

Departments of Physics and Astronomy
Thesis Guidelines
2020-2021

1. The Williams College Bulletin (course catalog) describes the requirements for a degree with honors in physics, astrophysics or astronomy. You should consult the Bulletin to be sure that you understand the requirements.
2. A grade will be given for PHYS or ASPH 493, based on effort and accomplishment during the fall semester, although the grade may be deferred at the discretion of the advisor.
3. Each thesis student will make a brief (~10 minute) progress report to the department on their thesis project on one of the last three Fridays of the Fall semester (11/20, 12/4, and 12/11). You should discuss the content and format of your talk with your advisor and sign up here.
4. A draft of a 10-page portion of your thesis must be in the hands of the advisor by Friday, January 29, 2020. Your advisor will determine the precise nature of the material to be included. See also the document, "Writing a Physics Thesis, some advice from Prof. Jones."
5. A complete draft of the thesis must be in the hands of the advisor by noon Friday, April 23, 2020, for initial evaluation and editing. This is three weeks before the final due date on the Wednesday of the last week of classes (see #7). Although the exact length of the thesis will depend on the nature of your project, the number of diagrams etc., 40 to 60 pages of text and diagrams normally will be sufficient. Material not essential for the general reader (computer programs, details of primary interest to a future students, additional examples of data, etc.) should be in an appendix rather than the main body of the work.
6. Revisions and corrections must be made so that the thesis is in the hands of a second reader by noon on Friday, May 5, 2020. All figures and diagrams should be included in final form. The second reader should not be asked to read a thesis which is incomplete or still being revised.
7. A copy of the thesis, incorporating the corrections made by the advisor and the second reader, must be delivered to the department administrative assistant by noon on Friday, May 14, 2020, for examination and evaluation by the department. This is the copy that will be evaluated by the departments to determine honors. You should note that this date is earlier than the one given in a mailing from the Dean of the College.
8. Each thesis student will present their results to the departments in the form of a short colloquium held during Reading Period (May 20-21, 2020).
9. Information regarding the College-wide rules for the format and submission of honors theses is available at <https://specialcollections.williams.edu/archives-collections/theses/theses-submission/> . The permanent archival copy of the thesis should be submitted as a pdf to to theses@williams.edu by 5:00 p.m. on the last day of final exams (College rule). The Library will make arrangements for binding.