Latin Honors and Senior Honors Thesis
The Physics department encourages all students to engage in undergraduate research and to write a report about their research (see http://physics.wustl.edu/undergraduate/research-projects for information about how to find a research project and a faculty advisor). Students with a GPA of >3.50 are encouraged to write a formal senior honors thesis that will qualify them to receive a diploma with Latin Honors:
• cum laude, with praise,
• magna cum laude, with great praise,
• summa cum laude, with the highest praise.
The thesis is a proof that you have a deep understanding of the concepts acquired as a Physics major, and that you can use these concepts to do original research. The thesis should describe research performed by you in the Physics Department or elsewhere. The writing should attest to your ability to write a scientific paper. The thesis should include an introduction giving the motivation for the research project and background information, describe the methods applied and the results of the research, include a discussion section, and include appropriate citations throughout the thesis. Your will receive faculty feedback to your thesis will help you to improve your scientific writing skills.

Each year the deadline for seniors to turn in their finished theses is in March by 5:00 PM on the Monday that is the first class day after the end of spring break. This is a firm deadline that cannot be extended.
All students writing a senior thesis need to report their intent to do so to the department secretary Sarah Hedley (SarahHedley <sarahj@wuphys.wustl.edu>) with the form given at the end of this document. If the research was done and supervised in another department, you must find a physics faculty member to be a thesis supervisor, read your thesis and certify that it is substantial and well written. In this case, please give the names of both advisors.

A successful thesis usually contains between twelve to twenty pages of text (single-spaced) plus figures, tables, and references. Writers should consult the advisors frequently to ensure high scientific and writing quality. The librarian Alison Verbeck has theses from recent years in a box in the library, so you can look at examples there, or in the electronic repository described below.
All students writing a senior thesis are encouraged to give a short (10-15min) presentation about their work to fellow undergraduate students, and professors. The Undergraduate Studies Committee will contact all senior thesis writers to schedule the presentation within the framework of a few 1hr long seminars with 3-4 similar presentations. The Undergraduate Studies Committee will try to schedule these meetings before the due-date of the senior thesis, so that the students can use the feedback from the audience to address shortcomings of the thesis. We also recommend that a poster describing the research will be presented at one of the two Undergraduate Research Symposia held each year.
We ask that students post electronic copies of their theses at the Washington University Libraries Open Scholarship repository. The repository is a service of the Libraries to provide free access to the scholarly output of the university. More information about the repository is available on the “About” page at openscholarship.wustl.edu. Open Scholarship already contains several senior honors projects. You can find examples listed under Student Publications in two folders – Undergraduate Theses–Restricted and Undergraduate Theses–Unrestricted. Find out more about submission guidelines, policies, forms and the necessity for the two distinct areas at this site: libguides.wustl.edu/undergrad_open_schol.

Students may perform the research work on which they will report as volunteers, for pay, or for academic credit. An hour of work may not earn both money and credit. Students should not be paid for time spent writing theses, but may count that time toward academic credit. Seniors may use Physics 499 and Physics 500 to sign up for credit. The only way to enroll in these courses is to have the advisor ask Sarah to make the registration and tell her how many units should be earned. A University-wide guideline is one unit of credit for three hours per week of research work.

**Form to Report the Intent to Present a Senior Thesis**

Your Name: 

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Proposed Title: 

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Name of faculty advisor(s): 

(in case of an extramural research project, please list the name of the faculty advisor inside the Physics department, and the name and contact information (telephone number and email address) of the external research advisor): 

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