discipline and the objectives listed above. The thesis director will be the instructor of record, but two additional faculty or other experts acceptable to the department will read the thesis, participate in an oral defense³, and be consulted by the director in determining the student's grade. Work completed toward the thesis and the final thesis itself will be evaluated according to the XXXX 483 course objectives and according to the appropriate disciplinary standards and conventions. An explanation of evaluation methods is part of the required attachment to the university's standard "Request for Independent Study" form.

IV. Required reading:

Varies according to the thesis topic and discipline. Part of Objective 1 (above) is definition of a problem that can be managed in the time allowed. A bibliography is part of the required attachment to the university's standard "Request for Independent Study" form.

V. Special Resource Requirements:

Varies according to thesis topic and discipline. Extraordinary needs should be made clear in the proposal attached to the university's standard "Request for Independent Study" form.

VI. Bibliography Used in Preparing Proposal:

IUP Graduate School, *Thesis Manual*

Syracuse University Honors Program Website: "Senior Honors Thesis Project"
<http://sumweb.syr.edu/honors>

Tufts University, "Submission Guidelines for Undergraduate Honors Theses"
www.library.tufts.edu/archives/Honors/tulips.html

University of California, Irvine, "Senior Research and Thesis"
www.honors.uci.edu/student/curiculum/rcsearch.html

Western Kentucky University, "Honors Thesis" www.wku.edu/Dept/Special/Honors/handbook.htm

Villanova University, "The Senior Thesis" www.honorsprogram.villanova.edu

Oregon State University, "The Honors Thesis" www.orst.edu/dept/honors/thesis

Millersville University Honors Program, "Senior Thesis Guidelines" www.millersv.edu/~honors/thesis

³ Rather than a traditional thesis committee and oral defense, departments may adopt alternate methods of having the student's work reviewed by more than one faculty member; such methods might include, but not be limited to, the presentation of research results or creative work before departmental faculty in a departmental seminar, artistic exhibition, or performance.

Bemidji State College, "Honors Thesis or Project" www.bemidjistate.edu/honors/thesis

Pennsylvania State University, "Thesis," www.shc.psu.edu/thesis

Course Analysis Questionnaire

A. Details of the Course

A1. This proposal creates a standard university-wide number for undergraduate theses. It is intended to facilitate proposals for Departmental Honors Tracks. Departments may activate a "483" thesis course for their prefix without submitting a separate course proposal, *if the department requests such activation from the UWUCC*. Normally such a request will be made as part of a proposal for a departmental honors track, but the UWUCC could receive and act on other requests on their merits. Departments may, as explained in their proposals, count the course as an elective toward credit in the major or to consider it as a substitute for a required course in the major.

A2. Changes in any courses or requirements within the department will be explained in the proposal for a departmental honors track.

A3. Undergraduate honors theses have been available in this format for many years in some IUP departments such as history, philosophy, and psychology. More recently, a generic thesis course, HNRC 483, was approved for the Honors College.

A4. This course is not intended to be dual level.

A5. This course may be taken for variable credit 1-6 credits; the course may also be taken for repeat credit. This combination of variable credit and repeat credit allows the maximum flexibility for departments to design theses appropriate to their disciplines and curricula. While 3sh would be the normal minimum for a thesis, departments seeking a more substantial thesis might wish to use a full year 3sh-3sh format, or even a three-semester, 2sh-2sh-2sh format. The decision about the appropriate number and sequence of credits should be made by the thesis director according to accepted standards in the field and/or stipulations of the departmental honors program. Again, as stated in the preface, the goal of this generic thesis proposal is to facilitate the varied needs of departments and disciplines.

A7. Honors tracks at many of the nation's universities include a senior thesis either as a requirement or a recommended elective. For examples, see "VI. Bibliography Used in Preparing this Proposal" above.

A8. The National Collegiate Honors Council does not mandate any particular honors curriculum, but it strongly supports the inclusion of senior theses within an honors track. See, for instance, its guide to the planning of programs, *Beginning in Honors*.

B. Interdisciplinary Implications

B1. This course is not designed to be team taught, at least as that term is commonly understood. One faculty member will be the designated instructor of record and receive independent study compensation; normally, however, two other faculty will read the thesis and participate in an oral defense.

B2. Departments that choose to activate this number will explain its relationship to other courses in that department in a departmental honors track proposal. A few departments currently have discrete departmental thesis numbers (such as HIST 483), and they can continue to use them. This proposal allows other departments to activate equivalent 483 numbers upon request to the UWUCC; such requests will normally be made as part of a proposal for a departmental honors track. Two departments (anthropology and sociology) currently have a 483 number on the books; these were originally intended for special

individual student projects, but in neither case has the number been used for at least ten years. Both departments are anxious to begin using ANTH 483 and SOC 483 under the provisions of this generic thesis proposal, and they will be making this request as part of their departmental honors track proposal. As is currently the case, students in the Robert E. Cook Honors College may continue to complete theses under the College's number HNRC 483 or, if the student is also part of a departmental honors track, under the department's number. See attached memoranda from Anthropology and Sociology departments.

B3. Not applicable; students must be enrolled in a department to be eligible for departmental honors.

C. Resources

C1. No new faculty is needed to teach this course. This course requires that the provost's budget be adequate to support the necessary independent study compensation. See attached memorandum of support from the provost.

C2. Current space allocations are adequate to offer this course. No new additional equipment is required to teach this course. No supplies are required to teach this course. Students will need to choose topics that are supportable by available library resources. No travel funds are required to teach this course. Students may be able to apply for internal or external research funds to support their work, but this proposal is not dependent on that support.

C3. No grant funds are associated with this course.

C4. This course will be offered as needed every semester and summer session.

C5. Similar to a usual independent study course, discrete sections will be created for each student.

C6. Any number of students may be accommodated in this course, as determined by departmental honors tracks.

C7. The National Collegiate Honors Council does not mandate any particular honors curriculum, but it strongly supports the inclusion of senior theses within an honors program. See, for instance, its guide to the planning of programs, *Beginning in Honors*.

D. Miscellaneous

Provost's statement on adequacy of independent study money.

Honors Committee's approval of "H" designation for departmental thesis numbers.

Statements from Anthropology Department and Sociology Department regarding their current courses, ANTH 483 and SOC 483.

MEMORANDUM FROM MARK STASZKIEWICZ
November 7, 2001
Subject: Departmental Honors Thesis Resources

Charles, while it would be nice to be able to incorporate the funding for these directly to the colleges, I understand the significance and importance of being able to separate it so people don't perceive that tight college/department resources are being used. I believe we can work out a system where we reserve the funding for these at the Provost Office level and cover the costs. Please go ahead and I will work with Mark Piwinsky to set up a centralized system for funding these. GOOD LUCK!!!!

----- Original Message -----

From: Charles Cashdollar
To: Mark Staszkiwicz
Sent: Wednesday, October 31, 2001 3:18 PM
Subject: Departmental Honors/Thesis

One of the first things I'll need is a memo from you for the UWUCC about adequate independent study money for thesis work. I'm working on a proposal to go to the UWUCC to get them to agree to authorize a standard thesis number for the campus. (Preliminary conversations with the committee suggest it is willing to do so.) The number (483) would be available to departments, and they could activate it by requesting to do so as part of their application for a departmental honors track. That is, it won't automatically go into everyone's course list like 281, 481, and 482 did. I expect that the UWUCC members will want some assurance that they aren't wasting their time by setting up a standard thesis number and that there will be resources behind it. I don't know that the memo has to be down to the penny, but if we set this up, there's going to be an increase in IS, and current allotments aren't going to cover it. So, I think you are going to have to say there will be \$ over and above what's currently available.