

# ISP HONORS PROGRAM APPLICATION

NAME:

PID#:

ISP MAJOR:

COLLEGE:

DOUBLE MAJOR/MINOR:

UCSD EMAIL:

MAJOR GPA (ON DEGREE AUDIT):

**UPPER DIVISION COURSEWORK:** *Please outline all of the coursework that you have completed or you are currently enrolled in. If a course is currently a work in progress, leave the grade blank*

REQUIREMENT	COURSE SUBJECT CODE AND NUMBER	PROFESSOR	QUARTER/YEAR	GRADE	
EXAMPLE	CRS 101	JANE DOE	SP20	A	
INTERNATIONAL STUDIES CORE	INTL 101				
	INTL 102				REGIONAL REQUIREMENT
DISCIPLINARY FOCUS (8 COURSES TOTAL)	1.				
	2.				
	3.				
	4.				
	5.				
	6.				
	7.				
	8.				
INTERDISCIPLINARY ELECTIVES (3 COURSES TOTAL)	1.				
	2.				
	3.				
NOTES:					

I certify that I have read the webpage on the [ISP Honors Program](#) regarding eligibility for admission to the honors program and the requirements for the award of honors. I will notify the ISP Advisor if my topic or faculty advisor changes during the program. \_\_\_\_\_

STUDENT SIGNATURE

DATE

# HONORS THESIS PROPOSAL

As you begin to explore topics and faculty advisors for your honors thesis application, please carefully review the information on the following pages. On a separate document to be attached to your application, you must provide an outline with the following information:

- Topic
- Research Question
- Explanation of Literature and/or data sources that you would like to use

## FACULTY ADVISOR

**FACULTY ADVISOR NAME:**

**DEPARTMENT:**

**FACULTY ADVISOR EMAIL ADDRESS:**

**PLEASE OUTLINE THE NATURE AND FREQUENCY OF CONTACT AS AGREED UPON BY BOTH THE FACULTY ADVISOR AND STUDENT:**

I have read the attached thesis proposal and the requirements of the ISP Honors Program and agree to serve as the students faculty advisor should they be admitted to the Honors Program.

**FACULTY ADVISOR SIGNATURE:**

**DATE:**

## International Studies Program Honors Thesis Application Project Proposal

Your application to the ISP Honors Program has three parts: 1) Program eligibility; 2) Deciding on a topic **and** a research question; and, 3) Identifying and securing the approval of an adviser. This is the order in which you should approach your application. What follows below will help you with #2 and #3. Your application will be stronger (and you will find it easier to find an advisor) if it demonstrates that you understand what a research project is and that you are starting out with a question, not just a topic.

**Your Question:** Research is driven by questions and controversies, not topics. For example, a thesis “about baseball” is undoable. “Baseball” is a topic and a huge one, at that. However, one that asks, “Does building sports stadia in blighted urban neighborhoods create stable economic revitalization?” would work nicely. **Note** that this also turns your thesis into research about a pattern of events rather than one incident. You *could* ask “Has Oriole Park at Camden Yards created urban revitalization in Baltimore?” and produce a good case study around the answer, but its theoretical reach is very narrow and interest in your research will be limited. There are too many ways that Baltimore is not like San Francisco or San Diego to make the one case a basis for an argument about other stadium plans. **In addition**, most good research will tell the reader not only what happened (“The San Francisco Giants built AT&T Park and there was little change in the surrounding business climate.”) but also why it happened (“The seasonality of baseball, the types of businesses it is most likely to attract, and the lack of housing result in significant downtime in economic activity.”) **Finally**, tell your reader why they should care about your question and what it offers to existing scholarly debate. (“Municipal resources are limited given middle class flight to the suburbs, neighborhoods are old and lack a sufficient tax base, and development of some type is required to revitalize; baseball stadia are a poor investment if the intent is to improve the material quality of life in a city.”)

**Your Literature Review:** Who are the people and what have they written that tells you about the debate you want to engage? Literature reviews are not summaries or book reviews and neither are they intended to be exhaustive explanations of the research on your question. A good literature review does three things: 1) It lays out the different, credible answers that others have given to your research question; 2) It allows you to briefly analyze BOTH the strengths and weakness of this other work; and, 3) It takes note of the holes in that other research as a way of building the case for why the other work is inadequate, leaving the need for one more (your) answer.

A **literature review** focuses on the *conceptual* puzzle in which you are interested and extends beyond the specific case(s) you will use. If my argument is “Building sports stadia does not contribute to urban development in poor neighborhoods,” much of the literature I review will be on urban planning and redevelopment. Before I can decide whether a new baseball park will have any consequence, I have to know the standards for measuring community improvement and the problems with displacement. In social science terms, my “dependent variable” (the thing I want to explain) is the economic difficulty of revitalizing poor neighborhoods with a new baseball stadium. This is, in part, an empirical point; I begin by showing that the neighborhoods around new sports complexes started poor and are still poor. My independent variables will be those elements that may explain why the neighborhood remains poor: the wrong type of businesses come in with a new stadium, no new appropriate jobs come in with a new stadium, no new tax base, no investment in safety, too seasonal, displacement of long time inhabitants.

- The dependent variable is what I am trying to explain.
- The independent variables are those things/facts/bits of data that test and prove my explanation. You will test more than one and likely need more than one for a strong argument. Few things have only one cause.

My **literature review**, then, on baseball stadiums and urban revitalization will include literature from both, but will not tell just the stories of Camden Yards, AT&T, Petco, or PNC Park. It will focus also on how to define revitalization, in general, and whether the arguments about stadium building focus on the correct questions and use the correct metrics for measuring revitalization.

**Your Thesis and Hypothesis:** Your *thesis* is an argument. It is a statement of your position in the debate about whether building stadiums has any positive consequences for cities. It is the idea that you will argue. Your *hypothesis* suggests a “how” or “why.” Most research begins with the writer having some idea of how/why something happens— why building

a stadium does not work to bring urban renewal. It is likely that by the time you get to the end of your research, you will have to refine your hypothesis, even change it substantially. Writing is often a revelatory process. Save time at the end of winter quarter to make certain that your conclusion, introduction and literature review line up.

**Your Explanation:** While an individual event may have a single cause, a *patterned* set of events that allows you to reach for a conclusion with theoretical merit will likely be more complex. In general, a thorough explanation will require you to become well versed in a complex set of rules, actions, conditions, actors or meanings. The most common categories are:

1. Institutions—Such an explanation focuses on the rules and mechanics of action. For example, if cities have zoning or environmental rules that limit the type of businesses allowed near a stadium, this could be an important factor in my explanation.
2. Economics—In this case, the most important variables are those that relate to economic conditions. For example, the quality of a development project can be dependent on having few financial constraints—resources to relocate the poorest residents or to build public transportation or to bring in new jobs.
3. Power--Who/what has power and how is power disbursed/balanced? Who is making the decisions and who is in opposition?
4. Culture—Is there a deep set of norms or conventions that determine the outcome of actions? For example, will racial or class norms affect the types of businesses that are placed around a stadium or how the revenue is shared in a city? What does the neighborhood think and why?

In reality, no explanation is purely one type or another. As I say above, complex outcomes rarely have one cause. Indeed, mono-causality is usually wrong. But thinking in terms of these categories will help you sort through the details of case studies and keep you from falling into the trap of thinking everything is responsible.