The University of Sydney
School of Geosciences

Honours program 2013

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What Honours is about

The Honours year represents the bridge between (content-driven) undergraduate studies and (research-driven) postgraduate studies. It is an exciting year. For the first time, you have the opportunity to take intellectual leadership of a major research undertaking. It is challenging, but also rewarding. Students who successfully complete an Honours year gain an edge in life, whether that be manifested in employment, further studies, or a desire to better understand the world.

Honours in the School of Geosciences in 2013 will comprise the equivalent of 48 credit points (effectively, two semesters of full time enrollment), with the following requirements:

- 25% from the equivalent of 12 cp of approved coursework units
- 70% Thesis
- 5% final presentation

If you are enrolled full-time and commencing in Sem 1, 2013, your thesis will be due on Friday 25 October, 2013. If you wish to enroll part-time, you should consult the Honours coordinator about due dates.

It is possible to commence Honours in the July Semester, however this involves preliminary approval from the Honours coordinator. Note that most Coursework options are not available in the July Semester, meaning that separate and individual arrangements need to be made.

Honours grades

You receive one grade for Honours, at the completion of your 48 credit points. (For full-time students commencing in the February Semester, this is in Nov-Dec.)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>H1 (First Class)</td>
<td>80+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H2 (Second Class, First Division)</td>
<td>75-79</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H2 (Second Class, Second Division)</td>
<td>70-74</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H3 (Third Class)</td>
<td>65-69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No award of Honours</td>
<td>less than 65</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Elaboration of expectations in each grade is provided in the Box.

Your final Honours grade is based upon work completed during your Honours year, and in the case of University Medals, your WAM.
Honours program

Dates

Before February
You should be in regular contact with your supervisor(s) during this period.

Monday 4 March
1st semester begins

Wednesday 6 March
2.00pm to 3.30pm: Compulsory induction class. Madsen Conference Room (449)

Monday 11 March
2pm – 4pm. Compulsory class on “Preparing a Research Proposal” with Dr Angela Ardington of the Learning Centre (Madsen Conference Room)

Thurs/Fri 15-16 March
(Human Geography only) Hawkesbury retreat

Monday 18 March
2pm – 4pm. Compulsory class on “Preparing a Research Proposal” with Dr Angela Ardington of the Learning Centre (Madsen Conference Room)

Friday 22 March
Presentations of research proposals

Friday 9 August
Mid-year presentations (all students required to give a mid-year progress presentation)

Friday 25 October 4pm
Theses due

Tuesday 29 October
Final Honours thesis presentations

Additional to these dates are various other requirements relating to individual coursework options.
Important facts

Penalty for Lateness

A penalty of 5% per day will be deducted for late Seminar Reports and Thesis submission. No extensions are granted unless a Special Consideration form is submitted and approval granted.

Final Examination

In exceptional circumstances there may be an oral examination after theses have been examined. This will provide a student with the opportunity to present and defend their thesis.

Number of Assessors and the Assessment Process

The thesis will be assessed by three examiners. Your supervisor is ineligible to be an examiner. The examiners will be selected by the Honours Coordinator or the Deputy Honours Coordinator. The examiners will mostly come from within the School of Geosciences at the University of Sydney. However, depending upon the topic and workloads, it is possible that the Honours Coordinator, after consultation with the Head of School, will request an examiner from outside the School.

Once the examiners have agreed on a grade, this information is presented to the Honours Coordinator, who will calculate the raw grade and final mark for the Honours year. All of this numerical information will be presented to the School of Geosciences Examiners Board which will confirm the grades and marks to be submitted to the relevant Faculty. Note that final marks are confidential until released by the Faculty.

Thesis: General Background

(1) The thesis involves original research on a topic which must be acceptable to the Honours Coordinator in consultation with the supervisor.

(2) Each student is expected to work closely with his/her supervisor during the year. Regular consultation is required. It is not the responsibility of the adviser to chase students for consultation. It is reasonable for students to expect an average of 30 minutes per week consultation with their supervisor.

(3) Progress through the year will be continually assessed by the respective supervisors, and will also be monitored at intervals through student presentations and progress reports.

(4) Students are expected to collect, present, analyse and interpret data relating to a specific research problem. Use may be made of data from organisations, however it is important to remember that data provision is sometimes unreliable and this may delay your progress. The thesis should provide evidence of a student's ability to plan and conduct research using appropriate concepts and techniques with the guidance of a supervisor. It should also demonstrate the student's ability to communicate research results clearly and concisely in a scholarly manner.

Thesis: Details

1. The maximum word limit for an Honours thesis in the School of Geosciences is 20,000 words. Illustrations and other data (including the Reference List, Appendices and footnotes) are additional to the word limit.¹

2. Three identical copies of the thesis must be presented for examination. The original copy is to be in full standard binding with the spine suitably embossed and to show the key title of the work, the surname of the student and the degree. The title of the thesis and the name of the student should be on the front cover.

3. Inside the front cover, an A4 page should include;
   "Thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for Honours, University of Sydney, 2011".

4. Theses must be submitted on A4 paper. They should be typed on one side of the page only. Spacing should be either 1.5 or double. Margins should be about:
   38 mm on the binding side,
   12 mm on the other three sides.

5. Theses should be in 12 point font.

6. Any notes at the bottom of a page are to be clearly separated by a line spaced at 1.5 lines below the last line of the main text. These footnotes should be single spaced.

7. The typeface should be Times New Roman, Arial or a near equivalent.

Students may be required to insert emendations to the bound copy of their thesis after examination.

¹ In the case of Human Geography theses where interviews are the primary source of data, interview quotes from informants are excluded from word count requirements.
Submission
Submission of Honours theses to the department of geosciences must include a hardcopy as well as an electronic submission. The electronic submission should be produced (and therefore stored) as one or a set of .pdf files on CD or DVD media. Use of a “print” utility such as PDFCreator from any word-processing package eases the creation of .pdf files. Additional information attached to, or part of, a thesis, such as spreadsheet, database files or output from proprietary programs or devices, should be accompanied by a “usage” description and be stored with the thesis.

Please sign the copyright release form accompanying this document so that your thesis may be included in the institutional repository.

Supervisors
1. A supervisor must be a person with academic standing in the School of Geosciences.
2. The role of the supervisor in this process is to help you formulate your research topic and to plan your research program. Continuing guidance and advice from your supervisor should be a crucial part of the learning process.
3. As previously stated, regular consultation with your supervisor is required. It is not the responsibility of the supervisor to chase students for this consultation. It is reasonable for students to expect an average of 30 minutes hour per week consultation with their supervisor.
4. In some cases students will have an Associate Supervisor, who may or may not be an academic member of the School of Geosciences. If you have doubts about your ability to establish a productive working relationship with your supervisor, or if difficulties do arise at a later stage, you should discuss your concerns with the Honours Coordinator. All discussions will be treated in confidence.

Appeals
Appeals against marks for individual components of the total Honours mark should be dealt with by the School’s Honours Coordinator in the first instance and as soon as possible. An appeal against an Honours grade awarded by the Honours Meeting of the Faculty, should be made to the Faculty, and it is the Faculty’s responsibility to resolve the appeal according to established University policy.

Plagiarism
The University of Sydney has a policy on plagiarism. The full policy on Academic Honesty (Plagiarism) may be found at the Policy Online website http://www.usyd.edu.au/senate/policies/Plagiarism.pdf A key definition from that policy has been included below, but students who have any doubt about what constitutes plagiarism should either speak with their supervisor or the Honours Coordinator and/or read the full policy for clarification:

“Plagiarism means presenting another person’s ideas, findings or work as one’s own by copying or reproducing them without due acknowledgement of the source”.

Possible Withdrawal from the Honours Program
Students who may be contemplating withdrawing as one option should discuss this with their supervisor and/or the Honours coordinator. There may be other ways of handling problems, or if withdrawing is the best option there are ways of handling this process well. Discussions about withdrawal will be treated with confidence if requested and with sensitivity.

Honours marking guidelines
An Honours thesis is a contribution to knowledge. Because knowledge cannot be bottled, there can never be a single, authoritative measure of the merit of an Honours thesis. Examiners draw on their professional experience to evaluate theses, and because this experience differs from person to person, different examiners will inevitably interpret the merits of a thesis through different eyes. This is a strength of the examination process. The art of thesis examination’ gives voice to ways in which examiners with relevant professional experience ‘see something new’ in a thesis. Scope and flexibility needs to be accorded to this process. Examining a thesis should not entail rigid ‘box ticking’ to determine a final mark, but considered evaluation of a thesis within a rubric – a set of guidelines. The table below provides such a rubric. It corresponds to the necessary requirement to follow academic standards pertaining to the collection, analysis and presentation of original material. However, importantly, not all categories (rows) should be interpreted as being weighted equally. The nature of Honours theses differs across topics and disciplines. Sometimes, aspects relating to data or methodology provide keystone aspects of a thesis, and hence play crucially central roles in determining a grade. In different cases, positioning the study within a background literature may provide the critical aspect of originality in a study. For this reason, weightings are not proposed for the different rows of the rubric. It is up to the examiner to determine how the different aspects of the thesis come together to form an overarching ‘whole’.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Selection and articulation of research problem</th>
<th>Exceptional 1st Class, (90+)</th>
<th>High 1st class (84-89)</th>
<th>Solid 1st class (80-83)</th>
<th>2nd class, Div 1 (75-79)</th>
<th>2nd class, Div 2 (70-74)</th>
<th>3rd class (65-69)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The research problem represents a <strong>defining issue</strong> in a discrete body of knowledge. The student is able to express this cogently within a few sentences.</td>
<td>The research problem represents an <strong>important issue</strong> in a discrete body of knowledge. The student is able to express this cogently within a few sentences.</td>
<td>The research problem represents an <strong>incremental (but still relevant) issue</strong> in a discrete body of knowledge. The student is able to express it cogently within a few sentences.</td>
<td>The research problem represents a <strong>relevant and useful issue</strong> in a discrete body of knowledge. It is expressed not as cogently as it might.</td>
<td>A research problem is stated, however its importance is not key within a discrete body of knowledge. It is expressed confusingly and/or not altogether convincingly.</td>
<td>It is difficult to justify the selection of the research problem.</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

| Presentation of research problem in the form of a thesis | The structure of the thesis represents an **inspired, clear and logical** exposition of the steps that are required to resolve/ address/ inform the research problem | The structure of the thesis represents an **clear and logical** exposition of the steps that are required to resolve/ address/ inform the research problem | The structure of the thesis has the ambition of resolving/ addressing/ informing the research problem, however there are **minor flaws in execution**. | The structure of the thesis has the ambition of resolving/ addressing/ informing the research problem, however there are **major flaws in execution**. | The link between the research problem and the structure of the thesis is problematic. |

| Scope of intellectual effort | The thesis brings together literatures or knowledge from a wide field, thereby positioning evidence within an expansive frame of relevance. | The thesis draws on an appropriate body of literature or knowledge. | The thesis makes use of a good selection of literature or knowledge, however may contain some omissions. | One or more major omissions of literature or knowledge are readily identifiable. | The scope of the research is not clear. |

<p>| Coherence and signposting between chapters | The reader has no problems whatsoever in understanding how one chapter connects to another, and these connections are undertaken in an inspired way. | The reader has no problems whatsoever in understanding how one chapter connects to another. | The progression of chapters follows a broad logic. | There may be slight inconsistencies or interpretative difficulties in following the progression of chapters. | There is incoherence between chapters. |</p>
<table>
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<tr>
<th>Thoroughness of methodological task</th>
<th>Exceptional 1st Class, (90+)</th>
<th>High 1&lt;sup&gt;st&lt;/sup&gt; class (84-89)</th>
<th>Solid 1&lt;sup&gt;st&lt;/sup&gt; class (80-83)</th>
<th>2&lt;sup&gt;nd&lt;/sup&gt; class, Div 1 (75-79)</th>
<th>2&lt;sup&gt;nd&lt;/sup&gt; class, Div 2 (70-74)</th>
<th>3&lt;sup&gt;rd&lt;/sup&gt; class (65-69)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A methodological task which involves a highly impressive combination of ‘grunt’ (large dataset; extended or difficult empirical collection effort, etc) and also a high degree of inspiration in terms of finding the data and expressing its relevance.</td>
<td>The thesis contains a ‘wow’ factor in the way it introduces and contextualises the research problem.</td>
<td>The thesis introduces and contextualises the research problem according to a thoroughly convincing logic and this is undertaken in a highly professional way.</td>
<td>The research problem is introduced and contextualised efficiently.</td>
<td>The research problem is introduced and contextualised in a manner which leaves some room for doubt.</td>
<td>The research problem is introduced and contextualised in a way which leaves the examiner unconvinced.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Analysis of results from methodology in the context of the research problem</td>
<td>Exceptional 1st Class (90+)</td>
<td>High 1st class (84-89)</td>
<td>Solid 1st class (80-83)</td>
<td>2nd class, Div 1 (75-79)</td>
<td>2nd class, Div 2 (70-74)</td>
<td>3rd class (65-69)</td>
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<tr>
<td>There is complete symmetry between the objectives of the research problem, the methodology to inform it, and the collection of data to contribute to knowledge about it.</td>
<td>There is a high degree of symmetry between the objectives of the research problem, the methodology to inform it, and the collection of data to contribute to knowledge about it.</td>
<td>There is a degree of symmetry between the objectives of the research problem, the methodology to inform it, and the collection of data to contribute to knowledge about it.</td>
<td>There is a not complete symmetry between the objectives of the research problem, the methodology to inform it, and the collection of data to contribute to knowledge about it.</td>
<td>There are problems in the symmetry between the objectives of the research problem, the methodology to inform it, and the collection of data to contribute to knowledge about it.</td>
<td>It is difficult to identify any symmetry between the objectives of the research problem, the methodology to inform it, and the collection of data to contribute to knowledge about it.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| Broader discussion of relevance of the results | There is a ‘wow’ factor in the way results are discussed. | The way results are discussed is extremely professional. | There is a high degree of competency in the way results are discussed. | Results are discussed competently. | The thesis ‘goes through the motions’ in discussing results. | It is difficult to work out what interpretation the student is giving to the results. |

<p>| Conclude the thesis in the terms in which the research problem was introduced | The thesis returns to the original research problem; outlines the contribution made by the thesis, and holds forth the relevance of the research for further inquiry. | The thesis returns to the original research problem; outlines the contribution made by the thesis, and holds forth the relevance of the research for further inquiry. | The thesis returns to the original research problem, and outlines the contribution made by the thesis. | The thesis presents a set of conclusions that broadly reflect the original research problem. | There is little or no symmetry between the conclusions and the research problem of the thesis. |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ISSUES RELATING TO THESIS PRESENTATION</th>
<th>Exceptional 1st Class, (90+)</th>
<th>High 1st class (84-89)</th>
<th>Solid 1st class (80-83)</th>
<th>2nd class, Div 1 (75-79)</th>
<th>2nd class, Div 2 (70-74)</th>
<th>3rd class (65-69)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Acknowledgements</td>
<td>Not graded</td>
<td>Not graded</td>
<td>Not graded</td>
<td>Not graded</td>
<td>Not graded</td>
<td>Not graded</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>T of C, Lists of Figures/ Tables</td>
<td>Flawless</td>
<td>Minor mistakes</td>
<td>Major mistakes</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Abstract (approx 500 words)</td>
<td>An inspirational statement of the purpose of the thesis and the relevance of its findings.</td>
<td>An excellent statement of the purpose of the thesis and the relevance of its findings.</td>
<td>A clear and pithy statement of the purpose of the thesis and the relevance of its findings.</td>
<td>A clear and pithy statement of the purpose of the thesis and the relevance of its findings.</td>
<td>A statement which provides a good indication of the purpose and relevance of the thesis.</td>
<td>A statement which does not provide a convincing rationale for the thesis.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overall presentation of the thesis – written expression, grammar, spelling, appropriate and/or imaginative use of section/chapter headings</td>
<td>Written expression inspiring. Spelling and grammar flawless (indicative of repetitive drafting and close editing). The way chapters and section are headed and introduced conveys an accurate intellectual coherence of purpose.</td>
<td>Written expression reflective of publishable academic work, but with some minor mistakes in spelling and grammar. Headings convey an accurate intellectual coherence of purpose.</td>
<td>Written expression gives the impression that it could be improved with a further round of edits. Chapter and section headings accurately represent content.</td>
<td>Written expression emblematic of a ‘work-in-progress’. A number of mistakes in spelling and grammar through the thesis. Headings don’t fully and accurately represent content.</td>
<td>Written expression emblematic of a ‘work-in-progress’. A number of mistakes in spelling and grammar through the thesis. Headings don’t fully and accurately represent content.</td>
<td>Written expression contains non sequiturs, indicative of a ‘credit range’ undergraduate essay. Numerous problems with spelling and grammar. Chapter and section headings problematic.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Use and presentation of relevant tables, graphs, photos, illustrations and maps</td>
<td>Extensive original material, presented in convincing, easy-to-interpret, ways.</td>
<td>Original material, presented in convincing, easy-to-interpret, ways.</td>
<td>Materials presented in a broadly professional manner.</td>
<td>Sloppy/lazy use of materials (e.g., location maps copied from Google Earth).</td>
<td>Data not presented in tables, graphs; absence of maps indicating field sites, etc.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Convey the purpose of the thesis within the word limit</td>
<td>Mandatory</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Use of citations and references to support key arguments</td>
<td>Written text supported by extensive and relevant referencing. Backed up by quotes, footnotes if relevant.</td>
<td>Written text supported by extensive and relevant referencing.</td>
<td>Competent referencing</td>
<td>Some notable errors in referencing</td>
<td>Major errors in referencing (inconsistency of style, etc)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bibliography</td>
<td>Flawless</td>
<td>Minor errors</td>
<td>Major errors</td>
<td>Major errors</td>
<td>Substantial errors</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Legend:**
- **Exceptional 1st Class:** 90+
- **High 1st class:** 84-89
- **Solid 1st class:** 80-83
- **2nd class, Div 1:** 75-79
- **2nd class, Div 2:** 70-74
- **3rd class:** 65-69
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Work: _____________________________

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where the work is a thesis, it is a direct equivalent of the final officially approved version that was submitted, and no emendation of content has occurred other than minor variations in formatting, that are the result of the conversion to digital format.

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- indemnify the University against any actions, costs or expenses arising out of the breach of a warranty in clause 5.

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EXECUTED as a Deed Poll on the terms above.
Signed, sealed and delivered by the CONTRIBUTOR

……………………………………………………..
Signature

………………………………………………………
Printed Name

……………………………………………………
Date

In the presence of:

……………………………………………………
Signature

……………………………………………………
Printed Name