Honours in Italian Studies
Department of Italian Studies

1. What is the Honours program?
Honours involves two semester-length seminar courses on different topics in Italian culture and society and research methodologies, and a dissertation of 18,000-20,000 words on a topic of interest to the student, prepared with the close guidance of a full-time member of staff.
The Honours year is usually taken full-time, February to November, but it can also be taken half-time over two years, and it can be taken July to May.

2. Why study Honours?
− The Honours program gives you the opportunity to explore in depth different areas of Italian Studies that interest you. Normal undergraduate courses only give you a glimpse.
− As a graduate, your Honours degree will set you apart from Pass graduates of any Faculty. The letters BA (Hons) after your name will testify to the fact that you are a consistently high achiever with high level skills in independent research and in communication, and they will give you an edge in whatever career you choose, or in any future application for graduate entry to another course.
− If you desire to pursue an academic career, Honours is an essential step to Masters and PhD programs.

3. What will you learn?
− To refine your skills to read critically, and fully understand, a wide range of Italian texts of different nature.
− To independently research and evaluate different areas of Italian culture using appropriate critical and theoretical approaches.
− To deepen your knowledge of selected aspects of Italian cultures and societies.
− To be able to formulate your own opinions on these cultural texts and social issues and communicate them effectively both in English and Italian.

4. What are the prerequisites?
A major in Italian Studies at an average of 70% or better, and prior permission of the department.
5. **Enrolment**
In the first instance you should discuss your intention to apply for Honours with the Honours Coordinator. Once you have been accepted into the Honours program by the Honours Coordinator (or Coordinators for Joint Honours) please go to Sydney Courses and locate your Degree with Honours (e.g. Bachelor of Arts Honours). Click on ‘Apply’ on the right-hand side.

**Please note:** although there is a note below ‘Apply’ that indicates that the information is for prospective students, current students are also deemed ‘prospective students’ for Honours and therefore need to apply through Sydney Student.

**Entry Requirements** for Honours and **Unit Descriptions of Honours Seminar and Thesis Units** can be found in the Subject Area section for the Department of Italian Studies in the Arts and Social Sciences Undergraduate Handbook. Please also see the Sydney Courses Honours page for more information.

6. **Examples of Honours theses**
Here are some examples of past Honours theses. Note that you can also undertake an interdisciplinary Honours program across two different Departments.
- Dante, Durkheim, Dio. A study of treatment of suicide in Dante’s *Commedia* (Emma Barlow, 2013)
- Gli atteggiamenti degli anglo-australiani verso gli italiani in Australia tra la seconda guerra mondiale e gli anni cinquanta (John Conley, 2014)
- Contemporary Sino-Italian Writing: Hu Lanbo and Marco Wong (Sonia Pang, 2015)
- *Fa metamorphosi di se stessa: Commedia dell’arte* and the ingenious metamorphoses of Isabella Andreini (Meg McLellan, joint with History, 2016)
- “Scusissimi!”: The performance of written apologies by learners of Italian (Talia Walker, joint with Linguistics, 2016)
- Cultural representations of the intellectual *caffè* in Italy: 1848 – 1893 (Elspeth Abrahams, 2016)

7. **Student testimonies**
Past students have found the Honours program in Italian Studies very rewarding and extremely useful for future employment. Here are quotes from some of them:

“Honours definitely prepares you for work, much more than I expected. Preparing, researching for and writing your thesis teaches you larger-scale organisational and research skills which are applicable to a wide variety of work-related activities, from preparing for events to writing research papers and organising your day to day activities. I have been very surprised at how, when confronted with large tasks, the experience of doing my thesis reminds me that it’s just a matter of getting organised, getting into the task, and taking it to completion. While of course when you’re writing it, the content of your thesis is important (and I’ve been surprised about how the knowledge I acquired has come in handy), it’s just as much, if not more, about the process.” (Lisa Golden)

"My experience undertaking Honours in the Department of Italian Studies was an enriching and rewarding one. I very much enjoyed the seminar series that ran over the course of the year, as it gave me the opportunity both to explore topics relating to Italian history and culture that I did not otherwise have the chance to study during my undergraduate degree, and to deepen my knowledge of other topics that I had already come across. I loved researching and writing my Honours thesis on a subject that I was already passionate about but wanted to really sink my teeth into, and the excellent supervision I received helped me not only with the process of writing a thesis but also, more importantly, with the skills required to undertake a research project with such a large scope. The positive impact of my Honours year is very much visible in my current career trajectory; following my Honours year I applied to begin a PhD in the same department in order to continue my Honours work on an even larger scale, which I will
soon submit for examination, and the enthusiasm and expertise I witnessed from my
lecturers and supervisor encouraged me to begin my own teaching trajectory,
culminating in my being granted a 2018 FASS Teaching Fellowship in the department
with their full support, which has proved an invaluable opportunity. Honours was my
doorway into the world of academia, for which I will be ever grateful.” (Emma Barlow)

“Enrolling into the Honours program in the Department of Italian Studies was the best
decision of my academic career. The opportunity to pursue my own research interests
was made all the more valuable by the consistent support which I received from the
department, not only from my supervisor but also from other academics and students.
The transferable research and organisational skills which I developed through my
Honours research have helped me in my teaching career and equipped me to extend my
research further in my doctoral studies. The Honours program was an experience which
allowed me to build confidence in myself, both individually and as an academic, and I am
incredibly glad to have had the opportunity to engage with and be a part of such a
program.” (Talia Walker)