

The Anthropology Honours Program offers students a chance to design and implement a major independent research project. Students work with a committee of faculty members who guide and advise them in their research and in the production of an Honours thesis. The department strongly favours research projects that involve the collection and analysis of original data, and does not typically approve those based solely on library research.

Writing a thesis requires dedication, independence, initiative and a passion for the subject – successful completion of the project is a clear demonstration of these qualities to future employers and graduate admissions committees. Students will also be taught strategies for publishing and presenting their research to the public.

Admission

Most students apply to the honours program in the spring prior to their final year of study. To be admitted to the program, you must satisfy the following Faculty of Arts requirements:

- Have declared a major in Anthropology
- Have a minimum overall grade point average (GPA) of 3.30 in the credits constituting the Honours subject, and no grade lower than C.

Application to the program consists of three forms:

- Honours Application Form
- Honours Thesis Committee Form
- A one-page abstract that outlines your intended research topic and source of data

These forms and instructions for completion can be found on the Department of Anthropology website: <https://www.smu.ca/anthropology/honours-program.html>

Graduation

To graduate with Honours you must satisfy the Faculty of Arts requirements outlined in the Academic Calendar and complete the following Department of Anthropology Requirements:

- 60 credit hours in Anthropology
- All four introductory courses: ANTH 1202, 1271, 1280, 1290
- 6 credit hours at the 2000-level or above in each of the four subfields (archaeological, biological, linguistic and sociocultural anthropology)
- Anthropological Theory: ANTH 4452
- 3 credit hours in Methods (a list of qualifying courses can be found under the Anthropology section of the Academic Calendar)
- ANTH 4501 and 4502, with a minimum grade of B (3.00) in each

- Minimum Grade Point Average of 3.30 in Anthropology credits, with grades of B or higher in at least 48 credit hours, and no grade lower than C

If you have any questions about these requirements, consult with your academic advisor. If you fail to meet the requirements for an honours degree but otherwise meet the requirements for a general degree, on formal application to graduate you will be awarded a general degree.

Double Honours

It is possible to earn double honours in Anthropology and another of the Arts subjects listed in the Academic Calendar. It is also possible to earn double honours in Anthropology and another subject in the Faculty of Science; if you wish to pursue this option, you should first consult with advisors in both Arts and Science.

Honours Seminar

A core requirement of the Anthropology honours program is production of an honours thesis within the framework of the two Honours Seminar courses: ANTH 4501 – Honours Thesis Research and ANTH 4502 – Honours Thesis Writing. Normally ANTH 4501 and 4502 are completed consecutively within a single academic year. These courses are taught by the Honours Program Coordinator who supervises the program, including submitting grades, scheduling presentations, etc. Enrolment in these courses is restricted to students who have been accepted into the honours program. Once your registration status has been updated by the Registrar, you can add the classes.

Thesis Production Schedule and Deadlines

The Department has adopted the following schedule and deadlines. Petitions for changes to these deadlines, or for other major changes in procedure, should be made in writing to the Honours Program Coordinator. Committee members alone cannot grant permission for major changes.

Spring Semester

June 1, 2026

Application to Honours Program

Fall Semester

September 23, 2026

Draft Proposal

September 30, 2026

Final Proposal

October 2, 2026

Proposal Presentation

December 31, 2026

Research Complete

Winter Semester

January 6, 2027

Draft Progress Report

January 13, 2027

Final Progress Report

January 15, 2027

Progress Report Presentation

March 19, 2027

Draft Thesis

April 2, 2027
April 16, 2027

Draft Thesis Returned with Comments
Final Thesis

Formation of Committee

Your thesis committee will be composed of three members – one chairperson and two additional members – that you select to provide advice and guidance on your research. Two of these three members, including the chair, must be full-time faculty members of the Department of Anthropology; the third member can be based elsewhere. The Honours Program Coordinator must approve your choices before admission.

You should begin approaching potential committee members well before the deadline to discuss your project and their own individual expectations. Please note that while committee members will be commenting on drafts of the work you complete in the Honours Seminar, they are not proofreaders and are not responsible for correcting errors of grammar or spelling.

As part of your committee participation grade (see below), you are required to set up a meeting at least once a semester with all of your committee members present, either in person or online. The meetings will be used to assess your progress and help plan your research and writing strategies.

Research Ethics

All honours research that involves human participants must be reviewed and cleared by the Saint Mary's University Research Ethics Board (REB) before it can begin. Examples of such research include participant-observation, interviews, collection of biological materials (i.e. tissue or blood samples) or measurement of physiological features in living populations.

If you require REB approval for your honours thesis research, you will have to complete an application for research ethics approval. Consult with your committee and the Honours Program Coordinator about the procedures for doing so. REB applications can take several weeks to be processed, particular during the fall, so you are highly advised to begin early, preferably in the summer before your honours research begins.

As part of your preparation, you may wish to schedule an appointment with the Research Ethics Officer who can assist you in the preparation of your application. More details are available at: <https://www.smu.ca/hreb/index.html>

Proposal

In the fall you will prepare a proposal outlining your research plans for the coming year. Your proposal should be written and presented using the following sections:

1. Background

Provide a general overview of the situation, setting, field of study, and context for your research.

2. Research Question

Your thesis should be organized around a clear and viable research question, one that can be answered within the scope of your thesis.

3. Data and Methods

Describe the source, nature and extent of the data you will collect. These can take many different forms in anthropology but could be both quantitative and qualitative, including such possibilities as bone measurements, archaeological artifacts, site reports, historical documents, ethnographic interviews, dialect surveys, maps, etc. Discuss what methods you will employ to collect and organize your data.

4. Tradition of Scholarship

Discuss the overall theoretical framework that will guide your interpretations. What work has been done on this topic or in this area by other scholars? Note any differences between your own approach and what has been done in the past.

5. Statement of Significance

Explain the merits of your research and its relevance to the field of anthropology.

Your proposal should be prepared in accord with the guidelines above and in the Honours Thesis Style Guide. Include a list of references and attach any appendixes to the end of your proposal.

Draft Proposal

Submit your draft by email to each of your committee members and the Honours Program Coordinator by the deadline noted above. Committee members will provide comments and direction based on your draft the following week.

Final Proposal

Revise your draft with feedback from your committee for your final proposal and send it as a PDF file to the Honours Program Coordinator by the deadline. The coordinator will distribute it to your committee and all other full-time Anthropology faculty.

Proposal Presentation

Prepare a presentation of your proposal, using PowerPoint or other presentation software, to deliver at a public meeting of faculty and students. After your presentation, the Honours Program Coordinator will solicit feedback from the faculty and provide you with an assessment of your presentation and modifications requested to your proposal. The faculty need to approve your proposal before you proceed to the next phase of your thesis.

Progress Report

You should aim to complete all of your data collection by the end of December. At the beginning of the winter semester, you will present a progress report detailing the work completed on your thesis to that point and your plans for completing the project. Your progress report should be written and presented using the following sections:

1. **Thesis Proposal**
Briefly summarize the thesis proposal you submitted and presented previously.
2. **Progress on Research**
Report on your thesis research to date, describing what you have accomplished and what data has been collected.
3. **Changes to Proposed Research**
Discuss any additions, deletions, or modifications to your original proposal, and explain why these changes were necessary. Keep in mind that all major changes need to be discussed with and approved by your committee.
4. **Research Remaining**
Identify any research that remains to be completed and explain why you were unable to complete it.
5. **Proposed Structure of Thesis**
Describe how you intend to structure your thesis, including a provisional table of contents and outline of your chapters.
6. **Preliminary Findings**
Present any preliminary research findings, such as major discoveries you made, confirmation (or not) of your hypotheses, and your conclusions to this point.

Include a list of references and attach any appendixes to the end of your proposal.

Draft Progress Report

Submit your draft by email to each of your committee members and the Honours Program Coordinator by the deadline noted above. Committee members will provide comments and direction based on your draft the following week.

Final Progress Report

Revise your draft with feedback from your committee for your final progress report and send it as a PDF file to the Honours Program Coordinator by the deadline. The coordinator will distribute it to your committee and all other full-time Anthropology faculty.

Progress Report Presentation

Prepare a presentation of your progress report, using PowerPoint or other presentation software, to deliver at a public meeting of faculty and students. After your presentation, the Honours Program Coordinator will solicit feedback from the faculty and provide you with an assessment of your presentation and modifications requested. The faculty need to approve your progress report before you proceed to the next phase of your thesis.

A provisional grade of IP (In Progress) will be assigned for ANTH 4501 at the end of the fall semester. After your progress report is completed, the IP will be changed to a letter grade.

Thesis

The winter semester will be dedicated to writing up the results of your research in the form of your honours thesis. There is no prescribed structure to the content of your final thesis, but major sections of your thesis should be organized into chapters. Adhere to the guidelines in the Honours Thesis Style Guide in the preparation of your draft and final thesis.

Draft Thesis

Submit a draft of your thesis by email to each of your committee members and the Honours Program Coordinator by the deadline noted above. This should be a full draft of your thesis, including all of the chapters you intend to include in your final version, full list of references, notes and appendices. Committee members will provide comments and direction based on your draft by the date noted above.

Final Thesis

Revise your draft with feedback from your committee and send it as a PDF file to the Honours Program Coordinator by the deadline. The coordinator will distribute it to your committee and all other full-time Anthropology faculty.

Grading

You will receive grades for both ANTH 4501 and ANTH 4502. Grades of D (1.0) and above will allow you to receive course credit. Only grades of B (3.0) or above will count toward your honours degree. Please note that to continue in the program, you must maintain a minimum overall GPA of 3.0 and attain a B (3.0) or above in ANTH 4501.

ANTH 4501 – Honours Thesis Research

All full-time Anthropology faculty and committee members are eligible to grade the following: your final proposal and final progress report; and your proposal presentation and progress report presentation. Grades submitted by faculty and committee members are averaged to obtain a grade for each component below. The final grade is then determined as follows:

Final Proposal

25%

Proposal Presentation	25%
Final Progress Report	25%
Progress Report Presentation	25%

Failure to meet deadlines will result in a penalty of one grade step (0.3) to your final grade for each late submission or presentation.

ANTH 4502 – Honours Thesis Writing

All full-time Anthropology faculty and committee members are eligible to grade the final version of your thesis. Graders will assign two grades to your thesis as follows:

- Intellectual Content – assesses your argument, use of evidence and the organization of your thesis
- Style and Presentation – assesses your skills in written expression, composition, and adherence to the conventions of scholarly writing as outlined in the Honours Thesis Style Guide

These grades are final and based on the thesis as submitted.

All of your committee members will also be asked to submit a grade for committee participation based on your performance throughout the year. This grade is based on your preparedness and conduct in committee meetings, quality of your drafts, productivity and attentiveness to committee suggestions, and adherence to rules and regulations.

Grades submitted by faculty and committee members are averaged to obtain a grade for each component below. The final grade is then determined as follows:

Thesis: Intellectual Content	40%
Thesis: Style and Presentation	40%
Committee Participation	20%

Failure to meet the deadline for thesis submission will result in a penalty of one grade step (0.3) to your final grade **for each day late**.

A grade of IC (Incomplete) will only be assigned in exceptional circumstances. Students seeking an IC must petition the Honours Program Coordinator in writing, stating their reasons. This petition also needs to be approved by the Dean of Arts.

Printing and Archiving

As the author of your thesis, you retain copyright to it, meaning that you have rights over how your work is reproduced by others within the parameters established by the Copyright Act. However, the public dissemination of research is also a key concern of anthropologists. The department will request, upon completion of your thesis, permission to print and bind one copy for our collection. Printing of additional copies can be arranged for you at minimal expense.

We also request that you submit a digital copy of your thesis to the Saint Mary's University Institutional Repository (<http://library2.smu.ca/>) which will make your thesis accessible online. To do so:

1. Have your committee members attach digital signatures to your signature page (alternatively they can confirm acceptance of your thesis to the library by email)
2. Email a **single file** PDF version of your thesis along with your A# to theses@smu.ca
3. Attach any applicable documentation (REB certificate, Restriction letter, Copyright letters etc.)

If your thesis contains confidential or sensitive material, you may apply to have it restricted. This request must be submitted in writing in a letter addressed to the University Librarian, and the letter should be included with your manuscript submission. The request should specify the length of the restriction (up to a maximum of five years). Restricted projects will not be added to the Institutional Repository during the restriction requested.