Contact: 2018 Honours Coordinator for the Department of English, Dr Matthew Sussman
Email: matthew.sussman@sydney.edu.au

Closing date for 2019 Honours applications in English:
20/11/2018

**Department of English Honours Program**

**Why do Honours in English?**

An Honours year in English allows you to specialise further in your area of interest. It offers students the opportunity to work independently and creatively in a community of scholars that includes both their peers and the staff of the department. A number of Honours graduates each year continue on to postgraduate study in Australia or abroad. During their Honours year, students will write a thesis of 15,000 words, complete three 4000-level seminar units and participate in the mid-year Honours conference.

In working on your Honours thesis with an expert in a field of your choice, you will develop skills in independent research that will benefit you in a wide range of career paths: anything that requires skills in research, analysis and argumentation. One of those might be further academic study and, for this, an Honours degree is an important stepping stone. Alongside the thesis, the three seminar options that you choose will deepen your understanding of the subject of English.

The skills that you develop in an Honours degree include analytical thinking; reading, listening to and analysing complex texts and arguments; proficiency in research methods; public speaking and the communication of ideas; independence of thought; and the capacity to complete a significant writing project. As such, the Honours degree is an excellent qualification for many careers in a world beyond academia that increasingly demands these adaptable skills. These include fields which have an immediate relationship to literary study, such as publishing and other careers in the arts, but also other professions and vocations for which an analytical mind is crucial: the law, public service, advertising and the media, teaching, politics, as well as business and industry.

**How do I qualify to do Honours in English?**

Academic work at Honours level is challenging and demanding. This means that the criteria for qualification are higher than for a major in the subject.

From 2018-2020, acceptance into the Honours program requires a major in English with an average of 70 percent or above across your six best senior-level English units.

From 2021, acceptance into the Honours program requires a major in English with an average of 70 percent or above across your six best senior-level English units and the completion of a second major.
If you are keen to apply, but are in any doubt as to whether you meet the pre-requisites, please get in touch with the Honours Coordinator.

How do I apply?

If you have met the pre-requisites or, in the case of external candidates and returning candidates, have approval to apply from the department, then you should 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.

As part of your online application, you will require proof of contact with the Honours Coordinator, so be sure to send an email to the Honours Coordinator stating your intention to apply. The coordinator will then ask you to provide a brief “expression of interest” describing the area you would like to research for your thesis. There is no need to contact a potential supervisor as part of your application.

Please note that the English department does welcome students applying to start mid-year and, in special cases, students applying to do Honours part time. Please contact the Honours Coordinator for details.

**What would I do in English Honours?**

As an Honours candidate, you write a 15,000-word thesis. This is done under the supervision of a member of the department who has some expertise in the field in which you choose to work. To supplement your supervision, we provide a comprehensive series of seminars on scholarly research and writing throughout the year. These are designed to help you at each stage of your project. Due in October, your thesis is worth 40% of your overall mark.

You will also take three coursework options, usually two in semester one and one in semester two. For each of these, you will attend a weekly 2-hour seminar. Each of these is worth 20% of your overall mark. Two of these are normally assessed by means of a long essay, the precise topic of which you develop in conjunction with the option coordinator.

In the first semester, you nominate one of your options to be assessed by your participation in the English Honours conference. The conference is an exciting opportunity to be involved with a vibrant academic community. The paper you give at the conference is then written up and the marks divided 50/50 between oral presentation and final write-up.

The seminar options change every year, although we attempt to make sure that there is always a broad historical and generic range of topics available. Past seminars have included Troilus and Cressida, Material Culture in Victorian and Modernist Literature, Reading Whiteness, Old English/Old Norse, Reading Suburbia, Approaches to Genre, Australian Literature and the Canonical Imaginary, Language and Subject, History in English, American Gothic, and The Idea of Home: Literature of Exile, Loss and Longing.