**Honors Expectations in the Asian Studies Majors**

**(Chinese, Japanese, and Asian Studies)**

Receipt of Honors in any of the three Asian Studies majors is a special distinction reserved for those students who have excelled in their academic accomplishments throughout their time at Bates and have completed a thesis project with certain distinguishing characteristics and features. The distinction of Honors requires that the student and the thesis meet all of the criteria for Honors specified below in addition to the general expectations for non-Honors theses in Asian Studies given on the Asian Studies Thesis page. An outstanding performance in several of the expectations for Honors may offset a less than exemplary performance in another area. A significant deficiency in any one expectation is sufficient grounds to deny Honors. The oral examination panel members, who may consult with the advisor, have final authority for judging whether the student has satisfactorily met the criteria for receipt of Honors.

The thesis must explore a significant question or topic. For East Asian Studies Majors, the thesis must use methods drawn from the student’s area of special interest. For Chinese and Japanese majors the project should involve some analysis of texts (written, filmic, etc.) in the target language and use methodologies that involve the interrogation of texts within their social contexts.

The student must develop a clearly defined research problem (thesis statement) and should present a project that, if brought to completion, would be of publishable quality, either as a stand-alone item or as part of a larger project. The Program recognizes that two semesters of work is seldom sufficient to complete a project to the point of a peer-reviewed publication, but the project should be on a trajectory for such an outcome.

In the written thesis and oral defense, the student must be able to demonstrate a thorough understanding of the broader cultural underpinnings of the project. One or more chapters of the thesis must develop the necessary background, and approach, and the thesis in general must cite relevant, published literature on the topic. The student must have advanced the substantiated arguments of the thesis to the stage where defensible conclusions can be drawn. If the project includes translations, these must be both accurate and readable. A translation in and of itself cannot comprise the whole of the thesis project.

The student must demonstrate a high level of self-motivation, independence and continuous engagement in the project over the entire two semesters.

In the oral exam the student must be able to answer questions posed by the examination committee and engage with members of the committee in a scholarly discussion of all facets of the project.

**Honors Nomination Process in the Asian Studies Majors**

**(Chinese, Japanese, and Asian Studies)**

**Short Term of the junior year:**In its spring meeting, the Asian Studies Committee invites students to pursue Honors based on the student’s preliminary thesis plan, overall GPA and GPA in the major (both of which should normally be 3.5 or higher), and the strong recommendation of Asian Studies faculty who are familiar with the student’s academic accomplishments in previous work at Bates and feel the student is capable of producing an excellent thesis. The student’s thesis advisor is assigned at this time. Students should consult with their advisor and indicate their interest in Honors on the preliminary thesis plan that all majors submit to the Asian Studies Committee in the Short Term of their junior year.

**Summer between junior and senior year:**Students invited to pursue Honors are expected to further develop their thesis topic prior to the start of the fall term of the senior year. They should consult with their thesis advisor during this time period.

**Fall semester of the senior year:**

Students invited to pursue honors must enroll in either ASIA 457, CHI 457 or JPN 457 in the fall of their senior year. Along with all senior majors writing theses in the fall, the Honors invitee must submit a thesis proposal to the Asian Studies Committee by the end of the third week of the fall semester. Based on its evaluation of this proposal, the Committee invites the student to submit a more comprehensive proposal and give an oral presentation to the Committee in the week after Thanksgiving break, and to submit a substantive chapter of the thesis by the end of the Fall Term final examination period. The Program will judge the quality of the presentation, the quality of the project to date, and determine whether the student is making satisfactory progress toward completion of an Honors thesis. The Program, in consultation with the advisor, will make a decision whether to formally nominate the student for Honors.

**Winter semester of the senior year:**Honors nominations are submitted by the chair to the Honors Committee at the end of the first week of the winter semester. Students nominated for Honors must enroll in either ASIA 458, CHI 458 or JPN 458 in the winter semester of their senior year.

If, at any time after formal nomination to Honors and prior to the submission of the written thesis, the thesis advisor feels that the student is not meeting the expectations of the Asian Studies Program for a satisfactory Honors thesis, she or he has the authority to withdraw the student from the Honors program.

A student formally nominated for Honors can withdraw from the program at any time prior to the thesis submission deadline or oral exam date.