

Physics Department Honors Policy

September 2008

The Occidental College Catalog states that, “*The Honors Program at Occidental College is designed to allow the superior student’s attention to be focused on an independent investigation for a sustained period of time.*” Physics majors with an overall grade point average of 3.25 are permitted to present a written thesis on their research for College Honors consideration at graduation, subject to the requirements enumerated below. Honors projects may come from any area of physics, and students are encouraged to use Physics 390 and Physics 391 as an opportunity to develop a project. An honors project usually results from research the student has conducted either with a faculty member at Oxy or under the guidance of someone off-campus (e.g., from JPL or LANL). Evaluation of the completed project will be made by a committee of the department faculty and may include persons from outside the department or College.

A completed Honors Project consists of four elements:

- 1) A one to two page proposal, signed by the project advisor, must be submitted to the department for approval. Note that in addition to a project's overall merit and feasibility, the department will also consider the time remaining to the student to complete the proposed work. The final deadline for submitting a proposal is the end of the 2nd full week of the fall semester of the student's senior year. Students planning on doing research over the summer are strongly urged to submit this proposal to the department prior to the start of research i.e. end of the spring semester.
- 2) A five to ten page paper describing the physics background and context must be signed by the advisor and turned in to the department no later than the end of the 2nd full week of the spring semester. This paper may be incorporated into the final thesis.
- 3) A 30 minute presentation describing the work the student has done must be given no later than the end of the 3rd full week of spring semester.
- 4) A final thesis signed by the advisor is due no later than the tenth week of the spring semester of the student’s senior year.